



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Racial Discrimination

Natasha Asghar (Conservative) [OQ58304] What discussions has the Minister had with ministerial colleagues about tackling racial discrimination in public sector workplaces?

Minister for Social Justice (Jane Hutt): ... Well, this item was on the agenda today for the local government partnership council, chaired by my colleague Rebecca Evans. It relates to the anti-racist Wales action plan goal of local government being an exemplar employer, with anti-racist employment and human resources policies, with improvement funding used to drive such best practice, contributing to good governance and performance.

Natasha Asghar: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate all the work that you're doing. Around 35 per cent of medical staff in Wales are from the ethnic minority backgrounds, and, in some hospitals, over 60 per cent of their staff belong to the ethnic minority groups. A recent report on racism in medicine by the British Medical Association found that nearly one third of doctors surveyed have considered leaving the NHS or have already left within the last two years due to persistent and intolerable levels of racism on a personal and institutional level. The survey reveals institutional barriers to career progression, low levels of reporting of racist incidents, and a growing mental health burden on ethnic minority doctors as some of the reasons why they're leaving. The chair of the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin in Wales said that if things don't improve urgently, then the NHS in Wales could face collapse. So, Minister, what discussions have you had with the health Minister to end structural racism in the NHS here in Wales and to rectify the disproportionate outcomes in careers and job satisfaction faced by different ethnic groups, such as by making job applications anonymous to protect the candidates' ethnicity, going forward? ...

Jane Hutt: Thank you very much, and I do welcome that question. Indeed, if you look at the anti-racist action plan for Wales, it covers every department of the Welsh Government, with actions and goals. So, clearly, that includes not just health but health and social care as well. So, the goals, as far as the Wales NHS are concerned, are that it should be and must be anti-racist, and staff should be able to work in safe, inclusive environments. I have also met with the BMA and also with

the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin on a number of occasions, and I attend—as I'm sure you do as well, and colleagues—their annual events. They have contributed to the anti-racist action plan for Wales, and, indeed, the goals and the objectives for the Minister for Health and Social Services are very clear in terms of delivering on those objectives for our Welsh NHS. And can we again thank those who work in the Welsh NHS—we were recognising the anniversary yesterday—and the role that they played during the pandemic, in terms of our black, Asian and minority ethnic professionals and colleagues in the NHS, when they were also disproportionately being affected by the pandemic? So, I'm very grateful for that question, and we will ensure that we will report, because there is an accountability committee, which is co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary and Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna, and, indeed, with representation from the NHS on it.

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/12901#C440904>

The Anti-Racist Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/anti-racist-wales-action-plan_0.pdf

The BMA report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bma.org.uk/media/5746/bma-racism-in-medicine-survey-report-15-june-2022.pdf>

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House of Commons Debate

Strategy for International Development

col 920 Gareth Thomas (Labour Co-op): ... May I take [Sarah Champion] back to a debate she initiated in Westminster Hall on the plight of the Palestinians and the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency—a crucial part of the multilateral system that does so much to support Palestinians in the worst conditions in Gaza, the west bank and elsewhere in the middle east? I am sure my hon. Friend agrees that it would be good to hear from the Minister how the UNRWA pledging conference went—the Minister was good enough to reference the conference in her response to the debate last week—as well as what Britain's contribution was and why no Minister from the UK attended.

Sarah Champion (Labour): I second everything my hon. Friend has said. ...

col 972 The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Vicky Ford): ... I was asked why we were not at the UNRWA meeting at ministerial level. We were there at a senior official level, where we pledged. The meeting took place in New York in the same week that the Minister for Asia and the Middle East was visiting an UNRWA-supported refugee camp in Jerusalem. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-07-06/debates/F6F6A449-9CB1-4423-8F40-6C2710E529D7/StrategyForInternationalDevelopment>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

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

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Written statement: Foreign Interference Offence: Online Safety Bill

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-07-06/debates/22070624000011/ForeignInterferenceOffenceOnlineSafetyBill>

Notice of amendments

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0121/amend/onlinesafety_rm_rep_0707v3.pdf

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Public Participation at the Scottish Parliament (closing date 22 July 2022)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cppp/participation-2022/>

Standards for ethnicity data (closing date 30 August 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-ethnicity-data>

Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25 (closing date 23 September 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

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