



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Marsha de Cordova (Labour)** [129106] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of YouGov's survey for Queen Mary University of London that 39 per cent of ethnic minority and 70 per cent of white people living in London said they were likely to have the covid-19 vaccination, how the Government's vaccination public information campaign plans to target Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities.

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [131468] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure take-up of the covid-19 vaccine in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

**Apsana Begum (Labour)** [131494] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage take up of the covid-19 vaccine in BAME communities.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** The Department is working with Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement and key stakeholders to encourage uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine among black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The Department is also working with community press, TV and radio stations to deliver information on vaccination in over a dozen languages.

Activity is also focusing on working with trusted voices such as healthcare personnel, faith leaders, community influencers and community organisations for priority multicultural audiences, with a particular focus on Muslim, Polish, black African and Caribbean and Jewish communities. The Department is building on pre-existing relationships and established channels as well as reaching out to more influencers through virtual sessions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/129106>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131468>

and

The survey results referred to above can be read at

[https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/b3se2qb61u/QMULResults\\_201119\\_Vaccine\\_W.pdf](https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/b3se2qb61u/QMULResults_201119_Vaccine_W.pdf)

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Out-of-school Education: Coronavirus

**Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Labour)** [HL13027] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of unregistered out-of-school settings providing religious tuition to children to adhere to restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Labour)** [HL13028] To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they have put in place to ensure that any unregistered religious schools which do not allow pupils to use technology cannot use exceptions pertaining to vulnerable children in the regulations in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to teach full-to-capacity classes whilst also claiming pupils are home-educated.

**Baroness Berridge:** Supplementary schools for children, including those offering religious instruction, for example, are typically considered to be out-of-school settings. The department defines out-of-school settings as organisations or individuals that provide tuition, training, instruction or activities to children in England without their parents' or carers' supervision, but are not:

- schools
- colleges
- 16 to 19 academies
- providers caring for children that are registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency

Unregistered schools are those that are operating as an independent school without having registered with the department. It is a criminal offence (under section 96 of the Education and Skills 2008 Act) for any person to conduct an unregistered independent school, and where we find evidence that a school is operating unlawfully, the department will seek to take action by working with police, Ofsted and the Crown Prosecution Service as necessary.

The department does not hold a central register of all out-of-school settings and so is not able to give an assessment of the ability of providers in the sector to adhere to restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 outbreak. However, since the beginning of the outbreak we have been in close communication with out-of-school settings stakeholders, including various representatives from the faith sector, to outline how the protective measures in the sector guidance work to minimise the risk of transmission and infection of the virus, and how they can be practically implemented across a range of settings.

Under the current national restrictions, announced on 5 January 2021, wraparound childcare providers, holiday clubs, and out-of-school settings should only continue to offer face-to-face provision for:

- children of critical workers, where it is reasonably necessary to support their parents or carers to work, seek work, attend a medical appointment, or undertake education or training; and
- vulnerable children and young people

During the current national restrictions, children who are home educated should not attend out-of-school settings for face-to-face provision unless they are considered to be vulnerable, or if they are children of critical workers.

Children may face a range of vulnerabilities, some of which are not easily defined.

Our guidance outlines that local stakeholders (such as education providers and local authorities) are best placed to identify who may fall into this category. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Some pupils who have difficulty engaging in remote education may be considered to be vulnerable children and therefore eligible to attend provision. However, settings may provide their own laptops, or should consider different forms of remote education, where this is not possible, such as printed resources or textbooks, supplemented with other forms of communication to keep pupils and students on track or answer questions about work.

Further information on the criteria for vulnerable children and children of critical workers can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Providers should be moving to remote education as far as possible for those not eligible to attend for onsite provision.

The department expects providers that continue to offer face-to-face provision for eligible children, to follow our updated guidance on protective measures for holiday and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school settings, in order to safely adhere to the government's restrictions. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

We have also published updated guidance for parents and carers to follow if their children are eligible to attend for face-to-face provision and they choose to send them to these settings. This guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/hl13027>  
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/hl13028>

### **Out-of-school Education: Coronavirus**

**Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Labour)** [HL13030] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received from Ofsted about changing legislation to ensure that out-of-school settings providing a religious or narrow curriculum can only operate legally if they are registered with the Department for Education; and what steps they intend to take in response to any such representations.

