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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Detention of Asylum Seekers (Impact on Police Scotland)

Karen Adam (SNP) [S6F-03076] To ask the First Minister what assessment the Scottish Government has made of the potential impact on Police Scotland and devolved agencies of reports that the Home Office has launched a major operation to detain asylum seekers across the United Kingdom, following the passing of the UK Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024.

Reply from the First Minister (Humza Yousaf): Let me be very clear: the dog-whistle politics that we have seen displayed this week through the disgusting Home Office footage and, frankly, the accompanying Westminster rhetoric, have no place here in Scotland. This Government has consistently opposed the Safety of Rwanda

(Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024, while other members of this Parliament have voted for it in their capacity as MPs. We have absolutely opposed the that act and the Illegal Migration Act 2023. The “hostile environment” rhetoric is a symptom of a broken Westminster system that is focused on constantly attacking the most vulnerable and is a complete abdication of not just the moral responsibility of the UK but its international obligations.

Any unannounced Home Office immigration enforcement visits will raise concern and anxiety right across our communities. Although Police Scotland has a role in maintaining public order and public safety, it will never assist in the removal of asylum seekers or other migrants. Ministers will continue to press to UK counterparts our deep concerns on reserved asylum policy.

Karen Adam: Given the news that the Home Office raids have begun, is the First Minister as sickened as I am, and as many of my constituents are, at the fact that this unworkable policy has been forced on Scotland by a fear-mongering and xenophobic UK Government?

Reply from the First Minister: I agree entirely with Karen Adam. However, I have great faith in the people of Scotland. Who will ever forget the heroic actions of those on Kenmure Street, for example?

The Government stands absolutely steadfast in our opposition to the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024 and the Illegal Migration Act 2023. I deplore the inhumane Home Office enforcement action that we have seen. Detaining people in order to forcibly remove them to Rwanda is cruel and punishes some of the most vulnerable in our society.

At times like this, we all have an obligation to step back and think about what is going on. Often, those who flee persecution, war or extreme poverty come to our shores. What has happened to the UK that has so often opened its homes, its hearts and its arms to people who seek sanctuary? Instead, the UK Government wants to pit community against community, person against person and race against race. I am afraid that such inflammatory rhetoric—such stoking of the flames of division—is only detrimental to each and every one of us.

To end this answer, my plea to every political party, particularly in what is a general election year, is that we show moral leadership in relation to some of the issues that are most divisive. That is important. I hope that every member of the Parliament will play their part in ensuring that we put out rather than stoke the flames of racial and religious tension—which, I am afraid, the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024 undoubtedly inflames.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-02-05-2024?meeting=15829&iob=135156#orsccontributions_M16177E387P723C2582042

UK Parliament Debates

Partner and Spousal Visas: Minimum Income

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-23/debates/197A4BF5-2D70-4087-9ECC-479F740A7C10/PartnerAndSpousalVisasMinimumIncome>

Draft Immigration (Leave to Enter and Remain) (Amendment) Order 2024

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-30/debates/45346c62-0b58-4b03-914c-c435fa6c19bc/DraftImmigration\(LeaveToEnterAndRemain\)\(Amendment\)Order2024](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-30/debates/45346c62-0b58-4b03-914c-c435fa6c19bc/DraftImmigration(LeaveToEnterAndRemain)(Amendment)Order2024)

Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-05-01/debates/BA5EC639-EA08-46E8-A3B7-A91F48BB4854/StatementOfChangesInImmigrationRules>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

UK-Rwanda Partnership

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (James Cleverly) [HCWS430] The Government today laid a statutory statement, in line with section 20(8) of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, confirming its intention to ratify the UK-Rwanda agreement on an asylum partnership (the treaty). The treaty will be ratified today.

The UK Government and the Government of Rwanda have worked together to ensure that all the necessary measures are in place, such that the parties are able to meet their obligations as and when they arise, to proceed with ratification of the treaty.

This work has included:

The passing by the Government of Rwanda of their own domestic legislation to ratify the treaty and to amend their asylum system to reflect new case-working and appeals processes. These measures will help address the Supreme Court's conclusions on the effectiveness of the Rwandan asylum system and will help build capacity and capability.

Identifying a Rwandan and a Commonwealth co-president to head up the new appeals body, which was introduced under the treaty to address the points raised by the Supreme Court about the independence of the Rwandan judiciary, and to ensure that the final determination of a refugee claim is independent and objective. The co-presidents will work together to ensure the selection of appropriate judges, on the drafting of procedural rules, and on the delivery of effective and appropriate training for new judges.

Progressing the identification of an independent expert to the new appeal body, and of potential experts to support the functioning of casework and to ensure high-quality decision-making.

Creating an independent monitoring committee, which will monitor the operation of the treaty.

Commencing the procurement exercise for the monitoring committee support team, which will be in place prior to a first flight.

Implementing an initial system to monitor the location of relocated individuals, with their consent, to ensure they are safe and that refoulement contrary to the terms of the treaty has not occurred.

Developing and agreeing with the Government of Rwanda a range of standard operating procedures detailing how the provisions under the treaty will be delivered in practice. This includes processes for safeguarding vulnerable individuals and accessing the comprehensive medical support package available to relocated individuals.

I am grateful to the Government of Rwanda for their work in implementing the treaty to ensure those relocated will be offered safety and security.

In line with our obligations under the refugee convention and the European convention on human rights, the treaty, which is binding in international law, addresses the Supreme Court's conclusions by making it clear that refoulement will not occur. The treaty ensures that those relocated: will be safe; will be fully supported for five years; will not be removed to a third country; and will have their asylum claims processed fairly; and that those who are not granted refugee status or humanitarian protection will get equivalent treatment and will be granted permanent residence.

The assurances in the treaty, alongside ongoing work to strengthen Rwanda's asylum system and operational readiness since the evidential position considered by the courts in summer 2022, are sufficient to conclude that Rwanda is safe for relocated individuals. In passing the Safety of Rwanda Act, which received Royal Assent today, 25 April 2024, Parliament has reached the same conclusion.

The Act will come into force upon the ratification of the treaty. Decision makers will be required to treat Rwanda as a generally safe country for the purpose of relocating individuals. The Act does allow decision makers and the courts and tribunals to consider claims that Rwanda is unsafe for an individual person due to their particular circumstances,

despite the safeguards in the treaty, if there is compelling evidence to that effect. But an individual claim is not permitted on grounds that Rwanda may remove the person to another state in contravention of any of its international obligations. The treaty has removed this risk.

Parliament is sovereign. Individuals with no legal right to be in the UK should no longer be able to frustrate removal through spurious legal challenges.

Despite the progress we have made in tackling illegal migration, we must go further. To fully solve this problem, we need a strong deterrent. Only by removing the prospect that illegal migrants can settle in the UK can we control our borders and save lives at sea. That is why it is essential we relocate illegal migrants to Rwanda, rather than letting them stay in the UK.

The sooner we can bring into effect our partnership with Rwanda, the faster we can disrupt the business model of smuggling gangs and demonstrate that making dangerous, illegal, and unnecessary journeys to the UK is not a viable means of entry to the UK asylum system.

When people know that if they come here illegally, they will not get to stay, they will stop coming altogether, and we will stop the boats. Illegal migration destroys lives, costs British taxpayers billions of pounds, and is unfair to those who follow the rules. Passing the Safety of Rwanda Act and ratifying the treaty with Rwanda will help us put a stop to this.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-25/debates/24042546000007/UK-RwandaPartnership>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Immigration Update

The Minister for Legal Migration and the Border (Tom Pursglove): ... The Government are committed to reducing immigration—both legal and illegal—into the United Kingdom. Legal immigration has risen in recent years in part because we have extended the hand of friendship to people fleeing conflict and persecution in Ukraine, Hong Kong and Afghanistan. That was the right thing to do. But another factor has been the numbers of overseas students and workers and their dependants rising to unsustainable levels. The steps that the Secretary of State for the Home Department ... announced last year to cut net migration will mean that around 300,000 people who would have been eligible to come to the UK will now not be.

We have restricted most students from bringing dependent family members, increased the salary that most skilled worker migrants need to earn in order to obtain a visa by nearly 50% to £38,700, stopped overseas care workers bringing dependent family members with them, raised the minimum income for family visas to ensure that people are supported financially, and scrapped the 20% going rate salary discount for shortage occupations and replaced the shortage occupation list with a new immigration salary discount list. The latest estimates from the Office for National Statistics show that net migration in the year to June 2023 was 672,000, 73,000 lower than it was six months earlier. The figures are provisional and we need to go further, but these are encouraging signs.

The latest statistics show that the numbers applying for skilled worker, health and care and study visas in the first three months of 2024 were down by 24% on the same period last year. We removed, from 1 January, the right of students starting courses—other than those on postgraduate research programmes and Government-funded scholarships—to bring dependants to the UK via the student visa route. The number of applications for student dependant visas has fallen by 80% since our changes came into force. From 11 March 2024, we have stopped overseas care workers bringing family dependants here, and have required social care firms in England to be registered with the Care Quality Commission to sponsor visas. In the year ending September 2023, an estimated 120,000 dependants

came here via that route. In the first three months of 2024, the number of applications for health and care visas was down by 28%—and this is just the start; most of our changes have only just come into force.

Meanwhile, we remain committed to stopping the boats. Following Royal Assent for the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024 and the ratification of our treaty with Rwanda, we can operationalise our plan to relocate illegal migrants to Rwanda. Rwanda is a safe country that has repeatedly shown its ability to offer asylum seekers a chance to build new and prosperous lives. It has a strong and successful track record of resettling people, hosting more than 135,000 refugees, and it stands ready to accept thousands more who want to rebuild their lives and who cannot stay in the UK.

Once flights begin, we will have added another vital deterrent to crack down on the people-smuggling gangs who treat human beings as cargo. The first illegal migrants set to be removed to Rwanda have now been detained, following a series of nationwide operations this week. Operational teams within the Home Office have been working apace to detain, safely and swiftly, individuals who are in scope for relocation to Rwanda, with more activity due to be carried out in the coming weeks. This action is a key part of the plan to deliver flights to Rwanda in the next few weeks.

We have made solid progress in stopping the boats, although we need to finish the job. The number of small boat arrivals fell by more than a third in 2023, and our work with international partners prevented more than 26,000 crossings last year as well as helping to dismantle 82 organised crime groups since July 2020. Our new agreement with Albania has cut Albanian small boat arrivals by more than 90%, and we recently signed a groundbreaking deal with Frontex—the European Border and Coast Guard Agency—which marked another crucial step in the securing of our borders. An initial cohort in the thousands of suitable cases for removal to Rwanda has been identified and placed on immigration bail, with strict reporting conditions. We have a range of measures in place to ensure that we remain in contact with individuals, including both face-to-face and digital reporting, and Immigration Enforcement has a range of powers to trace and locate any individuals who abscond, as well as a dedicated team of tracing officers who work with the police, other Government agencies and commercial companies to help trace individuals and bring them back into contact. It would, of course, be inappropriate for me to comment further on operational activity.

Immigration has enriched this country beyond measure, but it needs to be sustainable and it needs to be fair. Legal immigration should be focused on helping those in genuine need, and on ensuring that our economy has the skills that it needs in order to flourish. It is simply not right for those who can afford to pay gangsters to jump ahead of those who would play by the rules, and whose need is greater. No one needs to flee to the UK from a safe country such as France. Both illegal immigration and unsustainable legal migration place intolerable burdens on communities, and over time they will undermine support for immigration in general, which would be a tragedy. That is why this Government have a plan, which we are putting into action. There is further to go, but we are seeing its positive impact already. ...

Stephen Kinnock (Labour): ... Net migration has trebled since 2019 to a barely comprehensible 745,000. Under this Government, the number of people crossing in small boats has spiralled from a few hundred in 2018 to tens of thousands every year. It was toe-curlingly embarrassing to watch the Minister claim that he has made “solid progress” on stopping the boats, when this year the number of crossers is at the highest level on record—more than 7,000 between January and April.

It was excruciatingly painful to watch the Home Secretary boast on social media about removing people with no right to be here, when the removal of failed asylum seekers has collapsed by 44% under this Government since 2010, when the removal of foreign criminals has plummeted by 27%, and when he has completely lost track of the 3,500 asylum seekers he claims have been identified for deportation to Rwanda. It is also painful

to hear Government figures bragging in the media that their Rwanda policy is somehow a success because a single person, who did not even cross the channel on a small boat, has chosen to fly to Rwanda voluntarily, with thousands of pounds of Government money stuffed into his pocket by the Home Secretary. This is not a policy; it is a headline-chasing gimmick, a fiasco and a farce.

Labour has been absolutely clear that we reject the £500 million Rwanda scheme, based on its unaffordability and unworkability. It will cover only 1% of small-boat asylum seekers, and the Government have no plan for the other 99%. We will repurpose that money to smash the criminal smuggler gangs with our new cross-border police unit and a security partnership with Europol. Crucially, our new returns and enforcement unit will ensure that more flights take off to other countries, which will remove foreign criminals, failed asylum seekers and visa overstayers so that we can restore some control and integrity to our asylum system in a way that is firm, fair and well managed. We will also end the use of 250 asylum hotels and other inappropriate accommodation for asylum seekers, which is costing the British taxpayer millions of pounds every single day.

It is painful to hear the Minister bragging today about the reduction in the number of health and social care visas awarded as a way of bringing down net migration—first, because it is based on such a small data sample; secondly, because this is only one sector of the economy; and, thirdly, because the Minister seems to care not one iota what the reduction in workers will mean for our elderly parents. Where is the impact assessment, and where is the plan to recruit local talent? ...

On asylum, Home Office sources have told *The Times* that only 400 to 700 detention spaces are reserved for migrants who are due for deportation to Rwanda. Can the Minister confirm that this equates to less than 1% of the current asylum backlog in the UK? The Prime Minister promised to detain everyone who has crossed the channel on a small boat—over 30,000 last year. Given that we have only 2,200 detention spaces, what will happen to the remaining 28,000? ...

Reply from Tom Pursglove: ... We have begun the process of delivering the measures in relation to legal migration, and we are also delivering when it comes to illegal migration. We have a plan. We are now getting on and closing hotels—150 asylum hotels have been closed. That is a positive thing. It is the right thing to do to make sure that we accommodate people in appropriate accommodation, but get away from the model of providing hotel accommodation for people. ... We have seen massive gains when it comes to asylum decision making and productivity around those processes. ... We have seen crossings down by over a third last year compared with the year before. We have seen Albanian arrivals falling by 90%. We will continue to sustain the progress that we have made, and we know from everything that has been said in recent days that the Rwanda policy is beginning to have the desired effect: the deterrent is clear. When it comes to the hon. Gentleman's meagre offering, I would just say that we have already doubled funding for the National Crime Agency for organised immigration crime work, and we already have approximately 5,000 officials working on these matters within migration and borders. That is all that Labour Members are offering; it virtually resembles a blank sheet of paper. The truth is that they offer no deterrent. They have nowhere to send people. They have no plan. They have no solutions. They try to bluff that they do, but they are kidding nobody. They are terrified that our plan is going to work. They are terrified that they will have to scrap it, and they are terrified that they have no alternative. Only we have a plan. It is delivering results and we will see it through.

Tim Loughton (Conservative): Again, no hint of a plan for how we deal with failed asylum seekers from countries to which they cannot be returned without the Rwanda scheme. I am pleased with the progress that the Minister has made on reducing net migration, but I am worried about the figures that came out yesterday. Of the 5,700 migrants who have

been identified for removal, only 2,145 can be located. This reflects the evidence from the second permanent secretary to the Home Affairs Committee earlier in the year, when some 17,000 failed asylum seekers who should have been removed could not be located. Where are these people, and what is the Department doing about tracking them down and making sure that they can be removed, as needs to happen as swiftly as possible?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: My hon. Friend will appreciate that I cannot go into the granularity of the operational work that is ongoing to ensure that we can deliver on this policy, but I can say that an initial cohort of suitable cases of around 2,000 people has been identified for removal, and they have been placed on immigration bail with strict reporting conditions.

For those outside that group, there is still a wide range of tools to maintain contact with them. That includes, as I said earlier, face-to-face and digital reporting, and many individuals also reside within Home Office accommodation. The Minister for Countering Illegal Migration, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Mid Dorset and North Poole (Michael Tomlinson) leads on this work and he is confident of the whereabouts, once the decision to detain is made, and this is just one of the cohorts of people who may be eligible for removal to Rwanda. The policy is clear and we are getting on and operationalising it. That includes detaining people for the purposes of relocation. ...

Alison Thewliss (SNP): ... These plans are damaging to our society, to our economy, to the people who need care and to the people who want to love, live and study here. Universities are up in arms about the cuts to student numbers. It makes absolutely no sense. The draft rules that the Government have issued on adults at risk in immigration detention were released this week, but instead of taking action on the serious recommendations of the Brook House inquiry, the Home Office is instead doubling down on its policy of indefinite detention. ...

Far from what the Minister said, small boat arrivals are up this year. Rwanda is no deterrent because none of their other policies has proved a deterrent. The thousands of people they want to send there have disappeared, never to be seen again, and who can really blame them, if they are going to be plucked from their beds and taken away by Ministers and sent to countries against their will? Indeed, who can blame them? The risk is that these people will end up being exploited because they have gone into hiding. They will be exploited, they will be trafficked and they will be vulnerable. Why is the Minister not acknowledging the impact that this policy will have on vulnerable people?

Finally, if it is indeed the case that the person the Government sent to Rwanda has not been granted refugee status in this country, why are they not being returned to their country of origin? Is it perhaps that that country is actually unsafe? If that is true, why were they not given refugee status here in the first place?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: It is a perfectly respectable position to want to protect our borders. It is right and proper to want to ensure that we have a fair and balanced system of legal migration that is sustainable. I make no apology whatsoever—and nor will this Government or any of the Ministers in the Home Office—for placing front and centre the determination to protect people's lives. We have seen too many lives lost in the channel at the hands of evil criminal gangs with no regard whatsoever for human life who take people's money, exploit them and send them out to sea in unseaworthy vessels. Candidly, beyond that, I am not going to edify the hon. Lady's contribution with anything further. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-01/debates/BB9F92E8-F7E3-4679-B016-DBFB356BB173/ImmigrationUpdate>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Rwanda Refugee Policy

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Rwanda

John McDonnell (Labour) [23362] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an estimate of the cost to the aid budget of preparations to transport migrants to Rwanda including costs (a) paid to the Rwandan Government, (b) defending legal challenges (c) passing the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill and (d) for flights and accommodation in the last 12 months.

John McDonnell (Labour) [23363] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an estimate of potential future costs to the aid budget of plans to transport migrants to Rwanda including costs (a) paid to the Rwandan Government, (b) defending legal challenges and (c) flights and accommodation for the next 12 months.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The funding for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda is separate from, and additional to, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget.

The most recently published information, which includes costs paid to the Rwandan government and legal fees, is the National Audit Office Report which can be found here: [UK-Rwanda Partnership - NAO report](https://www.nao.org.uk/publications/2024/04/uk-rwanda-partnership).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-24/23362>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-24/23363>

Rwanda: Deportation

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [21377] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to take steps with the Secretary of State for the Home Department to use RAF Voyager aircraft to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda.

Reply from Leo Docherty: The Home Office is responsible for operationalising Migration and Economic Development Partnership flights to Rwanda and it plans to do so using a commercial provider. The Secretary of State for Defence will however consider any requests for support according to the normal Military Aid to the Civil Authorities process.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21377>

Rwanda: Deportation

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [21378] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether a deployment of RAF Voyagers to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda would require an on the ground UK military presence in Rwanda to receive and refuel the RAF aircraft.

Reply from Leo Docherty: The RAF routinely flies to civilian airports around the world. As is common throughout the aviation industry, ground handling services at civilian airports are provided through the receiving aerodrome or civil fixed base operator.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21378>

Asylum: Rwanda

Diana Johnson (Labour) [23442] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many initial reception centres in Rwanda are ready to accommodate individuals deported under the UK-Rwanda treaty; and what the maximum number of people those centres can accommodate is.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The number of people who can be relocated under the arrangement is uncapped and the Government of Rwanda have identified a range of accommodation sites to support individuals under the MEDP.

These include reception accommodation in addition to the existing Hope Hostel, and a range of sites for longer term accommodation purposes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-24/23442>

Asylum: Deportation

Diana Johnson (Labour) [21941] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what criteria his Department uses to determine whether it can enter into discussions on establishing potential asylum partnerships akin to the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership.

Reply from Andrew Mitchell: The UK is continuing to work with a range of international partners to tackle global illegal migration challenges. Our focus has been on passing the Safety of Rwanda Bill, which builds on the Illegal Migration Act, and putting plans in place to get flights off the ground as soon as possible to Rwanda.

A range of factors need to be taken into consideration for migration partnerships, including the human rights situation in the country.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-16/21941>

The Partnership agreement referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65705fd474693000d4888dc/CS_Rwanda_1_2023_UK_Rwanda_Agreement_Asylum_Partnership_Protection_Refugees_Migrants.pdf

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Channel Migrants

The following two questions both received the same answer

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op) [22780] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people arriving in the UK aboard any floating structure have been stopped under Schedule 7 Terrorism Act powers since the enactment of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op) [22781] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people arriving in the UK aboard any floating structure who have been stopped under Schedule 7 Terrorism Act powers since the enactment of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 have had a lawyer present during a stop.

Reply from Tom Tugendhat: The Home Office publishes data covering the use of the powers under Schedule 7 to the Terrorism Act 2000 on a quarterly basis.

This data can be found via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000>.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22780>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22781>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [22900] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Ukrainian government has requested that boats used for illegal channel crossings be offered to that country.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The Home Office is not aware of any formal request from the Ukrainian government for these lethally dangerous and unseaworthy craft, though it has repeatedly made clear the unsuitability of these boats to those who have advocated that they be sent to Ukraine.

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [22009] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information his Department holds on the number of Afghan nationals who are family members of individuals resettled to the UK under pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme who have (a) applied for and (b) been granted (i) entry clearance under refugee family reunion rules, (ii) leave outside those rules and (iii) leave to enter or remain in the UK under other immigration routes.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government continues to work with partners in the region to evacuate eligible people and are committed to bringing more Afghans to the UK in the long term. This includes eligible immediate family members of those being resettled under both the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

Public data giving the requested breakdown of family members is not available; however, the latest published statistics, summarised at [Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data](#), show that, at the end of December 2023, 10,520 have been relocated under ACRS, with 9,706 individuals resettled under Pathway 1 of this scheme so far. For those evacuated from Afghanistan under ACRS Pathway 1 without their immediate family members, the Home Secretary has committed to establishing a route for separated families to be reunited in the first half of this year. Further details will be provided in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-16/22009>

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

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

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [22746] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when his Department plans to publish draft guidance on the family reunion route for Afghan nationals under pathway one of the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We committed to opening the route for separated families under Pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) for referrals in the first half of this year and we remain on track to meet that deadline.

Guidance will be published when the route is opened.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22746>

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

Refugees: Afghanistan

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [23813] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the judgment of HR & Ors, R (On the Application Of) v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2024] EWHC 786 (Admin) of 11 April 2024, whether it his policy to (a) develop a referral process to allow eligible parents and their immediate family members to be resettled under pathway one of the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme and (b) begin to accept referrals under that route in the first half of 2024.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: I can confirm that it is our intention, as was made clear through the judgment referenced, to establish a route for those evacuated from Afghanistan under Pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme without their immediate family members to be reunited in the UK. We remain on track to open the route for referrals in the first half of this year. Further details will be provided in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-25/23813>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2024/786.html>

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

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

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

John Healey (Labour) [22464] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many Afghans under the (a) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and (b) Afghan citizens resettlement scheme are in temporary accommodation provided under local authority homelessness provision.

John Healey (Labour) [22465] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the oral statement by the Minister for Veteran's Affairs on Resettlement of Afghans of 19 September 2023, Official Report, column 1253, how many and what proportion of the Afghans that were housed in temporary accommodation under the local authority homelessness provision on 19 September 2023 have since been moved into permanent accommodation.

Reply from Felicity Buchan: The department continues to monitor homelessness in these groups, and further data will be published on this in due course. This will be available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-management-information-afghan-nationals-england>

We publish data on this subject on an ad hoc basis that is voluntarily provided by local authorities. The last time information was published was in September 2023 and related to 1 July 2023 to 31 August 2023. This data was published to monitor the success of the move of Afghans out of hotels into settled accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-18/22464>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-18/22465>

The oral statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-09-19/debates/610B3446-BD51-4283-A0A8-176862E03CA2/ResettlementOfAfghans>

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

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

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>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Ukraine

Visas: Ukraine

Dave Doogan (SNP) [21364] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of granting a visa waiver for Ukrainians

visiting relatives and friends (a) displaced by the war in Ukraine and (b) temporarily resident in the UK.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Visit visas are an important part of securing the UK's border.

Waiving visa requirements for a specific cohort of Ukrainian nationals would not be consistent with the purpose of the visa requirement. There is no obvious mechanism for delivering the utility of a visa application and biometric enrolment, which underpin the role visas play in securing our border, whilst also distinguishing a cohort of Ukrainian nationals who have the requirements waived. Identifying those individuals and enrolling their biometrics would require a process which would be, in practice, nearly identical to a visa application.

Ukrainians who want to visit relatives and friends in the UK can apply for a standard visitor visa, including multiple-entry visas. The UK has a visa application centre (VAC) in Kyiv, and a VAC network in neighbouring countries, enabling Ukrainians to access these services and apply for visas.

This is in no way a reflection on our support for Ukraine which remains, and will always remain, steadfast. The Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme remains open for new applications from those wishing to come to the UK, seeking temporary sanctuary from the conflict.

To provide future certainty, we recently announced the new Ukraine Permission Extension scheme, which is a new visa scheme for existing Ukraine scheme visa holders who have made the UK their temporary home. It will provide permission to stay in the UK for an additional 18 months and is due to open early in 2025.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21364>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

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

British Nationality: Equality

Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru) [23781] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2024 to Question 16407 on British Nationality, whether his Department has made an assessment of the compatibility of the policy on British citizenship from birth for a person born between 2 October 2000 and 29 April 2006 with obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The British Nationality Act 1981 sets out how a person, born in the UK, may be a British citizen at birth, requiring that at least one parent is either settled here or British themselves. We are content that the determination of citizenship for children born to EEA nationals during the period cited is in keeping with that statute and does not breach any equalities obligations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-25/23781>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-29/16407>

British Nationality

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [21822] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications for citizenship were refused in each year since 1994.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Historical data relating to those who applied to naturalise/registration can be found here:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65d8886b87005a001180f8d9/citizenship-summary-dec-2023-tables.ods>

These summary tables report those who were naturalised, registered, or refused on tab Cit_02 since 1987.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-15/21822>

British Nationality: Assessments

Duncan Baker (Conservative) [23959] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Knowledge of English Language requirement for citizenship, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the validity of that certification to three years.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: With reference to the Knowledge of English Language requirement for citizenship, there are currently no plans to change the validity period of a Secure English Language Test certification to three years. A person who successfully made an indefinite leave to remain application on the basis of a B1 level qualification can meet the English language requirement for naturalisation without needing to pass another test.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-26/23959>

Immigration Controls: Religion

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [21209] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to engage with the (a) Jewish, (b) Muslim, (c) Sikh and (d) other religious communities on their treatment by border officials.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office seeks to engage and consult with all communities and members of the public in developing our policies and services for the public. This includes people from different religious communities. We also ensure that there are equality impact assessments carried out when developing new policies and making important decisions which impact the public in line with our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21209>

Visas: Equality

Deidre Brock (SNP) [21094] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will have discussions with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the potential impact of the increased Minimum Income Requirement on (a) women and (b) people belonging to specific ethnicities.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: The Minister for Women and Equalities wrote to all Government departments in December last year reminding them of their statutory duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty when shaping policy and delivering services. The duty requires public authorities to ensure that equality issues are actively considered in order to remove or minimise disadvantage. As part of the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty includes the protected characteristics of sex and race.

To assist departments' compliance with the duty, the Minister for Women and Equalities provided updated Public Sector Equality Duty guidance.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21094>

Visas: Married People

Keir Mather (Labour) [23618] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he plans to raise the minimum income threshold for the spouse/partner visa to (a) £34,500 and (b) £38,700.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The first increase to the MIR took effect from 11 April 2024 when it was raised to £29,000. The dates for further increases to £34,500 and

£38,700 will be announced in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-24/23618>

Visas: Skilled Workers

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [23046] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make it his policy to exempt people who arrived in the UK before 1 January 2024 from the new earnings threshold for skilled worker visa applications.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government position was originally set out on 8 December 2023. Updated details are available here:

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/01/reducing-net-migration-factsheet-december-2023/>

Those already in the Skilled Worker route before the Immigration Rules changes are exempt from the new median salary levels when they change sponsor, extend, or settle. We would, however, expect their pay to progress at the same rate as resident workers; therefore, they will be subject to the updated 25th percentiles using the latest pay data when they next make an application to change employment, extend their stay, or settle. This is in line with normal practice.

Anyone switching into the Skilled Worker category after 4 April will be subject to the new salary requirement. This includes those in the UK switching from other immigration routes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-22/23046>

Visas: British National (Overseas)

Anneliese Dodds (Labour) [22375] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Hong Kong residents born before 1997 have been granted British National (Overseas) visas under exceptional circumstances.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: All applications are determined on a case-by-case basis depending on their individual circumstances.

The Home Office does not hold data on the number of applications that have been granted a British National (Overseas) visa specifically under exceptional circumstances.

The Home Office releases data on the BN(O) route as part of the quarterly migration statistics which can be found at the following link: [Safe and legal \(humanitarian\) routes to the UK](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-17/22375>

Information about British National (Overseas) visas, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa>

Migrants

Alex Cunningham (Labour) [24036] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of No Recourse to Public Funds on people who are (a) destitute and (b) facing destitution.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office is committed to the continuous review of the NRPF policy and are engaging with public and private sector organisations on a regular basis to understand the impacts of the NRPF condition. The Government published an overarching Equality Impact Assessment on the Compliant Environment measures, of which No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is part; [Compliant environment: overarching equality impact assessment](#)

In general, temporary migrants are expected to support themselves and any accompanying family members in the UK without recourse to public funds. This is a well-established principle that protects taxpayer-funded public services from becoming overburdened.

Nonetheless, there are important safeguards in place for those in genuine need.

Migrants with permission under the Family or Private Life routes, or the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) routes, can apply, for free, to have their NRPF condition lifted by making a 'Change of Conditions' application. An individual on these routes can apply to have their NRPF condition lifted if they are destitute or at risk of imminent destitution, if there are reasons relating to the welfare of a relevant child, or where they are facing exceptional circumstances affecting their income or expenditure.