**Baroness Berridge:** Any education setting which provides full-time provision to 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age (or one or more pupils of compulsory school age who is looked after or has an education, health, and care plan) is required to register with the Department for Education as a school. It is a criminal offence to conduct an independent school that is not registered.

The current definition of full-time education does not capture settings which offer only a narrow curriculum, even if this teaching takes place throughout all, or most, of the school day. The department consulted on proposals last year to change the definition of independent schools in primary legislation to incorporate such settings.

We are currently considering responses to this consultation and will confirm further steps in due course.

The department is considering changes to the registration requirement for schools. The consultation on Regulating Independent Educational Institutions was launched on 14 February 2020 and withdrawn on 7 May due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The consultation was relaunched on 13 October 2020 and closed on 27 November. Following analysis, we will set out the government response in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/hl13030>

## Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

### Covid-19: Places of Worship

**Elaine Smith (Labour):** ... I wrote to [the First Minister] at the start of the year about the closure of places of worship, explaining the importance of communal worship for spiritual, social and psychological benefits, and I have received no response as yet. With schools beginning to return and Lent starting tomorrow, will the First Minister give some reassurance to Scotland's Christians that she will prioritise churches in her strategic framework so that they can be among the first places to reopen? We hope that that might be in time to celebrate Easter.

**The First Minister:** We will try to get places of worship back to normality. They are not closed, but the ability to worship normally and freely is restricted. I deeply regret that, as I know that everybody does, and we want to get that back to normality as quickly as possible. I do not want to pre-empt what we will set out in the strategic framework next week, but members will see a priority given to getting places of worship open again, given the importance that we attach to that. We will continue to do that as quickly as possible. I know that many people feel strongly about it and I understand that, but nobody in the Government, including me, wants anywhere to be operating less than normally for any longer than is necessary. It is easier for people to bear that with some settings than with others. We know how difficult it is with schools and care homes, and it is difficult for places of worship as well.

As we get the virus suppressed and continue to make progress with vaccination, that is what I mean when I say that we will have to make choices about what matters most to us. Sometimes those will be difficult choices, but the more we can build a consensus about the things that really matter—I would include places of worship in that—the more we can come out of this lockdown in a sensible and sustainable way and, I hope, avoid the need for another one later in the year.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13126&i=118815&c=2319967#ScotParIOR>

### Covid-19: Places of Worship

**Elaine Smith:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Earlier, in response to my question, the First Minister said that places of worship “are not closed.” However, the regulations state very clearly that they are closed for communal worship and private prayer and are allowed to open only for very small funerals and weddings. Therefore, will the First Minister take this opportunity to correct the record, as is allowed by our rules, because many people will be confused by the earlier assertion—[Interruption.] I think that we all know that it is absolutely essential to be clear about the regulations that are in place. The importance of that cannot be overemphasised.

**The Presiding Officer:** That is not a point of order, but it is a helpful point of correction that I am sure the First Minister will—[Interruption.] The member has made a point about the information that was given, and I am sure that the First Minister will pay attention to it. I will give the First Minister a chance to respond, if she wishes to do so.

**The First Minister:** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I would not normally do this, but it is a really important point for many people across the country. Any careful listening to Elaine Smith's reading of the regulations and to what I said would show that there is no inconsistency.

Places of worship are not closed, but they are able to open only for very limited purposes. It is because I know how difficult and distressing that is for many people that I am so intent on all of us trying to get into a better position as quickly as possible. I would not want anyone to think that there is glibness or an inability to understand how serious the issue is. It does nobody any good for us to quibble over the precise wording when, in fact, we both articulated the decision correctly, although perhaps we put the emphasis in different places.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13126&i=118815&c=2319989#ScotParlOR>

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## Holocaust

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### World War II: Genocide

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12942] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by University College London What do Students Know and Understand about the Holocaust, published on 19 April 2018, what plans they have for the reform of holocaust education in schools.

**Baroness Berridge:** The Government has supported Holocaust education for many years and is fully committed to continuing this support.

In recognition of its importance, the Holocaust is the only historic event which is compulsory within the national curriculum for history at key stage 3. This ensures that young people from every background can continue to learn about the Holocaust and its relevance today. Effective teaching about the Holocaust can support pupils to learn about the possible consequences of antisemitism and extremism and to understand how society can prevent the repeat of such a catastrophe.