For all other immigration routes (other than Family or Private Life, or the Hong Kong BN(O) routes), the general expectation is that they will return to their home country should they become unable to meet their essential living needs in the UK. If there are particularly compelling circumstances why leaving the UK is not possible, discretion can be used to consider if the circumstances justify access to public funds.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established either that there is a risk to the wellbeing of a child or there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution: for example, where a person has community care needs or serious health problems. Support provided to a child by local authorities is not dependent on the immigration status of the child or their parent(s).

Migrants with NRPF who have paid the necessary National Insurance contributions or have relevant periods of employment or self-employment, can claim contributory benefits and statutory payments such as New Style Jobseekers Allowance, Statutory Sick Pay, and the State Pension.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-29/24036>

Accident and Emergency Departments: Migrants

Catherine West (Labour) [24089] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance her Department provides to NHS A&E departments to ensure staff are aware that A&E services are free of charge regardless of immigration status.

Reply from Helen Whately: The Department issues guidance to the National Health Service on charging overseas visitors for some NHS services. This guidance is reviewed regularly and makes it clear that some services, including accident and emergency, are free at the point of delivery for everyone. NHS England works with Overseas Visitor Managers in NHS trusts to operationalise this guidance effectively.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-29/24089>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65d33bdf0f4eb1f5bba98141/nhs-cost-recovery-overseas-visitors-february2024.pdf>

Immigration: Applications

Tonia Antoniazzi (Labour) [22352] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he is aware of delays in casework decisions where further advice on policy is sought.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Our priority is to consider claims as efficiently and fairly as possible. This is best for claimants, but also reduces the number of people on asylum support, and in turn, the burden on taxpayers. There may be circumstances which may delay the progression of a case, for example waiting for evidence that is of importance in deciding a claim, or a change in country situation requiring an update in country and policy information notes leading to a pause in deciding cases.

In these circumstances, regular reviews are undertaken at appropriate intervals, dependant on the reason why the claim cannot be progressed. As soon as the

reason why the claim cannot be progressed is lifted, consideration of the claim is continued.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-17/22352>

Immigration: Appeals

Darren Jones (Labour) [22096] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2024 to Question 19426 on Immigration: Appeals, how many appeals were made before the (a) First and (b) Upper Tribunal between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2023; how many and what proportion of these appeals were successful; and what the total cost to the public purse was for these appeals.

Reply from Mike Freer: Information about appeal receipts in the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) and Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) is routinely published within Tribunals Statistics Quarterly in the main tables. The total number of receipts to the First-tier Tribunal is available in table FIA_1 and for the Upper Tribunal in UIA_1.

The proportion of appeals for the First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal which were successful is also available as published data and can be found in tables FIA_3 and UIA_3 respectively.

The latest quarterly data includes figures to December 2023 and is available here: [Tribunals statistics quarterly: October to December 2023](#) Data for the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) receipts, disposals and outcome figures is available up to Q1, April to June 2021. Data from Q2 2021/22 onwards have not been included in this publication as data was migrated to a new IT system and the data is not yet available.

Financial information is published for the IAC on an annual basis in the HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) Annual Report, within the fees and charges section. Published information relates to the expenditure and fee income of HMCTS and will not cover financial impacts on other public bodies. Fees and costs cannot be reliably attributed to a particular cohort of appeals. The most recent available data is for Financial Year 2022/23 and is published here [HMCTS annual reports and plans](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-16/22096>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/19426>

Undocumented Migrants

Helen Grant (Conservative) [22541] To ask the Deputy Foreign Secretary, what diplomatic steps he is taking to strengthen international co-operation to tackle illegal migration.

Reply from Andrew Mitchell: We engage with partners worldwide, including through international fora such as the G7 and the UK-hosted European Political Community summit in July 2024, to improve returns processes, tackle organised immigration crime and address the root causes of irregular migration.

In 2023/2024, we signed new deals with Bulgaria, Belgium, and Frontex (European border and coastguard agency), and through our close partnership with France stopped over 26,000 crossing attempts in 2023.

On 17 April 2024, the UK signed an agreement with Vietnam to increase cooperation on tackling illegal migration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-18/22541>

Asylum

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [22772] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he plans to issue his Department's guidance on the circumstances in which

exceptions will be made for asylum seekers from countries on the safe list.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Section 80A(5) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 and section 6(5) of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 set out some examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances, relevant to the substantive consideration of asylum claims and to removal under the Illegal Migration Act to s.80AA(1) listed states (respectively). These examples are neither exhaustive nor relevant to all cases, and do not purport to be.

Exceptional circumstances are not defined or limited in legislation, but will be considered and applied on a case-by-case basis where it is appropriate.

When we commence and implement the wider measures as set out in section 59 of the Illegal Migration Act 2023, we will provide updated guidance to assist caseworkers in their consideration of exceptional circumstances, and the wider provisions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22772>

Section 80A(5) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, referred to above can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/41/section/80A>

Section 6(5) of the Illegal Migration Act 2023, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/37/section/6/enacted>

Section 80AA(1) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, referred to above can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/41/section/80AA>

Section 59 of the Illegal Migration Act 2023, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/37/section/59/enacted>

Asylum

Drew Hendry (SNP) [21119] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing irregular migrants to make applications for asylum whilst still residing in (a) France and (b) Belgium.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK has a proud record of providing protection for those who need it. However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge. Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, the capacity of the UK is not unlimited, and we could not possibly consider protection claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come here. Those in need of immediate protection should take the fastest route to safety and claim asylum in the first safe country they reach.

There are several powerful reasons why allowing migrants to make applications for asylum from France and Belgium is not a viable option and could actually lead to adverse consequences.

The responsibility for asylum seekers and refugees lies with the authorities of the country in which they are present in accordance with their international obligations – in this case France and Belgium. EU countries operate the Common European Asylum System; a framework of rules and procedures based on the full and inclusive application of the Refugee Convention. The aim of this system is not just to ensure fair and humane treatment of applicants for international protection, but also to discourage secondary movements of people once they have reached safety, acknowledging the many problems that such movements create. There is therefore no reason why an individual who is residing in France or Belgium and who needs protection should not make their claim in France or Belgium and certainly no reasons why they should make the perilous onward journey to the UK. France and

Belgium are both safe countries, so the protection they seek is already available to them.

The UK processing asylum claims in France and Belgium would also have the potential to create more harm, and actually support the smugglers. Dangerous journeys and the work of the despicable smugglers are not just confined to routes across the Channel. Vulnerable people, if they have an incentive to aim for France or Belgium as a means of entering the UK, would be encouraged to make dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean and over land to France and Belgium. It would create a new pull factor, motivating people to again entrust themselves to smugglers. Even where they may avoid the danger of a small boat, we know from heart breaking experience that journeys over land, for example in the back of lorries, can be equally as perilous. We cannot, and must not, do anything which supports the smugglers' business model.

Our focus is on helping people directly from regions of conflict and instability, and we believe that our resettlement programmes are the best way to provide much needed support. Between 2015 and September 2023, over half a million people were offered safe and legal routes into the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21119>

Asylum

Navendu Mishra (Labour) [23611] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applicants refused asylum did not appeal that decision in the last 12 months.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The requested information cannot be accurately extracted from our internal systems. To provide this information would require a manual trawl of asylum refusal decisions and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

It might be helpful to explain that data on asylum outcomes is published as part of the Immigration Statistics at [Immigration system statistics data tables](#). Tab Asy_D02 of the Asylum and Resettlement tables contains data on asylum refusal decisions. Data on appeal volumes is published by HM Courts and Tribunals Service on a quarterly basis. The latest publication can be found at [Tribunals statistics quarterly: October to December 2023](#). Table FIA_1 of the Main Tables section shows asylum and protection appeal volumes data to 31 December 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-24/23611>

Asylum: Children

Anneliese Dodds (Labour) [23922] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any unaccompanied asylum seeking children who arrived in the UK after 7 March 2023 have been informed that their claim will not be processed until Ministerial guidance is provided on the applicability of the provisions of the Illegal Migration Act 2023.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: In 2023, we met the Prime Minister's pledge to clear the legacy backlog of asylum cases made before 28 June 2022. The Home Office is now prioritising claims lodged on or after 28 June 2022.

These are being considered under provisions in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. It is only right that we consider the oldest claims first.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-26/23922>

Asylum: Homelessness

John Hayes (Conservative) [21874] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has made an estimate of the number of asylum seekers presenting as homeless.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Asylum seekers are not eligible for statutory homelessness assistance. The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide accommodation to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-16/21874>

Asylum: Hotels

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [23038] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will take steps to increase opportunities for children and young people to (a) express their views and experiences of and (b) make decisions affecting their living conditions in contingency accommodation.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Asylum seekers have access to health and social care services from the point of arrival in the UK. The Home Office and its contractors work closely with the NHS, local authorities and non-governmental organisations to ensure that people can access the healthcare and support they need.

The Home Office also operates a Safeguarding Hub to support vulnerable individuals in accessing these services. In addition, the Home Office contracts Migrant Help to provide advice and guidance to asylum seekers should they have an issue with their accommodation or support, and for signposting to health and welfare services. Asylum seekers can access Migrant Help 24/7, every day of the year; by a freephone telephone number, via an online chat, or completing an email enquiry form, both of which can be accessed free of charge on the Migrant Help website. Interpreting and translation services are available through Migrant Help when the need arises for asylum seekers to raise any queries or concerns.

Whilst any safeguarding, medical, or other personal circumstances are considered, all asylum accommodation is provided on a 'no choice basis'.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-22/23038>

Asylum: Hotels

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [22518] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hotels were used to temporarily accommodate asylum seekers on 31 December (a) 2023 and (b) expected to be used by 2024.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office has been clear that the use of hotels is a temporary and necessary measure to ensure we meet our statutory obligation to accommodate destitute asylum seekers.

We have made rapid progress since autumn 2023, having handed back over 100 hotels to their local communities. Over 20,000 fewer asylum seekers are accommodated in hotels now than in September 2023. In total, we will have closed 150 hotels by the beginning of May 2024.

Our statutory accommodation needs are kept under continuous review, and we will write to MPs and local authorities as further decisions on hotels are made.

For the safety and security of individual premises, the Home Office does not publish statistics showing the number or location of hotels used to house asylum seekers.

However, provisional internal management information indicates a total of 342 hotels were accommodating asylum seekers as of 31 December 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-18/22518>

Asylum: Hotels

John Healey (Labour) [22222] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2024 to Question 14458 on Asylum: hotels, how many asylum seekers are being housed in UK hotel accommodation by his Department as of 17 April 2024.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office has been clear that the use of hotels

is a temporary and necessary measure to ensure we meet our statutory obligation to accommodate destitute asylum seekers. We have already made significant progress by no longer using 100 hotels for asylum seekers on 31 March 2024. A total of 150 hotels will no longer be used for accommodating asylum seekers by the beginning of May, reducing the strain on local communities.

Data on the number of supported asylum seekers in accommodation (including in contingency hotels and other contingency accommodation) is published in table Asy_D11 here: [Asylum and resettlement datasets](#). Data is published on a quarterly basis.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-17/22222>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-19/14458>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Hotels

John Healey (Labour) [22455] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Department's press release entitled 100th asylum hotel set to close next week, published on 20 March 2024, how many of the 100 hotels closed by the end of March 2024 were used to accommodate personnel relocating through the (a) Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and (b) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and their families.

John Healey (Labour) [22456] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Department's press release entitled 100th asylum hotel set to close next week, published on 20 March 2024, how many of the 100 hotels closed by the end of March 2024 were located in each (a) region and (b) constituency.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: None of the 100 hotels were used to accommodate people relocating through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy or the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Data on the number of supported asylum seekers in accommodation (including in contingency hotels and other contingency accommodation) is published in table Asy_D11 here: [Asylum and resettlement datasets](#). Data is published on a quarterly basis. The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of statistics which disaggregates the number of hotels used to house asylum seekers by region or constituency.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-18/22455>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-18/22456>

The press release referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/100th-asylum-hotel-set-to-close-next-week>

Brook House Immigration Removal Centre

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [21108] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the start and end times were of the two day-time and one night-time lock-in periods at Brook House IRC as of (a) 12 April 2024 and (b) 1 November 2023.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The dignity and welfare of residents across the entire immigration detention estate is of the utmost importance and the use of periods of time where individuals' freedom of movement is restricted contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in our centres.

From 4 December 2023 the Home Office changed the lock-in times from 12.00pm-12:30pm and 5.00pm-5:30pm to 11:30am-12:30pm and 4:30pm-5:30pm. All residents need to be in their rooms for one hour between 11:30-12:30 and 4:30pm-5:30pm, with meal services provided at the end of these times. The Home Office

requested this change to ensure that all residents are accounted for, that staff can conduct welfare checks on vulnerable residents, and that planned discharges can be carried out safely.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21108>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Asylum Seekers: Missing from Registered Address

Lord Thomas of Gresford (Liberal Democrat): To ask His Majesty's Government how many asylum seekers whose applications are pending are currently missing from their registered address.

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: My Lords, the department does not routinely publish this data, given that the figures are subject to frequent change. In addition, the Home Office, through a variety of means, including face-to-face and digital reporting, has robust procedures in place to prevent absconding and re-establish contact.

Lord Thomas of Gresford: My Lords, the Irish Justice Minister claims that 80% of asylum seekers arriving recently in Ireland have crossed the Northern Irish border through the common travel area. What steps are the Government taking to monitor these movements from GB to Northern Ireland and then from Northern Ireland to Ireland? Is there an agreement between the Governments, as the Irish claim, for them to be returned to the safe country known as the United Kingdom?

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: As the PM said, the comments from Irish politicians show that illegal migration is a global challenge, and that is why multiple countries are talking about third-country partnerships, as this House passed only the other day. We believe that they will follow where the UK has led. The Prime Minister said yesterday that we cannot go about cherry-picking any of our international agreements. The Secretary of State is seeking urgent clarification that there will be no disruption or police checkpoints at or near the border. I can confirm that the UK has no legal obligation to accept returns of illegal migrants from Ireland. It is no surprise that our robust approach to illegal migration is already providing a deterrent.

Lord Swire (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, what is no surprise, or should certainly come as no surprise, is that the Home Office has absolutely no idea where these people are. Worse than that, the Home Office has absolutely no idea where the alleged hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people who are not in this country officially are either. Are we not at the point now that we need to seriously look once again at the issue of ID cards?

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: Much as I am loath to do this, I have to disagree with my noble friend's broad point. In the scheme that he referred to, an initial cohort of suitable cases, around 2,000 people, were identified for removal and placed on immigration bail with strict reporting conditions. For those outside the group, there is still a wide range of tools, some of which I discussed earlier, to maintain contact with them. This includes face-to-face and digital reporting, and it is worth making the point that many individuals are residing in Home Office accommodation. But it is also worth making the point that compliance for this cohort has remained high, and therefore we are confident of the whereabouts once the decision to detain is made.

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage (Labour): My Lords, Home Office sources have told the *Times* that only 400 to 700 detention spaces are reserved for migrants who are due for deportation to Rwanda. Can the Minister confirm that this equates to less than 1% of the current asylum backlog in the UK? The Prime Minister promised to detain everyone who has crossed the channel on a small boat, a record 30,000 last year. Given that we

have only 2,200 detention spaces, what will happen to the remaining 28,000?

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: The point to make is that we were well prepared for this moment when it comes to Rwanda. I appreciate the time limits, but we have already done a number of things. We have trained dedicated caseworkers and increased the number of detention spaces to 2,200. We are doing a whole variety of things around ensuring that the legal proceedings are done speedily. We have looked at the flights; the Prime Minister has already said that this will be done over the next 10 to 12 weeks, and we also have an airport on standby ready to deliver what we said we would.

Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, as the noble Baroness asked, what is happening to the other 28,000? If we think there are 30,000 who came irregularly last year and His Majesty's Government have found 2,200 places, where will everybody else reside?

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: I do not think it would be appropriate for me to go through the different groups and numbers in detail. Turning to the original Question, I can say that those with a genuine claim would want to be at their registered address and not abscond, simply because that would be in their interests in pursuing their claim. There are many checks for the minority who game the system, and we have a significant uplift in our capability to tackle this. We have procedures in place to work alongside the police and other agencies to track them.

Baroness Berridge (Conservative): My Lords, the Home Office is lawfully able to accommodate those who are under the age of 18. Can my noble friend the Minister outline whether that power has been used? If it has, do we know exactly where those under-18s are or have any of them gone missing?

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: I am grateful to my noble friend, who has asked a number of similar questions in this area. This is important. In fact, my first Question at the Dispatch Box was about unaccompanied asylum seekers, and the duty of care to children is obviously something that the department and the whole Government take incredibly seriously. I understand that there are a number of dedicated hubs for children asylum seekers, and I am pleased to say that we have closed all seven hotels that we used to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. I do not know the specific statistics for how many have gone missing, but I will take that back to the department and write to my noble friend.

The Lord Bishop of Lincoln: My Lords, the Minister talked about hotels. The population of seaside towns, such as Skegness, have been very welcoming of asylum seekers staying in hotels. In effect, hotels are a way of monitoring the presence of asylum seekers over time. The frustration of people in Skegness and other coastal towns is that the slow progress in processing asylum seekers is having an impact on the tourist industry, the local economy and jobs in these towns. Is the Minister aware of that?

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: ... The right reverend Prelate is absolutely right that many communities up and down the land have been very hospitable, understanding and supportive. Helping those who need it goes to the vein of what this country is. The general point is that immigration, both legal and illegal, needs to be controlled. I am pleased to say that we have made great strides in clearing the backlog and that 100,000 cases have been processed, as we promised. I am happy to look at any outstanding issues in this area and pick them up with the right reverend Prelate outside the Chamber. He is very right, and we pay tribute to the people of the country for helping all people in need.

Lord Morrow (DUP): My Lords, can the Minister help the House with this? The Dublin Administration speak of 80% of asylum seekers crossing from Northern Ireland, but does he have any idea what the figure is? Some tell us that it is 80% of 20 people, which is not a vast number. Furthermore, it is very clear that the Dublin Administration insisted that borders must be open at all times. Why are they changing their mind now?

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: I am afraid I do not know what number that is 80% of, and nor do I think it appropriate to talk about it, but this Government are absolutely committed to the Good Friday agreement. We will do all we can to ensure that there is no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. This is an incredibly sensitive issue and I know that some of the noble Lord's colleagues raised this in a debate in the Chamber yesterday evening. As I said earlier, the Secretary of State is seeking urgent clarification with his Irish counterpart.

Lord Blunkett (Labour): ... Under the Illegal Migration Act, anyone who comes here undocumented is not processed. Perhaps the Minister, who is a decent guy, will tell us the figure for those who are unprocessed and permanently resident here because they cannot be transported in such numbers to Rwanda.

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: ... On the noble Lord's point, it is worth returning to what we have said about tackling illegal migration. We have been in contact with a number of individuals who will be sent to Rwanda through the passage of that Act, but it is not appropriate for me to go into further detail on that. There are reporting restrictions in place for those individuals.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-05-02/debates/68973360-9E0B-4EEB-9754-8D206E03127E/AsylumSeekersMissingFromRegisteredAddress>

Care Worker Visa Regime

Baroness Pitkeathley (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to review the care worker visa regime.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, the Government introduced changes to the visa requirements for how carers can be recruited to the UK on 11 March. The Home Office worked with the Department of Health and Social Care to implement these measures. We will continue to keep all visa routes under review, and will consider changes where appropriate.

Baroness Pitkeathley: I am sure the Minister will agree that the already beleaguered and inadequate social care workforce needs extra people. Until we are able to recruit and train them here, they must be found from overseas. There have been multiple failures identified in the Home Office system for awarding care worker visas. It has underestimated demand by a large degree, it applied an inappropriate scheme in a high-risk area, and it has nothing like enough staff to regulate licence sponsors or process applications. As they review this policy, will the Minister commit the Government to working with the social care sector, which is knowledgeable about these issues, to rectify these problems, and to ensure that there is sufficient supply of care workers to meet the ever-growing demand?

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: The Home Office seemed to bear the brunt of the noble Baroness's accusations, but this was a cross-government exercise, involving the Department of Health, the Treasury, No. 10, the Cabinet Office and other departments. The fact is that the most recent published statistics, relating to the year ending December 2023, show that we have issued more than 146,000 health and care worker visas. To suggest that we are not supporting the sector would be inaccurate—we are. That includes things such as how to register good applications, explaining the rules around genuine vacancies and addressing the mismatch between the actual job and salary, not things such as anticipated demand. There is a lot of work going on.

Lord Allan of Hallam (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, there are accounts of care workers coming to the UK being exploited, as either the jobs do not exist as advertised or they find themselves in hock to middlemen. Does the Minister agree that people who come here and apply for these visas in good faith should be treated with compassion? Can he explain how many people the Home Office has employed to help those people by going after

fraudulent sponsors and exploitative agents?

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: The noble Lord is right; there has been some abuse of the system, which is readily acknowledged by the sector itself. I noticed that the Skills for Care website points out that this system has been open to abuse in the past, and it provides some helpful links to some of the stories about modern slavery. Of course, the Government will not tolerate illegal activity in the labour market in general. Any accusations of illegal employment practices will be thoroughly investigated, and we strongly condemn offering health and care worker visa-holders employment under false pretences, which partly motivates these changes.

Baroness Cavendish of Little Venice (Crossbench): My Lords, the charity Unseen and the union UNISON have compiled substantial evidence of the exploitation of some of these workers, who now find themselves in limbo because they have been hired by agencies that do not have enough hours for them and they are not allowed to switch to any other profession. Will the Minister undertake to look at what quality control the Care Quality Commission used last year when it licensed a very large number of new providers into the market, which is already saturated with providers? Have the Government looked at the churn in the number of those providers and how many of them have already closed? What steps can the Government take to stop these fraudulent recruitment agencies operating in other countries? They are fundamentally misleading good people who wanted to come to our country and have been sorely mis-sold.

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: The noble Baroness makes a very good point about activities that have taken place in some other countries. Our abilities to influence those are somewhat constrained. I do not know how the Care Quality Commission goes about licensing. I will find out and report back to her on that. I repeat my previous answer: we will of course go after all those who are engaged in fraudulent practices.

Baroness O'Grady of Upper Holloway (Labour): Does the Minister agree, on reflection, that preventive measures should have been put in place? Many unions and organisations are now arguing that no business should be able to sponsor care workers unless it has been in operation for at least two years and unless it has had an inspection first, rather than after the event. Also, how are we going to go after abuses in the labour market when there are so few inspectors? For example, 18 inspectors are supposed to deal with an agency sector covering 40,000 businesses.

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: I am afraid I cannot comment on the number of inspectors because I genuinely do not know the answer to how many there are, but I take the noble Baroness's points. I reiterate that we will go after people who are abusing the visas and the individuals. We should remember that the employers also need to be supported to recruit staff from abroad in a way that meets the needs of those people. Skills for Care makes that point, and I completely agree.

Lord Laming (Crossbench): My Lords, the work of care workers is extremely valued, particularly by those who are dependent on them for their daily living. This extends across the whole age range of the population, not only in residential establishments but in home care facilities. Underlying all this is one of the difficulties: although this care work is highly valued, it is a low-paid occupation. I hope the Government will give thought to a way in which we can improve the status of care workers and thereby their earning potential in this country.

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: I very much agree with the noble Lord that the care workers themselves need all our support and, indeed, our praise for the very important and necessary work they all do. Of course, care workers are not subject to the same salary cap as other workers, so applicants to the health and care visa are exempted from the new £38,700 salary threshold. They must be paid at least £23,200 per annum, so the system, as constructed, takes into account the relatively

low-paid nature of this work.

Lord Jackson of Peterborough (Conservative): ... do we not have a moral duty and a responsibility in terms of public policy not just to import the best people from abroad but, given that we have record numbers of people on out-of-work benefits, to give opportunities, training and skills to our own young people, who would benefit very much from that and enhance that industry, rather than continually looking to foreign nationals to come in and do the jobs that British people could be trained to do?

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: I agree with my noble friend on that. We remain committed to developing the domestic workforce. We are doing that by investing in retention—there is a high churn rate in this sector, as is well understood—through better workforce training, recognition and career progression. A new career structure is being launched for care workers so that all staff can build their careers and more experienced care workers are recognised for their skills. We are creating new qualifications and a digital skills record to reduce the need for retraining costs. We are increasing funding for learning and development. The Government have made available up to £8.6 billion in additional funding over the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to support adult social care and discharge. I trust that all noble Lords will support the PM's valiant efforts to mobilise those who are not currently engaged with the domestic workforce.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, the Minister spoke of fraudulent sponsors and exploitative agents. What assessment have the Government made of the need to tighten up repayment clauses for relocation and visa costs, and requiring compliance with Department of Health and Social Care rules on international recruitment as a condition of gaining a sponsor licence?

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: ... I will come back to him with a better answer in due course.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Labour): My Lords, given that the Minister in effect embedded the idea of care work being low paid, in the answer he gave earlier about salary caps in relation to visas, does he think that £23,500 is an adequate reflection of the real value that any individual care worker provides through their work?

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: I did not embed anything; I was just restating a fact. Whether or not I think it is the right number for the sort of work that is done, obviously there is considerable variety in the type of care that is given. I do not think it would be appropriate to comment on the number in its totality.

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top (Labour): My Lords, I am sure the Minister will feel, at the end of this, that anyone listening to the totality of this Question will see that there are very serious issues. The Government have failed to address the whole issue of social care. It is a sector that is failing the country, at a time when we know there needs to be a lot more because, as we see around us, we are all getting older and living longer, and need more care. The Government have now had 14 years; when will they actually address the sector as a whole and reform it?

Reply from Lord Sharp of Epsom: The noble Baroness asks me about the care sector in general; I am obviously here to talk about visas. What I will say about visas is that the Government have in fact clamped down on the abuse of the visa system and once again are endeavouring to protect the integrity of our borders; I am sure the noble Baroness would welcome that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-23/debates/396FCDAD-39D1-4129-BFEC-CBD98C9C300B/CareWorkerVisaRegime>

Family Reunion Visas: Gaza

Lord Dubs (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to assist family reunion under the existing visa rules for persons in Gaza.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, in any humanitarian situation, the UK must consider its resettlement approach in the round, rather than on a crisis-by-crisis basis. We use existing pathways in response to events to support British nationals, those settled here and their family members. At present, there are no plans to create a new immigration route for those affected by the security situation.

Lord Dubs: There are Palestinian families here who would urgently like family reunion with their relatives in Gaza on a temporary basis, perhaps modelled on the Ukrainian scheme. People are in real difficulties. Would the Minister care to comment on this? People in Gaza cannot apply for a family reunion visa to join family in the UK without leaving Gaza—but they cannot leave Gaza without a visa. Surely we can do better than that.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, the safety of all British nationals affected by the conflict in Gaza continues to be our utmost priority, but individuals who are not British nationals should apply for a visa to enable them to enter the UK in the normal way—and of course much of the process is online. Individuals who are not British citizens must not travel to the UK without existing permission to enter or remain previously agreed.

Baroness Berridge (Conservative): My Lords, under the Ukrainian scheme, about 174,000 people came to the UK, and there were extensive categories of family relationships under that scheme. Can my noble friend the Minister outline whether the same categories apply for this family reunification scheme—and, if not, why not?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Ukraine family scheme was a temporary visa approach rather than a refugee scheme. It is not a route to permanent resettlement; it formed part of the response that we made with other countries to the Russian Government's unprovoked war against Ukraine. The Ukraine family scheme was developed in close consultation with the Government of Ukraine, who have been very clear that they would like their citizens to return to Ukraine when it is safe to do so. Obviously, similar discussions with the Government in Gaza would not be possible, so the two situations are not analogous.

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean (Labour): My Lords, how many people does the Minister think are online in Gaza to make such an application?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I am afraid that I am not terribly familiar with the internet in Gaza.

Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat): Is the Minister aware that the immigration tribunal judges found the Home Office's decision on this to be "irrational"? The concern is even deeper: the Home Office found itself able to expand the situation for those in Hong Kong who were under fear of persecution, but those who are in Gaza, who are in fear for their lives, the Home Office seems to be completely silent about. Therefore, there is a concern about double standards. Given the requirement on the occupying power, the Government of Israel, to ensure facilitation of the very documentation that the Minister said is necessary, what discussions has the Home Office had with its interlocutors in the Israeli Government to ensure that the visa process for documentation is facilitated?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I might dispute the noble Lord's premise there: I am not sure that I would characterise it as an occupying power. I reiterate what I said earlier: British nationals and those family members can obviously apply using normal routes.

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench): My Lords, has the Minister made an assessment on how many students from Gaza studying here in the UK cannot go back to their homes because their homes have been obliterated? What financial and other support has been provided to those students?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I am afraid that I really do not have those statistics at hand, but I shall see if they exist. ...

Baroness Blower (Labour): Can I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that, in his

opening question, my noble friend Lord Dubs specifically used the word “temporary”, and then prayed in aid the notion of “temporary” in supporting the Ukraine arrangements. Can the Minister think about the fact that what was being asked was whether we could find space in our hearts and systems to allow for family reunion from Gaza for those people in such dire straits, on a temporary basis?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... we keep all existing pathways in response to events under review.

Lord Coaker (Labour): ... Judicial review has found that the family of a Palestinian refugee can apply for a visa without the use of biometrics. The Home Office has said that it is complying with that, so can the Minister outline to the Chamber how it is complying, and whether that applies to all those who should seek a visa application from Gaza?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... The judgment was handed down a couple of weeks ago; ... we have received the outcome and officials will provide advice very shortly to Ministers on how it will impact ongoing and future operations. ...

Lord Newby (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, can I revisit an answer that the Minister gave a moment ago? He said that Israel was not an occupying power in Gaza. My understanding, by looking at the FCDO website, is that the British Government’s formal position is that Israel is an occupying power in Gaza. Could he take this opportunity either to correct what he said or to explain why the Government have changed their policy?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: If I spoke incorrectly, of course I correct it. I have not read the FCDO advice, but if that is what it says, then I correct the record. ...

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green): ... the Minister referred to the Government making decisions about special visa schemes on a crisis-by-crisis basis. What criteria do the Government apply in making those judgments? Perhaps the Minister can point me to where it is written down, so that we can all see how the Government are making them.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: It very much depends on the circumstances and other factors. For example, there were separate arrangements made after earthquakes in places like Turkey and Syria.

Lord Morgan (Labour): My Lords, is not the policy of issuing visas being used deliberately to cut back the number of immigrants in the country—particularly those from India—with very severe damage to, for example, research groups and universities? Could we have an undertaking that this policy will change?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: This country is actually very generous: between 2015 and 2023, some 53,574 family reunion visas were granted to family members. We are the third most generous country in Europe, after Germany and Sweden. I do not really know what this Question has to do with universities.