The Department for Education further supports school pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust by providing funding for the University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education, £500,000 in the 2020-21 financial year match-funded by the Pears Foundation, and the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project, £2.193 million for the 2020-21 financial year. These programmes help reach all types of schools and help to develop high-quality teaching across the school sector.

The University College London Centre for Holocaust Education's report and wider research informs the continuing professional development work for teachers that the Department for Education funds by identifying key gaps in knowledge and underpins the educational resources that the centre makes available to teachers across the country.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/hl12942>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.holocausteducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/What-do-students-know-and-understand-about-the-Holocaust1.pdf>

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## House of Commons Written Answers

### Overseas Trade: Israel

**Craig Tracey (Conservative)** [151774] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 146961 on Question for Department for International Trade, what sectors have been identified for further cooperation with Israel beyond the continuity trade agreement.

**Graham Stuart:** The United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement entered into force on the 1 January 2021. The agreement provides an ambitious framework to continue to grow our future trading relationship, which totalled £4.9 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2020. We have identified opportunities to deepen our bilateral trade relationship in sectors such as financial services, infrastructure, and technology. We will work with our Israeli counterparts to realise these including through reinstating plans to host a UK-Israel Trade and Investment conference in London.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-09/151774>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-01/146961>

*The trade agreement referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781440/CS\\_Israel\\_1.2019\\_Trade.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781440/CS_Israel_1.2019_Trade.pdf)

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### West Bank: Demolition

**Hilary Benn (Labour)** [150686] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Israel on the demolition of structures provided as humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians living in the West Bank.

**Hilary Benn (Labour)** [150689] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the reported demolition by the Government of Israel of a donor-funded water network serving 700 Palestinians during the covid-19 pandemic.

**James Cleverly:** The UK regularly raises demolitions with the Government of Israel. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised his concerns about demolitions of Palestinian and humanitarian structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/150686>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/150689>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1357723513940045824>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Middle East: Peace Negotiations

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative)** [HL13007] To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are currently providing to advance the peace process in the Middle East; and what discussions they have had with the Secretary-General of the Arab League about this process since 31 December 2020.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is committed to making progress towards a twostate solution. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community. The UK is supportive of a regional approach to peace and we have actively encouraged the parties back to dialogue. The UK joined a UN Security Council session, attended by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States on the 26 January. The Arab League and Arab states have a key role in the peace process and we are in close contact on this issue.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/hl13007>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL12920] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made any assessment of the number of indictments of Israeli citizens by the government of Israel for charges relating (1) to the assault of Palestinians, and (2) to damage to Palestinian property; and if so, what steps they are taking in the light of any such assessment

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made this assessment. We welcome the Government of Israel's strong condemnation of settler violence, as well as the establishment of a special governmental unit and legislative changes. Nonetheless, we continue to urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We have stressed the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/hl12920>

### Issa Amro

**Baroness Blackstone (Labour Independent)** [HL12935] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Amnesty International on 5 January that Issa Amro is "facing politically motivated charges for his peaceful activism against Israel's military occupation and illegal settlements"; and what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the conviction of Issa Amro.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of the 5 January statement by Amnesty International about Issa Amro's case. Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem attended Mr Amro's court hearing on 6 January. We continue to urge the Israeli Government to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations. We have also raised concerns with the Palestinian Authority about the narrowing of space for civil society to operate in the West Bank.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/hl12935>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/01/israelopt-drop-politically-motivated-charges-against-palestinian-human-rights-activist-issa-amro/>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2622>

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2592>

#### **Domestic Abuse Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2709>

#### **Education (Assemblies) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>

#### **Freedom of Speech (Universities) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2820>

#### **Genocide Determination Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2621>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2608>

#### **Marriage (Approved Organisations) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2537>

#### **Marriage (Authorised Belief Organisations) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2795>

#### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2584>

### **Scottish Parliament**

#### **Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill>

#### **\*\* Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

Bill as amended at Stage 2

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/stage-2/bill-as-amended-at-stage-2.pdf>

#### **Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 2 days**

**Introduction of a statutory opt-out system for organ donation for Northern Ireland**  
(closing date 19 February 2021)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/organ-donation>

**Human Rights Act Review** (closing date 3 March 2021)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/138635/call-for-evidence-the-governments-independent-human-rights-act-review/>

**The future of the [Welsh Government] Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme**  
(closing date 30 March 2021)

<https://gov.wales/future-equality-and-inclusion-funding-programme>

**Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19**  
(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438