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Labour): My Lords, in response to an earlier question, the Minister gave a rather flippant answer when he said that he had no knowledge of the internet in Gaza. The question was serious; I ask that he reflects on his response ...

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I disagree. How am I supposed to know how the internet runs in Gaza? It was not a flippant answer; it is factual.

Lord Cashman (Labour): My Lords, can I press the Government to find the imagination to help those in Gaza seeking refuge under the most extraordinary, inhumane circumstances? It would do the Government and this country a great deal of good if they could reach out and do something positive.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I absolutely take the noble Lord’s point, and we keep all systems and processes under review.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-24/debates/E9E63B4A-61FD-4731-B6F6-90795D57B181/FamilyReunionVisasGaza>

The Tribunal judgement referred to above by Lord Purvis of Tweed and Lord Coaker can be read at

<https://tribunalsdecisions.service.gov.uk/utiac/jr-2024-lon-000082-jr-2024-lon-000128>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (Labour) [HL3801] To ask His Majesty's Government when the family reunification route for Afghans in the UK, under Pathway 1 of the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme, will open; and what assessment they have made of the level of danger faced by the spouses and children who remain in Afghanistan of those who have resettled in the UK with indefinite leave to remain.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Government remains committed to providing protection for vulnerable and at-risk people fleeing Afghanistan. The situation continues to be complex and presents significant challenges, including how those who are eligible for resettlement in the UK can leave the country. For those evacuated from Afghanistan under Pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) without their immediate family members, the Home Secretary has committed to establishing a route for separated families to be reunited in the first half of this year. Further details will be provided in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-15/hl3801>

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 Commons Home Affairs Committee

Evidence session: Brook House

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/14734/html/>

Press Releases

Rwanda Bill to become law in major illegal migration milestone

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rwanda-bill-to-become-law-in-major-illegal-migration-milestone>

Prime Minister's statement on Safety of Rwanda Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-statement-on-safety-of-rwanda-bill-23-april-2024>

UK-Rwanda Treaty completes ratification process

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-rwanda-treaty-completes-ratification-process>

UK-Rwanda asylum law: UN leaders warn of harmful consequences

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/uk-rwanda-asylum-law-un-leaders-warn-harmful-consequences>

UK: Airlines and aviation authorities should not facilitate unlawful removals to Rwanda, UN experts say

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/uk-airlines-and-aviation-authorities-should-not-facilitate-unlawful-removals>

First phase of detentions underway for Rwanda relocations

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-phase-of-detentions-underway-for-rwanda-relocations>

Home Secretary action delivering major cut in migration

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-action-delivering-major-cut-in-migration>

New Publications

What we know about the Rwanda Act and Treaty so far

<https://righttoremain.org.uk/what-we-know-about-the-rwanda-act-and-treaty-so-far/>

Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda: updated equality impact assessment

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migration-and-economic-development-partnership-with-rwanda/migration-and-economic-development-partnership-with-rwanda-equality-impact-assessment-accessible>

Windrush Compensation Scheme data: March 2024

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/662a4f78690acb1c0ba7e61c/WCS+data+-+March+2024+v.1.ods>

Illegal migration: Dealing with inadmissible asylum applications

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/illegal-migration-dealing-with-inadmissible-asylum-applications/>

Costs associated with illegal immigration

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2024-0085/CDP-2024-0085.pdf>

Additional statistics relating to Illegal Migration (April 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-relating-to-the-illegal-migration-bill/additional-statistics-relating-to-illegal-migration-march-2024>

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>

Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme in Scotland: statistics - April 2024

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-in-scotland-statistics-april-2024/>

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>

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Rwanda Act: Advice for people affected

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/rwanda-raids-advice-deportation-home-office-government/>

Human Rights not Rwanda Flights

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/rwanda-bill-act-uk-government-refugees/>

What is the UK's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda and how many could go?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-61782866>

Rwanda: Civil servants mount court challenge over new law

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-68934480>

Home Office asking civil servants to move to Rwanda

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/home-office-civil-servants-relocate-rwanda-b2535612.html>

Rwanda flight detentions to begin within weeks, Home Office says

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68916456>

Rwanda migrants set to be detained within days

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/22/rwanda-migrants-set-be-detained-within-days/>

Sunak says Rwanda asylum flights to leave in July

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24269276.sunak-says-rwanda-asylum-flights-leave-july/>

Rwanda Bill: Rishi Sunak says UK government has 'airfield on standby' to take refugees to Rwanda within 12 weeks

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/rwanda-bill-rishi-sunak-says-uk-government-has-airfield-on-standby-to-take-refugees-to-rwanda-within-12-weeks-4600007>

First Rwanda deportation flight could take off on July 1

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/05/04/first-rwanda-deportation-flight-could-take-off-july-1/>

Rwanda: Why a migrant plane won't be taking off anytime soon

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68841417>

Hope Hostel in Rwanda says it's ready for first migrants from UK

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68836255>

Government denies losing track of likely Rwanda deportees

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-68924392>

Thousands of migrants bound for deportation to Rwanda are 'missing'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/30/migrants-rwanda-missing-home-office/>

Rwanda policy leading to asylum seekers going underground

<https://www.paih.org/rwanda-policy-leading-to-asylum-seekers-going-underground/>

Rishi Sunak's Safety of Rwanda Bill sees politicians assume a terrifying new power to decide what is real

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/rishi-sunaks-safety-of-rwanda-bill-sees-politicians-assume-a-terrifying-new-power-to-decide-what-is-real-ian-johnston-4601373>

First failed asylum seeker sent to Rwanda under voluntary scheme

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68932830>

First failed asylum seeker removed to Rwanda

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/30/first-failed-asylum-seeker-removed-to-rwanda/>

First asylum seeker flown to Rwanda under voluntary relocation scheme

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/asylum-seeker-rwanda-first-ever-deportations-b2537471.html>

Tories accused of ‘extortionate gimmick’ after paying asylum seeker to be deported to Rwanda

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-rwanda-badenoch-cooper-asylum-boats-b2537647.html>

First Rwanda migrant removal a con, says Farage

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/05/01/first-rwanda-migrant-removal-con-says-nigel-farage/>

115,000 asylum seekers will be in limbo after Rwanda bill

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/115000-asylum-seekers-will-be-in-limbo-after-rwanda-bill-d07rf55bn>

Migrants in Calais: ‘If they send me to Rwanda, I’ll kill myself’

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrants-in-calais-if-they-send-me-to-rwanda-ill-kill-myself-l0fj7drcc>

Rwanda will benefit from asylum seekers sent from UK because of 1994 genocide, says James Cleverly

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-genocide-james-cleverly-asylum-seekers-b2533902.html>

PM warned diverting judges to Rwanda appeals will drive backlog and soar asylum hotel bills

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/27/pm-warned-diverting-judges-rwanda-appeals-drive-backlog/>

Detained asylum seekers given Home Office booklet saying Rwanda is ‘generally safe’

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/may/03/home-office-booklet-rwanda-generally-safe-asylum-seekers>

Lone children at risk of deportation to Rwanda after being classified as adults, says charity

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/may/01/lone-children-at-risk-of-deportation-to-rwanda-after-being-classified-as-adults-says-charity>

Women seized in immigration raids ahead of Rwanda deportation flights

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/05/01/first-migrants-rwanda-flights-detained-raids/>

News: Channel Migrants

Record number of migrants cross Channel as arrivals surge by 30pc

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/05/01/migrant-arrivals-record-number-2024-channel-small-boats/>

Five deaths in English Channel are tragic, says Rishi Sunak

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-68880049>

Two men charged in Channel deaths investigation

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68903739>

Three arrested over Channel migrant deaths

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68890850>

Three men arrested after five die in Channel boat crossing

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24275892.three-men-arrested-five-die-channel-boat-crossing/>

Migrants undeterred by deaths to continue Channel crossing attempts

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68891950>

'I want to get to England': BBC sees people struggling on migrant boat before five died

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68882577>

BBC crew captures moment migrants board small crowded boat to UK from France

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68880651>

Outrage as Reform UK deputy leader says Britain should 'absolutely' let migrants drown in the Channel

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/reform-uk-asylum-rwanda-channel-boats-b2533923.html>

France accused of 'irresponsible' actions after Channel migrants die

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/23/french-under-fire-over-death-crush-migrant-boat/>

Channel deaths: Teenager describes chaos as boat launched

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-68912593>

Girl, 7, among five dead on Channel migrant boat

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68880671>

'I could not protect her': A dad mourns his child killed in the Channel

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68930088>

Father 'will never forgive himself' after seeing daughter, 7, die on migrant boat

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/05/01/father-girl-died-migrant-boat-channel/>

Children left to drown in the Channel – is this where Britain's drift to the right is taking us?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/28/children-drown-channel-britain-ben-habib-reform-uk>

News: Ukraine

More than 2,000 Ukrainians still living in Scottish Government-provided temporary accommodation

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/more-than-2000-ukrainians-still-living-in-scottish-government-provided-temporary-accommodation-4605600>

Revolt over 'disgraceful' axing of Scots support for Ukrainian refugees

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24276663.revolt-disgraceful-axing-scots-support-ukrainian-refugees/>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Immigration levels falling after visa curbs

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/immigration-levels-falling-after-visa-curbs-m2f6fshkd>

Visa crackdown causes plunge in family members of foreign students coming to UK

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/30/number-foreign-student-family-members-coming-uk-falls/>

UK attacks EU double standards on migrants

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/28/ireland-plans-send-asylum-seekers-back-uk/>

Visa crackdown causes plunge in family members of foreign students coming to UK

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/30/number-foreign-student-family-members-coming-uk-falls/>

Asylum homelessness rises as refugees told to leave accommodation

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-68927101>

Asylum seekers on the Bibby Stockholm barge describe 'prison-like conditions'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/bibby-stockholm-report-small-boats-b2533434.html>

Protesters charged after blocking coach bound for Bibby Stockholm

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/05/04/bibby-stockholm-bus-asylum-seekers-protesters-charged/>

Senior C of E figure rejects claim of asylum-seeker baptism 'conveyor belt'

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/24/senior-c-of-e-figure-rejects-claim-of-asylum-seeker-baptism-conveyor-belt>

'They hear a bang at the door and it's the Home Office': threat of being 'disappeared' haunts asylum seekers amid Rwanda crackdown

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/may/04/lots-of-fear-how-the-rwanda-deportation-crackdown-led-to-panic-and-protests>

One in five asylum seekers on Rwanda deportation list is from Afghanistan, charity says

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-asylum-seekers-deport-afghanistan-b2539287.html>

Rwanda bill 'driving fearful migrants to cross into Ireland'

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rwanda-bill-james-cleverly-macron-france-migrants-plan-rxdfz3t7>

Sunak claims migrants going to Ireland shows Rwanda plan is working, despite no flights taking off

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-rwanda-bill-deportation-ireland-b2535846.html>

Britain 'not interested' in taking back migrants from Ireland, Sunak warns

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/29/mel-stride-uk-take-back-migrants-ireland/>

We won't take back asylum seekers from Ireland, Rishi Sunak insists

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/we-wont-take-back-asylum-seekers-from-ireland-rishi-sunak-insists-wx3kzbf8l>

Ireland to send police to the border as migrant row with UK grows

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/05/01/sunak-dont-send-police-to-irish-border-to-stop-migrants/>

Ireland plans to send asylum seekers back to UK under emergency law

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/28/ireland-plans-to-send-asylum-seekers-back-to-uk-under-emergency-law>

'I fled to Ireland from Britain to avoid being deported to Rwanda'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/04/30/migrants-flee-uk-ireland-dublin-rwanda-scared-tent-asylum/>

For migrants, 'deterrence' doesn't deter. It's cruelty, not compassion, Mr Sunak

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/28/for-migrants-deterrence-doesnt-deter-cruelty-not-compassion-rishi-sunak>

Peckham: Protesters block coach over asylum seeker transfer

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-68943919>

Migrants returned to Peckham hotel after protesters disrupt removal

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/05/02/protesters-attempt-stop-migrant-raid-london-hotel/>

TOP

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Interfaith Dialogue

Kirsten Oswald (SNP) [902407] What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to help promote interfaith dialogue.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Felicity Buchan): This Government are extremely supportive of efforts to bring together people of different faiths and beliefs. The faith Minister meets regularly with faith leaders to encourage these efforts, and the Department has funded a range of partners, including Near Neighbours and Strengthening Faith Institutions, to organise local level interfaith dialogue.

Kirsten Oswald: ... two months ago the Secretary of State announced that he would pull funding from the Inter Faith Network, which is the largest interfaith charity on these islands. It will close next week, after 40 years. It is an astonishing decision by the UK Government to close Britain's main forum for Jewish-Muslim dialogue now. The Secretary of State could still reverse that very poor decision, but that would have to happen this week. What are the chances of that?

Reply from Felicity Buchan: Let me explain what occurred. The closure of the Inter Faith Network is a matter for the Inter Faith Network, as an independent charity; it is not a matter for Government. We have always made it very clear to all charities that receive Government funding that they need to have sustainable

sources of other funding. In my response to the urgent question about a month ago, I made clear the reasons for the closure. To repeat, the decision to withdraw the funding was taken because of the appointment of a member of the Muslim Council of Britain as a trustee. Governments of various different hues have decided that they will not deal with the Muslim Council of Britain.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-22/debates/8A6B98D4-06A1-4A55-A001-9F826D80BCCE/InterfaithDialogue>

News

Schools should bond communities: faith schools divide them. Why are ministers making that worse?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/may/02/faith-schools-communities-ministers-government-religious-discrimination>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Poverty: Children

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [22336] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of levels of child poverty among (a) BAME, (b) Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and (c) disabled children.

Reply from Jo Churchill: Statistics on the number of Children living in absolute and relative poverty by disability in the UK are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication in “table 1_7c” and “table 1_7d” (respectively) of “summary-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2022-23-tables” at

[Households below average income: for financial years ending 1995 to 2023](#). The number of children living in absolute and relative poverty by ethnic group of head of household can be found in “table 4_1db_BHC” and “table 4_1db_AHC” at the link above. Poverty statistics for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are not available.

The latest statistics published on 21 March 2024 are for the financial period 2022/23. The latest available data can also be found on Stat-Xplore:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-17/22336>

Maternity Services: Complaints

Kwasi Kwarteng (Conservative) [22002] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether her Department has had discussions with NHS England on ensuring that (a) reviews, (b) investigations and (c) complaints processes relating to maternity services include consideration of the (i) impact of ethnicity on the care received and (ii) potential role of (A) racism and (B) discrimination.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: NHS England, along with the devolved administrations and the Crown Dependencies, funds Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries to collate ethnicity data, in relation to all perinatal and maternal deaths across the United Kingdom. They publish annual surveillance reports which provide comparators of rates of mortality for women and babies from different ethnic groups. They also publish confidential

enquiries, assessing care provision along the whole care pathway, to identify areas requiring improvement.

The Maternity and Newborn Safety Investigations programme provides independent, standardised, and family focused investigations to provide learning to the health system. This includes analysis of data to identify key trends, and collaboration with system partners to escalate safety concerns.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-16/22002>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Breast Cancer: Ethnic Groups

Dawn Butler (Labour) [22274] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to improve breast cancer outcomes amongst Black women.

Dawn Butler (Labour) [22275] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to help ensure the Major Conditions Strategy improves breast cancer outcomes for ethnic minority women.

Reply from Andrew Stephenson: Reducing inequalities and improving breast cancer outcomes for ethnic minority women, including black women, is a priority for the Government. To support this work, NHS England has commissioned six new cancer clinical audits, which will provide timely evidence for cancer service providers of where patterns of care in England may vary, increase the consistency of access to treatments, and help stimulate improvements in cancer treatments and outcomes for patients, including metastatic breast cancer. The Royal College of Surgeons began work on this audit in October 2022, and the first outcomes are expected in September 2024.

NHS England is also leading a programme of work to tackle healthcare inequalities centred around five clear priorities, which are set out in operational planning guidance for the health system. The Core20PLUS5 approach for adults has been rolled out as an NHS England framework to focus action on reducing inequalities on issues within the National Health Services' direct influence, which are major contributors to inequalities in life expectancy through major conditions like cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and others, or Long-Term Plan priorities where stark inequalities are evident, such as maternity or severe mental illness.

The key actions for systems as highlighted in NHS England's planning guidance for 2024/25 is to continue to deliver against the five strategic priorities for tackling health inequalities. Additionally, by the end of June 2024, NHS England aims to publish joined-up action plans to address health inequalities, and implement the Core20PLUS5 approach.

Improving earlier diagnosis of cancers, including breast cancer, is also a priority for the Government. The NHS has an ambition to diagnose 75% of cancers at stage 1 or 2 by 2028, which will help tens of thousands of people live for longer. Additionally, the new cancer standards developed and supported by cancer doctors and implemented in October 2023, will ensure patients are diagnosed faster, and that treatment starts earlier. In the 2023/24 Operational Planning Guidance, NHS England announced that it is providing over £390 million in cancer service development funding to Cancer Alliances in each of the next two years, to support the delivery of the strategy and the operational priorities for cancer, which includes increasing and prioritising diagnostic and treatment capacity.

Whilst the Major Conditions Strategy does not seek to describe everything that is being done, or could be done, to meet the challenges of individual conditions in silo, it instead focuses on the changes likely to make the most difference across the six groups of major conditions, including cancer.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-17/22274>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-17/22275>

Information about the Core20PLUS5 approach, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/>

The Planning Guidance referred to above can be read at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-25-priorities-and-operational-planning-guidance-v1.1.pdf>

The Strategy referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/major-conditions-strategy-case-for-change-and-our-strategic-framework/major-conditions-strategy-case-for-change-and-our-strategic-framework--2>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Schools: Equality and Religious Freedom

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [22795] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance her Department issues to schools on balancing inclusivity and religious freedoms.

Schools: Religious Practice

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [22796] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance her Department issues to non-religious schools on enforcing policies that restrict (a) prayer and (b) other religious practices.

Schools: Discrimination

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [22797] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to (a) monitor and (b) tackle potential discrimination in schools against students based on their religious practices.

Schools: Equality and Religious Practice

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [22798] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to make an assessment of the adequacy of school policies on (a) religious practices and (b) inclusivity.

Reply from Damian Hinds: There is currently no legal requirement for schools to allow their pupils time within the school day to pray upon request, nor are they required to provide any pupil with a physical space, such as a prayer room, to conduct their prayers. It is a matter for individual schools and headteachers to make a decision that is in the interest of their pupils. It is important when considering any requests relating to prayer that they do so in the context of the Equality Act 2010, and their public sector equality duty.

Under the Equality Act 2010 schools must not discriminate against a pupil in a number of respects because of a characteristic protected by the Act, including religion or belief. State-funded schools are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). All children and young people must be treated fairly and supported to thrive and reach their potential within a respectful environment.

The department has published guidance for schools on how to comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010, which can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

This includes specific advice on religion or belief.

The PSED was introduced in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and places a legal obligation on public authorities to consider how their policy or service decisions impacts differently on individuals. The department as a public body is required to give due regard to PSED in its decision making. According to the PSED, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Protected characteristics include religion or belief.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22795>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22796>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22797>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-19/22798>

Offenders: Ethnic Groups

Carla Lockhart (DUP) [21217] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what data his Department holds on the ethnicity of offenders convicted of theft in each of the last 12 months.

Reply from Mike Freer: The Ministry of Justice holds data on the ethnicity of offenders convicted of theft offences covering the period requested and these are published and can be viewed in [Outcomes by Offence tool: June 2023](#).

The tool allows users to select offences (in this case Offence '04: Theft offences'). Yearly totals can be broken down by quarter using the Quarter variable.

The ethnicity of the offenders can be found by using either the Ethnicity or Detailed Ethnicity filter. Furthermore, the number of convictions by ethnicity can be seen by dragging the Ethnicity or Detailed Ethnicity from Filters to Rows in the PivotTable Fields.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21217>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Ethnicity Pay Gap

Baroness Prashar (Crossbench): To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the growing number of companies reporting their ethnicity pay gap and of the case for legislating for mandatory reporting.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Baroness Barran): My Lords, it is encouraging to see more employers choosing to report their ethnicity pay data. Rather than mandating reporting, which may not be appropriate for all employers, our guidance supports those who wish to report by providing a consistent approach and advice on achieving meaningful comparisons. The latest ONS statistics show that it is difficult to compare data across up to 19 different ethnic groups.

Baroness Prashar: ... It is good that a number of companies are now beginning to report voluntarily on this, but why are the Government reluctant to make it mandatory, given that in 2017 it was made mandatory for gender disparity?

Reply from Baroness Barran: ... this is a much more complicated area to get meaningful data on. There are five broad categories of ethnicity that are used by the ONS, for example, and 19 specific ethnicities. The Government's concern is that there is a real risk of misleading data, particularly among smaller firms that may have very few members of staff from a minority community, and therefore a change in one or two people could distort the figures.

Baroness Thornton (Labour): My Lords, Labour has a long-term plan to tackle racial inequality after the longed-for general election, if we are elected, including through our racial equality Bill, which will require large companies to report on their ethnicity pay gaps, as they already do for gender pay gaps. I know that the Minister is absolutely committed to equalities. As a common-sense way to begin the process of tackling these glaring inequalities, we would not mind at all if she would commit to this policy and persuade her Government to support it.

Reply from Baroness Barran: I will give a couple of examples. First, there was the work the Government did in 2019, when we engaged with a broad range of businesses to understand the complexities of implementing mandatory reporting in this area. It genuinely showed just how complicated it was to do. That was echoed in the *Inclusive Britain* report chaired by my noble friend Lord Sewell, which brought out a number of points including, critically, the difference between the ethnicity pay gap of those born in this country and those who are not born here, with which I am sure the noble Baroness is familiar.

Baroness Manzoor (Conservative): ... There are disparities in pay for ethnic minorities. There are also disparities in senior and board-level positions, where there are targets for women but fewer targets for people from ethnic minorities. If we looked at individual groups within ethnicity, we would never bring about the changes. It is an argument that my noble friend could ask the department to look at again, so that we can move forward and ensure that we can reduce the inequalities that currently exist.

Reply from Baroness Barran: I am more than happy to take this back to the department and share my noble friend's reflections, but I remind the House that there is no ethnicity pay gap for people born in this country from roughly half the ethnic-minority groups. In fact, in a number of cases there is a pay gap in the other direction. The issue is much greater for those not born in the UK, and there we need to understand to what extent that reflects level of qualification, level of language, age and a number of other factors.

Lord Boateng (Labour): My Lords, when the TUC and the CBI are both in agreement that this is a policy that should be introduced and mandated—and the Government spend a great deal of time and effort recruiting workers from overseas to fill gaps in our own labour market—why do the Government not accept the wisdom of the TUC and the CBI? They surely know more about the operation of markets than any Government do.

Reply from Baroness Barran: As I said, the Government have done extensive work engaging with employers in this area. We have the important work of the *Inclusive Britain* report. An employer of, say, 250 employees would typically have 25 ethnic-minority employees, if it was in line with the national average. With 18 separate ethnicities, the noble Lord can do the maths on the sample size.

Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I welcome the Minister's agreement to take this matter back. As I have said before, what you do not measure you cannot manage. I appreciate that the ethnicity mix of one's workforce is a bit more complex than with compulsory registration of gender pay gaps, but that policy works very well. I hope the Minister will agree that it would be a worthwhile requirement for any larger employer that sees the benefit of having a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The Government agree that it is worth while but not that it should be mandatory. We have developed clear guidance for employers and are seeking case studies from employers monitoring ethnicity pay data—but also, crucially, their diagnosis of any gaps and their action plan to address those gaps—so that other employers can benefit from their experience.

Baroness Whitaker (Labour): My Lords, one of the ethnicity pay gaps is the difference in income that arises from art awards. Will the Minister join me in congratulating Delaine Le Bas, who has just been put on the Turner Prize shortlist for her art deriving from her Romani heritage, as well as the other distinguished members of the shortlist from minority-

ethnic backgrounds?

Reply from Baroness Barran: I am delighted to celebrate with the noble Baroness.

Lord Shinkwin (Conservative): My Lords, I am sure my noble friend is aware that some people from certain ethnic backgrounds, for example African-Caribbean, face a much larger ethnicity pay gap. Does she agree with me that this is unacceptable in 2024 and that therefore we need urgent targeted action to address this?

Reply from Baroness Barran: My noble friend is right: there are particular groups that have not only a larger ethnicity pay gap but a larger employment gap than other communities. The Government have worked with specific communities. My noble friend raised the Afro-Caribbean communities but there are also, for example, significant barriers to employment and pay differentials for Bangladeshi women. The Government have a number of programmes to address those.

Lord Bird (Crossbench): While we are at it, can we congratulate PwC for taking people from prison? I think that is a great sign. We must remember that people from ethnic minorities are overrepresented in the prison population.

Reply from Baroness Barran: Of course. I welcome all employers, including PwC, working with those who have been in the criminal justice system and in prison.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-25/debates/77D4BEC8-3A91-4B7C-AB43-8533959A9BD9/EthnicityPayGap>

Inclusive Britain, referred to above, can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62321381e90e070edcb8d97c/Inclusive-Britain-government-response-to-the-Commission-on-Race-and-Ethnic-Disparities.pdf>

New Publications

Scottish Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2024-28

<https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/2625/scottish-human-rights-commission-strategic-plan-2024-28.pdf>

Lived Experience of Black/Global Majority Disabled Pupils and their Families in Mainstream Education

<https://www.allfie.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/FULL-REPORT-Lived-Experience-of-BGM-Disabled-Pupils-and-their-Families-in-Mainstream-Education-Apr-24.pdf>

News

Scotland's human rights watchdog launches plan for next four years

<https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/news/scotlands-human-rights-watchdog-launches-plan-for-next-four-years/>

Looking ahead: Scottish Human Rights Commission launches its Strategic Plan 2024-28

<https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/blog/looking-ahead-commission-launches-its-strategic-plan-2024-28/>

Black menopausal women almost 5 times less likely to be on HRT than white women

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/menopause-hormone-replacement-therapy-hrt-b2535389.html>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 (Promotion)

Sandesh Gulhane (Conservative) [S6O-03334] To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it has reportedly spent nearly £400,000 of public money to promote Scotland's new hate crime laws.

Reply from the Minister for Victims and Community Safety (Siobhian Brown): Presiding Officer, £390,000 was invested in the hate hurts national hate crime marketing campaign, which ran from 11 March to 31 March 2024. It included a broadcast and print campaign.

The campaign aimed to raise public awareness of hate crime by showing the impact that it has on those affected, for example a disabled person or those affected by hate crime due to their race or religion, and to encourage those who are witnesses or victims of hate crime to report it. During the development of the hate crime strategy, we heard from people who felt unable to leave their home due to their fear of being targeted by hate crime. We want to have a society where everyone feels safe. No funding was spent to promote the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021.

Sandesh Gulhane: We have heard what the minister has to say, but £60,000 of public money was squandered on the ludicrous hate monster campaign, which was patronising, embarrassing and offensive; it treated the Scottish public like children. Last Wednesday, during our debate on repealing the hate crime act, Stuart McMillan argued that the new law implements a higher threshold for criminality than the long-standing stirring up of racial hatred offence. Either the Scottish National Party's own MSPs do not understand the act, or they are right and the act makes it harder to prosecute actual hate in the form of racism. Which is it, minister?

Reply from Siobhian Brown: First, the hate monster campaign had nothing to do with the Scottish Government; it was a Police Scotland decision. In relation to hate crime, we know that lots of incidents have been reported over the past three weeks. However, figures that were released yesterday show that 654 hate crime incidents have been recorded by Police Scotland, of which 51 per cent were on race.

Rona Mackay (SNP): The 2021 act has been the subject of much misrepresentation and inaccurate commentary, some of which appears to have been deliberate, which has caused confusion about what the act actually does. Can the cabinet secretary say any more about the steps that are being taken to ensure that accurate information about the act is available to the public?

Reply from Siobhian Brown: I have noted the misinformation on and misrepresentation of the act, and that many commentators have ignored the people in our communities whom the act seeks to protect. Following the statement in the Parliament last week, the Scottish Government published a new fact sheet, which, alongside existing information on the act, provides further clarity and factual information on what it does and, importantly, what it does not do. We are also undertaking a series of engagements across communities in order to listen and to raise awareness of hate crime.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-24-04-2024?meeting=15814&iob=134985#orscontributions_M16183E409P745C2579326

Information about the Hate Hurts campaign, referred to above, can be read at
<https://sgmarketing-newsroom.prgloo.com/resources/f/safer-scotland-campaigns/hate-crime>

Information about the Hate Monster campaign, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/campaigns/2023/hate-crime>

The fact sheet referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-act-factsheet/>

Non-crime Hate Incidents (Recording)

Michelle Thomson (SNP) [S60-03335] To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority regarding plans to incorporate any precedent set by the Miller v College of Policing case into the recording of non-crime hate incidents.

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance): The United Kingdom-wide practice of recording non-crime hate incidents dates back to recommendations in the 1999 Stephen Lawrence inquiry report. The College of Policing recently published updated guidance on the matter for England and Wales, and, although the guidance is not directly applicable to Police Scotland, it is currently reviewing it. If there are proposed changes, they will be subject to consultation.

How hate crime is investigated and recorded is an operational matter for Police Scotland. However, I have discussed the issue with the chair of the Scottish Police Authority and will do so again, and I will raise it with the chief constable when we next meet.

Michelle Thomson: The cabinet secretary is correct in saying that my concern relates to Police Scotland and the fact that, at the moment, we appear to have an unclear process—at least in the eyes of the public—as to what is termed a non-crime hate incident. My concern is that a number of people may have sought a subject access request notice and found themselves egregiously believing that their name has been recorded. Has the cabinet secretary explored that possibility with Police Scotland as part of her deliberations, or does she intend to do so?

Reply from Angela Constance: I have to be clear that this is an operational matter, but I would hope that my conversations with the SPA and Police Scotland will cover a range of matters, many of which have been raised directly with me in the chamber. I agree that clarity on these matters is important. My understanding is that Police Scotland considers the work to review the guidance and the code that was published by the College of Policing to be a priority. It is progressing matters and will come to a conclusion shortly. Thereafter, if there are any changes, it will consult with its officers, stakeholders and staff associations. I will endeavour to keep the member updated.

Murdo Fraser (Conservative): In her response to Michelle Thomson, the cabinet secretary indicated that Police Scotland is still applying its pre-existing policy on recording non-crime hate incidents. Can she clarify that that policy is being applied on an even-handed basis? Evidence would suggest that that is no longer the case.

Reply from Angela Constance: I state unequivocally that I have faith in Police Scotland as an organisation that has human rights at its core and that will apply the law and its own procedures fairly and without fear or favour to any party. If Mr Fraser would like to further explore any issues, I would be more than happy to do that, notwithstanding that this is an operational matter.

Pauline McNeill (Labour): There is some confusion on the matter, and I am further confused by the cabinet secretary's answer. She said that the police apply the law. Is hate incident reporting the law or is it a process? If it is a process, given that England and Wales dropped it last year, and given that I have already raised the matter, does the cabinet secretary share my concern about that? Is the Government content that putting something into someone's record that is not required by law complies with human rights law—or am I confused? I think that we need to get the matter resolved as soon as possible.

Reply from Angela Constance: As I said in response to colleagues, the matter is being considered as a priority by Police Scotland. It is important to acknowledge that, although the original ruling and the information that has come from the College of Policing are not directly applicable to Scotland, it is imperative that we look at those in order to evaluate them and consider them.

With regard to what the ruling said, in brief, the judge held: "That is not to say that perception-based recording of non-crime incidents is per se unlawful, but that some additional safeguards should be put in place".

That is what those with operational responsibility are seeking to address, to ensure that we can have maximum clarity and confidence.

However, non-crime hate incidents are separate from the hate crime legislation, and Police Scotland has been clear that those incidents are predicated on the vulnerability of the complainer and are used primarily to determine what care and support can be provided to them. Those incidents are not recorded against the alleged perpetrator of the NHCI. They can be recorded on a vulnerable person database, but there is no direct link between the database and systems used for disclosure checks.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-24-04-2024?meeting=15814&iob=134985#orscontributions_M16178E390P726C2579331

The judgement in Miller v College of Policing, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Miller-v-College-of-Policing-judgment-201221.pdf>

Workplace Racial Abuse

Foyso Choudhury (Labour): Yesterday, I chaired a meeting of campaigners and business representatives on anti-racism in the workplace. I was disappointed to hear that so many people in our businesses and public organisations felt that they were unable to report the racial abuse that they face at work. Can the First Minister outline what measures the Scottish Government is taking to empower people to report racial abuse in the workplace?

Reply from the First Minister (Humza Yousaf): I thank Foyso Choudhury for raising an exceptionally important question, and for the time that he spent on the issue before he was a member of the Scottish Parliament, when he consistently raised such issues as chair of the Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council and other such organisations. He has been a tireless campaigner against racism and hatred of any form over many years.

On the actions that we are taking, I will ensure that the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs writes to Foyso Choudhury with the detail. For example, third-party reporting centres are really important, but there has been some misinformation and disinformation over the weeks and months about why they exist. They are important because some people might not quite feel as confident reporting directly to the police. We have to remove and dismantle those barriers where they exist, and third-party reporting centres can play a role in that.

I will ask the appropriate cabinet secretary to write to Foyso Choudhury with the detail of what we are doing so that everybody feels safe in the workplace to be able to report racism, wherever it exists.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-25-04-2024?meeting=15816&iob=135018#orscontributions_M16216E356P845C2580128

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Hate Monster Campaign

Fergus Ewing (SNP) [S6W-26748] To ask the Scottish Government how much the "hate monster" public information campaign has cost.

Reply from Siobhian Brown: The 'Hate Monster' is a Police Scotland campaign which ran for 6 weeks in Spring last year. The Scottish Government does not hold this information.

I will assume you are referring to the Scottish Government's 'Hate Hurts' campaign which ran in March. The campaign showed the impact that hate crime has on those affected to help people recognise their experiences, highlighted the forms that hate crime can take and encouraged those who are witnesses to, or victims of hate crime to report it.

The campaign sends a message of reassurance to all communities in Scotland that hate crime will not be tolerated. c£390k was invested in the 'Hate Hurts' national campaign which included a broadcast and print.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-26748>

Information about the Hate Monster campaign, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/campaigns/2023/hate-crime/>

Information about the Hate Hurts campaign, referred to above, can be read at

<https://sgmarketing-newsroom.prgloo.com/resources/f/safer-scotland-campaigns/hate-crime>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Protection of Free Speech

Jerome Mayhew (Conservative) [902558] What recent discussions [the Minister] has had with the Scottish Government on the protection of free speech in Scotland.

Reply from the Secretary of State for Scotland (Alister Jack): This Government are committed to protecting free speech. It is the responsibility of the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament, working with Police Scotland, to ensure that the hate crime legislation is implemented and enforced in a way that protects freedom of speech and has the confidence of people in Scotland.

Jerome Mayhew: The Scottish Government's Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 came into force this month and is already having a chilling impact on free speech. What lessons can the UK Government learn from the introduction of this poor legislation in Scotland?

Reply from Alister Jack: Yes, and Police Scotland already has stretched resources—not least because it has been checking up on the SNP finances for the last three years. My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and we do have concerns that the legislation could have a potential chilling effect on free speech, but it is for the Scottish Government to speak to their own devolved laws. For my part, I believe it is an awful piece of legislation; it lacks clarity on what constitutes an offence, and, importantly, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has made it very clear that the UK Government will not enact similar legislation. ...

Pete Wishart (SNP): Never before has such rubbish been uttered about a piece of legislation as has been uttered about the Hate Crime Act. In one week, the Tories have tried to repeal it—which, given that it mainly consolidates existing legislation, will leave us unprotected against islamophobia, racism and homophobia. Will the Secretary of State now issue one of his famous colonial decrees and tell the Scottish Tories to back off?

Reply from Alister Jack: First of all, those laws already existed — that is the

important thing. Secondly, I was right about police resources. There were 8,000 hate crime reports in the first week, more than in any of the seven preceding years. It is a ridiculous, unnecessary piece of legislation.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-01/debates/D330666A-581B-47B3-8FCD-9D8425AF5782/ProtectionOfFreeSpeech>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Freedom of Speech: Scotland

Alexander Stafford (Conservative) [902552] To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the protection of free speech in Scotland.

Reply from Alister Jack: This Government is committed to protecting free speech. It is the responsibility of the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament, working with Police Scotland, to ensure that the hate crime legislation is implemented and enforced in a way that protects freedom of speech and has the confidence of people in Scotland.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-23/902552>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Jewish Community in London: Safety

Lord Bellingham (Conservative): To ask His Majesty's Government what further measures they plan to take to enhance the safety of London's Jewish community.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, the Government are steadfast in their commitment to protecting our Jewish communities, which is why we have committed further funding of £72 million for the Jewish community protective security grant to continue the vital work done in protecting Jewish communities until 2028. The JCPS grant is managed by the Community Security Trust, which I had the privilege of visiting a couple of weeks ago and which provides protective security measures at Jewish schools, colleges, nurseries and some other Jewish community sites, as well as a number of synagogues.

Lord Bellingham: My Lords, does the Minister agree that the police have a very challenging task to allow peaceful marches, to protect the rights of local people who are observing the march and to arrest those who are blatantly breaking the law—and that they normally they get this right? I ask the Minister to reflect on the Gideon Falter case and just to further reflect on whether, if the person in question had been a hijab-wearing Muslim woman observing a pro-Israeli march, or, for that matter, a Catholic priest, they would have been accused of provocation and threatened with arrest? I suggest that, if that had happened, there would have been massive outrage and the police officers in question would have been dismissed. So all we are really asking for is that everyone should be treated fairly and equally.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I agree with my noble friend that the police have a hugely difficult job, but obviously a police officer telling a person that being openly Jewish is provocative is clearly very wrong. I will not speculate as to what might have happened in the case of other individuals. We should welcome the Met Police's apology. The Prime Minister recently made it clear to police forces that it is the public's expectation that they will not merely manage protests but police them and, of course, do so proportionately. My right honourable friend the Home Secretary met with Sir Mark Rowley and the Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist

earlier this week, and put it very well: “Jewish people will always have the right to be able to go about their daily lives safely and freely, in London and across the UK”. The Home Secretary continued: “Sir Mark has reassured me he will make this clear to all sections of the community as a matter of urgency. The Met’s focus now is rightly on reassurance, learning from what happened, and ensuring that Jewish people are safe and feel safe in London”.

I think we should all support it in that critical endeavour.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon: My Lords, does the Minister agree that it would enhance the image and security of the wonderful Jewish people if the Jewish people in this country were to issue a strong statement dissociating themselves from the policies of the Netanyahu Government and the atrocities that have been committed on the people of Gaza, who are also human? Instead of that, the Board of Deputies has unfortunately sent a delegation to Tel Aviv showing solidarity with the Netanyahu Government, whose atrocities include the destroying of hospitals and the firing on aid convoys, killing even British people.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I think that is a deeply inappropriate question and I will not stoop so low as to answer it.

Baroness Sherlock (Labour): Perhaps I can. British Jews are no more responsible for the actions of the State of Israel than I am.

To return to the question, it is clear that this incident was deeply regrettable; that language about being “openly Jewish” was wrong and I am glad that the Met Police has apologised for it and will take the opportunity to reflect and ensure that all Londoners can have confidence in it and everyone can feel safe in their city. I will not try to second-guess policing decisions and I would not expect the Minister to do so, but I am sure that discussions are ongoing around these issues in government. I noticed that this Question was originally down to be answered by the Minister for Faith. Can the Minister tell the House whether the Minister for Faith is being drawn into these discussions so they are not simply seen as a policing or security matter?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, we have to consider all the various aspects of policing in the round. The noble Baroness is quite right; public order policing is very complex and obviously very challenging, but it remains incumbent on Sir Mark and of course the mayor as well to ensure that London remains a safe and welcoming city. As I said in an earlier answer, I believe that the force’s focus ought to be on proportionate policing, making sure that it is done properly and fairly, and obviously we will continue to back forces in that, using all aspects of government.

Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee (Non-affiliated): My Lords, just to follow up on the noble Baroness’s point about drawing in other issues, not just leaving it to policing, the question is about enhancing the safety of our Jewish community. What more can we do to enhance it? Once it gets to policing, we know that it is in a bad place. How can we stop it getting to that point and enhance the safety of our Jewish communities right across the United Kingdom?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I think I answered that in my initial remarks, in which I mentioned the funding that has been increased for the Community Security Trust to administer in the JCPS. Just to go back to the Community Security Trust—I declare an interest as I was at the dinner where the Prime Minister announced the additional funding and I donated some money to it—the fact is that it has an enormous network, which I know is incredibly sophisticated, having seen it in operation, the police work incredibly closely with it, and it does a fantastic job. I very much praise it for all the work that it does.

Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, from a slightly different angle, the additional funding from the Government mentioned by the Minister is extremely welcome, but it is not assuaging the additional insecurity felt by the Jewish community

after 7 October. A recent survey found that 50% of British Jews are currently considering leaving the United Kingdom. This would spell disaster for Britain, which desperately needs their talent and creativity and the diversity that they bring to British life. We as politicians have an important role to play here, and we must be extremely careful about what we say and do, which could inflame tensions and increase divisions that are growing and are already way too wide.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I agree with the noble Baroness's statement.

Baroness Altmann (Conservative): My Lords, I am very grateful to the Government for their commitment to protect the Jewish community, and I ask my noble friend whether he will join me in paying tribute, as I am sure he will, to the CST, which is trying to keep Jews safe. I declare my interest as a British Jew and to my other interests in the register. While there are weekly marches calling for "globalising the intifada" and eradication of the only Jewish state, when Jews are pelted with bricks and beaten with bars, and children are threatened on the way to school and university students threatened on campus, I feel that it would be most appreciated if the Government would look carefully at banning more of organisations such as Palestine Action, which has come to light, and other groups which seem to want to target the Jewish community directly, when we have no responsibility for the actions of an overseas Government.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My noble friend makes some good points. Of course, as has been often stated from the Dispatch Box, the Government do not comment on ongoing matters of possible proscription. The police can of course impose conditions on protests where they believe the protest may result in a variety of civil offences, serious disorder, damage to property and so on and so forth, but the ability to actually ban protests is a complex one under the Public Order Act. Of course, I agree with my noble friend, but it is incumbent on all citizens to reassure the Jews, who are feeling so under pressure.

Baroness Fox of Buckley (Non-affiliated): My Lords, I am sure that noble Lords have been following the events at Columbia University and the encampment there, where there have been some pretty horrific scenes of students screaming rather maniacally to exclude "genocidal Zios", and using other very offensive and anti-Semitic slogans, and so on. It has just completely got out of hand. The global student movement is coming to the UK: "From Gaza to Columbia to London" is the slogan, and it starts at UCL at 1 pm on Friday 26 April. I am not saying that as an advert, and I am not particularly worried about people protesting or about their interpretive dance against colonisation that they are bringing over. However, I am worried about anti-Semitism on London and other British campuses. Safety is not just a policing question. Can the Minister assure us that guard is being taken against what is happening on campuses, where the levels of anti-Semitism are now routine and normalised?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My noble friend from the Department for Education assures me that there is protection on British campuses. However, I also acknowledge the points that the noble Baroness made and share her concerns; these trends are very disturbing.

Lord Harris of Haringey (Labour): My Lords, can the Minister comment on the take-up of grants for the protection of religious premises from attacks? Is he aware of some of the concerns that the processes that his department requires from faith communities are extremely complicated for often quite small sums of money?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I am afraid that I do not have any statistics to hand on that. But, again, the money that we were talking about making available in my initial Answer is administered by the Community Security Trust; there is no application process to access that pool of funds.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-25/debates/FB21E245-087C-4579-878E-2FFE8DFF4CAA/JewishCommunityInLondonSafety>

The research referred to above by Baroness Burt of Solihull can be read at <https://antisemitism.org/almost-70-of-british-jews-are-hiding-their-identity-and-almost-half-have-considered-leaving-britain-since-7th-october-new-cao-polling-shows/>

Crown Prosecution Service: Racial Bias

Lord Woodley (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of racial bias in Crown Prosecution Service charging decisions.

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, we know that some ethnic groups are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and we need to understand why so we can address this. The Crown Prosecution Service commissioned research which found that outcomes of CPS decision-making differ by ethnicity. However, the research did not identify the reasons for this, so the CPS has proactively commissioned further work to explore the impact of other contributing factors, to address this important issue.

Lord Woodley: My Lords, the noble and learned Lord, Lord Bellamy, as the Minister knows, told me from the Dispatch Box that "race plays no part in individual charging decisions".—[[Official Report, 19/10/23; col. 295.](#)]

However, the Crown Prosecution Service itself, as has just been said, in its report last year, "found evidence of disproportionality in relation to ethnicity in the outcomes of our decision-making", and that, "ethnic minority defendants are significantly more likely to be charged for a comparable offence than White British defendants". Can the Minister explain why?

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, as we all know, individuals commit crimes, and it is up to us to ensure that they are treated fairly and equally. The *Lammy Review*, published in 2017, found no issues with the outcomes of CPS charging decisions. Given the level of ethnic disparity across the CJS and the fact that the *Lammy Review* was undertaken some time ago, the CPS commissioned further independent academic research. The findings of this research, while challenging for the CPS, are an important step in ensuring that the CJS is fair and functioning for all sections of society. I am pleased that further work is being undertaken to provide a deeper understanding of this issue and to find solutions as to how best the system can address it. That work will help to identify any issue with processes, and we expect it to be completed in the last part of 2024.

Baroness Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the disparity and bias that we know about is not new. The MoJ and the Crown Prosecution Service have extensive data. This question has come up time and again. There have been reviews and there has been research. I find it very disappointing for the Minister to say that we do not know why this is still happening. We know that black defendants spend an average of 70% longer in prison awaiting trial and sentencing than their white counterparts—the Government's own data shows this—and we know that black and Asian people in prison are more likely to be serving longer sentences than other groups. Do not these shocking figures really lay bare how racism and injustice is hardwired into the criminal justice system? While sentencing and remand decisions are made by independent judiciary, the Government have a responsibility to tackle this. What is being done to end these disparities?

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, I do not accept the noble Baroness's comments that individuals are necessarily being treated differently. However, the research did find an issue, and the CPS is taking several steps to ensure that this work is both credible and robust, including development of an independent disproportionality advisory group that will provide independent scrutiny of its internal research regarding disproportionality to provide confidence that the work is suitably focused, rigorous and transparent.

Lord Kamall (Conservative): My Lords, in June 2020 the CPS launched its digital 2025 strategy, which includes how it is going to embrace new technology, including AI. Given

that there are many concerns about data bias and algorithm bias in artificial intelligence, what conversations has my noble friend's department had with the CPS about ensuring that this will not introduce more bias into the system?

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, the CPS itself demonstrates a remarkable ethnically diverse workforce. While that does not answer my noble friend's question precisely, this is an organisation that shows that it has an ethnic-minority background of 23%, well above the 15.4% for the Civil Service and the 19.3% for the working-age population. I will try to respond to my noble friend in writing on his specific point.

Baroness Chakrabarti (Labour): My Lords, does the Minister agree that my liking for "The Godfather" movies makes me no more or less likely to be a member of the mafia? If I am right about that, why are young black British men being prosecuted for serious violent offences in reliance of evidence of their liking for rap and drill music?

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, we do not accept that they are more likely to be prosecuted. The point is that we have identified that ethnic minorities are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and we are researching to find out exactly why that is the case. The raw data suggests that they are being charged more aggressively than the white majority, but we do not understand the factors behind that. The review that we have commissioned will report later this year on exactly what factors we can identify.

The Lord Bishop of Derby: My Lords, I hold responsibility in the Bishops' prison team for children in the youth justice system, so my question arises not only from access to what I find to be quite disturbing data but also from direct contact with children in the justice system. What steps are His Majesty's Government taking to eliminate racial bias, including in charging, against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in the youth justice system, who are often hidden within official statistics?

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, the Government are committed to tackling all sorts of racism and discrimination in society. The Government have a robust legislative framework to protect all individuals against unlawful discrimination. Our *Inclusive Britain* strategy, published in March 2022, set out a ground-breaking action plan to tackle negative disparities, promote unity and build a fairer Britain for all. The strategy includes 74 bold actions to improve outcomes for ethnic minority groups across education, health, employment and criminal justice.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, the *Lammy Review* was very clear. It said, first, that young men from ethnic minorities—particularly black young men—are more likely to be charged more aggressively, as the noble Lord has just accepted; they are more likely to plead not guilty, which means that they do not get the discount for pleading guilty because they do not trust the system; and they are more likely to be sentenced more harshly when the sentencing actually happens. Will the Government undertake to implement all the recommendations of the *Lammy Review*?

Reply from Lord Roborough: ... I am not going to make undertakings, but we take these conclusions very seriously and will act on them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, three times when presented with evidence of how individuals are being treated differently based on race in the criminal justice system, the Minister has said that individuals are not treated differently based on race. Can he furnish the House with the evidence base that allows him to say that with such certainty?

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, while we accept that the research from the University of Leeds, which covered 195,000 cases between January 2018 and December 2021, found that white British suspects had the lowest charge rate of 69.9%, and mixed-heritage suspects had a charge rate of between 77.3% and 81.3%, the statistics are alarming, which is why the CPS has responded by conducting this independent review on a timescale which I hope will please the

House, reporting by the end of 2024.

Lord Blunkett (Labour): My Lords, given the age profile of those who come up against the criminal justice system, would it not be wise to cross-reference with research that has been undertaken on school exclusions, which show a considerable reaction to authority from certain ethnic-minority boys in particular and a lack of training on how to deal with and understand that reaction?

Reply from Lord Roborough: My Lords, the purpose of the additional review being conducted by the CPS is to identify all other factors that could be at play in delivering this data. Once we have the results of that at the end of this year, we will be able to come to firmer conclusions.

Baroness Chakrabarti: ... Young black men are being charged partly on the basis of evidence that they are listening to rap and drill music. This kind of cultural bias is being used in our criminal courts for very serious prosecutions. Is that right? Is that a practice that the Minister and His Majesty's Government agree with?

Reply from Lord Roborough: I am grateful for the initial question. Of course, the Government do not agree with that. We have indeed provided guidance. The CPS is mindful that labels such as "gang" can lead to discrimination by racially stereotyping defendants. That is why prosecution guidance on gang-related offending is clear that prosecutors should not refer to gangs unless there is clear evidence to support the assertion. The CPS will make further improvements to its guidance, including on gangs, this year.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-25/debates/D3DB8398-195C-4C26-9740-951141E79D7E/CrownProsecutionServiceRacialBias>

The findings of the University of Leeds research referred to above can be read at

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-charging-decisions-examining-demographic-disparities-outcomes-our-decision-making>

The Lammy Review, referred to above, can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82009040f0b62305b91f49/lammy-review-final-report.pdf>

The Digital Strategy referred to above can be read at

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/CPS-2025-strategy.pdf>

Inclusive Britain, referred to above, can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62321381e90e070edcb8d97c/Inclusive-Britain-government-response-to-the-Commission-on-Race-and-Ethnic-Disparities.pdf>

Press Release

Stephen Lawrence Day: we need to recognise the drivers for disparity

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/stephen-lawrence-day-we-need-to-recognise-the-drivers-for-disparity>

News

First online terror group proscribed in the UK

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/tom-tugendhat-mps-dan-jarvis-alison-thewliss-slovakia-b2534212.html>

Extreme Right-wing terrorist group Terrorgram to be banned in UK

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/22/extreme-right-wing-terrorist-group-terrorgram-ban/>

Hate crime against east Asian people in the UK rocketed during Covid – and it hasn't gone away

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/24/hate-crime-east-asians-uk-covid-racism>

Racist abuse won't put new Derry mayor off job

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3gq6dq9ry5o>

Jewish Londoners are afraid, Baroness Casey tells Metropolitan Police

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/jewish-londoners-are-afraid-casey-met-crime-justice-commission-tb6mzxz6s>

Met's anti-Jewish bias: Offending by Existing

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-met-police-anti-jewish-bias-offending-by-existing-f8c70thrn>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Banning Conversion Practices: Legislation

Meghan Gallacher (Conservative) [S6W-26816] To ask the Scottish Government what engagement it has had with faith leaders regarding its proposed legislation banning conversion practices.

Reply from Shirley-Anne Somerville: The Scottish Government has undertaken extensive engagement with a range of faith and belief stakeholders throughout the development of proposals on ending conversion practices in Scotland and following the launch of our public consultation document on 9 January. This includes both individual and group meeting with faith-based organisations on at least 14 separate occasions since the launch of our consultation on 9 January 2024. In addition, a roundtable event specifically for faith and belief representatives was held on 3 April 2024, managed by independent, impartial external facilitators to support a free expression of views.

This engagement with faith and belief stakeholders has informed the development of our proposals, and feedback and consultation responses will be analysed and considered to inform future legislation to be introduced into Parliament.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-26816>

Press Releases

First Minister to stand down

<https://www.gov.scot/news/first-minister-to-stand-down/>

Bute House Agreement ends

<https://www.gov.scot/news/bute-house-agreement-ends/>

First Minister speech: Bute House Agreement ends

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-minister-speech-bute-house-agreement/>

Parents urged not to miss out on disability support

<https://www.gov.scot/news/parents-urged-not-to-miss-out-on-disability-support/>

Thousands of carers in Scotland to get new benefit

<https://www.gov.scot/news/thousands-of-carers-in-scotland-to-get-new-benefit/>

Passover Message from the First Minister (video)

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1782385588840096012>

New Publications

Motions of no confidence and what happens when a First Minister resigns

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2024/04/29/explainer-motions-of-no-confidence-and-what-happens-when-a-first-minister-resigns/>

What does the end of the Bute House agreement mean?

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2024/04/25/what-does-the-end-of-the-bute-house-agreement-mean/>

Justice in an Independent Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-new-scotland-justice-independent-scotland/>

News

How will Scotland's next first minister be chosen?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-68919996>

Who is John Swinney, the sole candidate for first minister?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn03klze4m6o>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

New Publication

How is a First Minister of Scotland appointed?

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/how-is-a-first-minister-of-scotland-appointed/>

News

England council results

<https://www.bbc.com/news/live/uk-politics-68609729>

Local election results in maps and charts [England]

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8v36l6d54do>

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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/>

Publication

House of Commons Library Briefing: Rising cost of living in the UK

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9428/CBP-9428.pdf>

News

Cost-of-living crisis making participation in sport more difficult, figures show

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/cost-of-living-crisis-making-participation-in-sport-more-difficult-figures-show-4599177>

My rent has gone up £300 a month': Pain of soaring costs and zero hours contracts

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rent-prices-cost-of-living-zero-hour-contract-b2530916.html>

Cost-of-living crisis still hitting students, research suggests

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/employers-alan-jones-b2533637.html>

The cost of living crisis has made the UK a poorer, more anxious nation – and worse is yet to come

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/26/cost-of-living-crisis-uk-prices>

Only one Western country suffers bigger household spending cuts than Britain

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/04/21/uk-suffers-big-household-spending-cuts/>

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Other New Publications

The Coronation Roll

The Coronation Roll is the true state record of the Coronation proceedings from the record of the proclamations on Accession, to listing the Coronation Claims process and followed by a complete record of the Coronation service as it occurred at Westminster Abbey on 6th May 2023.

<https://www.coronationroll.gov.uk/roll/>

Expressions of Self: Race, Religion and Representation of minoritized children and young people in the British Care System

<https://www.coventry.ac.uk/contentassets/0832b8d761aa49a6adb98cf4112b8cfd/expressions-of-self-report.pdf>

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Other News

First Sikh court opens in London

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-first-sikh-court-opens-in-london-hs7pzvbjn>

'Life-changing' drug for sickle cell disease to be offered by NHS in England

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/may/03/voxelator-sickle-cell-disease-drug-nhs-england>

'Life-changing' sickle cell drug approved for NHS roll-out after patient-led campaign

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/sickle-cell-voxelator-nhs-drugs-b2538713.html>

I'm a Black woman, but I still won't say 'Bame'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/bame-black-racism-tony-sewell-minority-ethnic-b2530960.html>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

**** Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/police-ethics-conduct-and-scrutiny-scotland-bill>

Evidence session: Criminal Justice Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/%20CJ-24-04-2024?meeting=15819&iob=135060>

UK Parliament

Asylum Application (Entry to the United Kingdom) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3530>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3627>

The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 [Draft]

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/9780348253191/contents>

Family Visas (Minimum Income) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3684>

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3618/stages>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3649>

Immigration and Nationality Fees (Exemption for NHS Clinical Staff) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3660>

**** Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3540>

House of Commons consideration of House of Lords message ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-22/debates/7DC010C7-A0EF-4165-B09E-86BB276B00C5/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-22/debates/7DC010C7-A0EF-4165-B09E-86BB276B00C5/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

House of Lords consideration of House of Commons reasons ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-22/debates/F6A3318A-52D6-4C4D-96B7-9C4286D7290F/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-22/debates/F6A3318A-52D6-4C4D-96B7-9C4286D7290F/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

House of Commons consideration of House of Lords message ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-22/debates/C6B3ACCA-CD05-4675-8026-6857AC19F5E0/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-22/debates/C6B3ACCA-CD05-4675-8026-6857AC19F5E0/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

House of Lords consideration of House of Commons reasons ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-22/debates/0CBD4628-1551-4D08-BDC9-A264228C240F/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-22/debates/0CBD4628-1551-4D08-BDC9-A264228C240F/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

Royal Assent

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-25/debates/66DFC5F9-F0DA-4334-ADAC-6D442303D487/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-60AAC349-FF93-49D8-89B7-5A355021A5E1>

Act as passed

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2024/8/enacted>

Scottish Law Officers (Devolution) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3665>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents>

Workforce Information (Ethnicity) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3522>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

How do the Scottish Government's capital spending plans affect you? (closing date 6 May 2024)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/ehrcj/affect-of-scottish-governments-capital-spending/>

Charity banking challenges survey 2024 (closing date 15 May 2024)

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/have-your-say-charity-banking-challenges-survey-2024/>

Disclosure Scotland fees: discounting, waivers and accredited bodies

(closing date 28 May 2024)

<https://consult.gov.scot/disclosure-scotland/fees-discounting-waivers-and-accredited-bodies/>

ITV/Tell MAMA survey on mosque safety in the UK (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/V7V5B6L>

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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

Faithful Welcome

Application deadline not stated

Faith in Community Scotland, and Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees funding of up to £500 to support Scotland's faith communities to welcome refugees and asylum seekers and enable them to be an integral part of community life, wherever they are coming from and whatever the reason. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/bdd5kr6n>

Cost-of-Living Support Scotland

Closing date: 21 August 2024

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!**

The Rwanda Act: What Happens Now?

7 May 2024 (online, 12.00–1.00)

Human Rights Consortium Scotland webinar to find out what the Rwanda plan means for people seeking asylum in the UK, what we know about what will happen next, and the ways in which organisations continue to fight against detention and deportations. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/ycn64bth>

**** this week!**

The issues and opportunities facing EU citizens in the UK

11 May 2024 (Edinburgh, 2.00–5.00)

Citizens Rights Project conference to look at the experience of EU and other European citizens in the UK, and Scotland in particular, including continuing problems with the EU settlement scheme, experience in the job market and education, discrimination and social exclusion, and opportunities to participate in the democratic process in Scotland, UK, and Europe. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3trz8tw8>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

13 May 2024 (Glasgow, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course explore how the asylum system works from the perspective of a claimant and the process involved in making a claim for asylum. The course also explores the journeys and barriers faced by both refugees and asylum seekers reaching and building a new life in Scotland and their respective entitlement to services. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

Introduction to working with interpreters

14 May 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

31 July 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Scottish Refugee Council course to enable you to understand the roles and responsibilities of interpreters and service providers, understand the rights of the client – confidentiality, professional boundaries, advocacy and advice, know what to consider when planning for an interpreted session, and feel confident to manage the interpreting dynamic as a service provider. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/mrxbdyc5>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

15 May 2024 (Glasgow, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course to find out about fundamental issues of housing, homelessness and welfare entitlements of EEA nationals and look at how service users might prepare themselves for an economy in recession and cost of living spiralling. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

No Recourse To Public Funds

22 May 2024 (Glasgow (10.00–12.30))

PAIH course to help frontline workers identify a tenant's current status, clarify what this means in terms of access to public funds and plan effective support where difficulties arise. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

Introduction to refugees: asylum and resettlement

18 July 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Scottish Refugee Council course to help you understand relevant legal definitions and processes including the UK asylum process, learn about the rights and entitlements of asylum seekers and refugees, and identify sources of support that empower people to live fully integrated lives. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/sbmevc64>

Introduction to supporting refugee integration

10 September 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Scottish Refugee Council course to help you understand the key principles of a rights-based refugee-led approach to integration, the underpinning principles of the Scottish integration framework and effective integration planning. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p9p9jdx>

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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>

New Scots <https://newscots.scot/>

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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