Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Home Office: Grants

Julian Knight (Independent) [189266] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Government grants statistics 2020 to 2021, published 31 March 2022, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the National Online Hate Crime Hub Grant.

Sarah Dines: In 2021/22 the Home Office provided a grant of £300,000 to the Online Hate Crime Hub. The Hub consists of a specialist police team based in Greater Manchester Police that works to improve the police response to online hate crime. The Hub provides a service for victims of online hate crime to report these crimes to the police and have cases effectively investigated. The Hub provides expert case management and victim support in relation to these abhorrent offences. This grant award supported the Home Office priority to cut crime and protect vulnerable people and communities.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-13/189266

The statistics referred to above can be read at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/government-grants-statistics-2020-to-2021

Information about the Online Hate Crime Hub, referred to above, can be read at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-new-national-online-hate-crime-hub

House of Lords Written Answer

Police: Hate Crime

Lord Jackson of Peterborough (Conservative) [HL8297] To ask His Majesty's Government, with regard to the case of Miller v College of Policing, what steps they are taking to ensure that police forces in England and Wales pay due regard to freedom of speech in the discharge of their responsibilities in respect of allegations of criminal activity arising from social media communication.
Lord Sharpe of Epsom: To address the Miller v College of Policing judgment and wider concerns relating to the recording of non-crime hate incidents, the Government has introduced a statutory code of practice on this recording for police officers in England and Wales, as provided for in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The code, which entered into effect on 3 June following Parliamentary approval, introduces a new threshold test that means that personal data may only be included in a non-crime hate incident record if the event is clearly motivated by intentional hostility and there is a risk of escalation causing significant harm or a criminal offence. The code will ensure non-crime hate incidents are only recorded when it is absolutely necessary and proportionate to do so, and not simply because someone is offended. This Government is confident that the code strikes the right balance between better protecting people’s fundamental right to freedom of expression, whilst enabling the police to continue to protect vulnerable people and communities.

Reported hate crimes will continue to be recorded in line with the College of Policing’s operational guidance on hate crime.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-07/hl8297

The judgement referred to above can be read at

The code of practice referred to above can be read at

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

UK public bodies banned from imposing their own boycotts against foreign countries
UK public bodies will be banned from imposing their own boycott or divestment campaigns against foreign countries and territories, Michael Gove has announced …

The Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill … sends a clear message to councils and other publicly-funded institutions that they need to focus on delivering for the public and not spending tax-payers’ money pursuing their own foreign policy agenda. Those who break the rules will face significant fines with Ministers among those able to conduct investigations into suspected breaches.

Today’s Bill will stop businesses and organisations – including those affiliated with Israel - being targeted through ongoing boycotts by public bodies – leading to community tensions and, in the case of Israel, a rise in antisemitism.

Universities, too, have been pressured by groups that want to impose their own subjective views about foreign policy upon public institutions: the goal often being to shut down rather than open up debate, serving to undermine free speech and educational study.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove said: It is simply wrong that public bodies have been wasting taxpayers’ time and money pursuing their own foreign policy agenda. The UK must have a consistent approach to foreign policy, set by UK Government.

These campaigns not only undermine the UK’s foreign policy but lead to appalling antisemitic rhetoric and abuse. That is why we have taken this decisive action to stop these disruptive policies once and for all. …

The President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews President Marie van der Zyl said: We are pleased to support the Government’s endeavours in the Economic Activity of
Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill which will directly hinder the unnecessary and inappropriate targeting of Israel by local authorities and other public institutions. We appreciate how the Government is working to prevent these organisations from setting their own foreign policy, which all too often creates a deeply divisive local situation as well as being deeply unsettling to local Jewish communities. … The changes announced today will ensure the UK is united in its foreign policy – stopping the harmful policies that are hampering our foreign diplomacy including those that are antisemitic.

The Government remains strongly committed to the UK’s long and proud tradition of free speech. The ban will not apply to individuals or private organisations, where they are not carrying out public functions. It will also not change the UK’s approach to the Middle East Peace Process, or our position on settlements, which are illegal under international law. This Bill has been widely supported by the Jewish Leadership Council as is part of the Government’s wider commitment to combat antisemitism. This includes the Holocaust Memorial Bill which seeks to progress the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, Westminster to preserve the memory of what happened for ourselves and for all future generations as we seek to understand the lessons it teaches Britain today. …

To read the full press release see https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-public-bodies-banned-from-imposing-their-own-boycotts-against-foreign-countries

Scottish Government

Embedding rights into the Constitution

… The Scottish Government favours a constitution which would include:

• recognition of the NHS in Scotland, giving the right to access a system of health care, available free at the point of need
• stronger protections for human rights and equality, including upholding and fulfilling the right to an adequate standard of living as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
• the right for workers to take industrial action
• a constitutional ban on nuclear weapons being based in Scotland …

First Minister Humza Yousaf said: “Our proposals would provide an opportunity for people in Scotland to shape the newly independent country and create a permanent, modern, written constitution to describe the type of country Scotland would be and how it would be governed. … The constitution would set out how democracy, rights and equality would be at the heart of everything we do as an independent nation. … “With rights in Scotland under threat as never before, because of the actions of the UK Government, and the Scottish Parliament being undermined, independence has never been more urgent or essential.”


Building a New Scotland: Creating a modern constitution for an independent Scotland


Employment Appeal Tribunal

Higgs v Farmor’s School

The claimant worked as a pastoral administrator and work experience manager in the
respondent secondary school. After complaints were received relating to Facebook posts the claimant had made relating to relationships education in primary schools, she was suspended and, after a disciplinary investigation, subsequently dismissed from her employment. The claimant complained that these actions amounted to direct discrimination because of, or to harassment relating to, her protected beliefs. The Employment Tribunal (ET) concluded, however, that the measures taken by the respondent had been due to its concerns that someone reading the claimant’s posts could reasonably consider she held homophobic and transphobic views (which she denied) and that the reason for its actions was, therefore, not because of, or related to, the claimant’s protected beliefs. The claimant appealed.

… the ET had failed to engage with the question identified in Eweida and ors v United Kingdom (2013) 57 EHRR 8; had it done so, it would have concluded that there was a close or direct nexus between the claimant’s Facebook posts and her protected beliefs. That being so … the ET had been required to assess whether those actions were prescribed by law and were necessary for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, recognising the essential nature of the claimant’s rights to freedom of belief and freedom of expression (articles 9 and 10 European Convention of Human Rights). …

As the ET had erred in its approach to the determination of the “reason why” question in this case, this matter would be remitted for re-hearing on this issue. …

To read the full judgement see
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/648c209bb32b9e0012a9691c/Mrs_Kristie_Higgs_v_1__Farmor_s_School_2__Archbishops__Council_of_the_Church_of_England__2023__EAT_89.pdf

The European Court of Human Rights judgement referred to above can be read at
https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-115881

Israel

Also see the press release “UK public bodies banned from imposing their own boycotts against foreign countries” which is included in the Home Affairs section above.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Updated Travel Advice: Israel
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel

Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

The following four questions all received the same answer
Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review
Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [189131] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign,
Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [189132] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK has (a) initiated and (b) supported any UN Human Rights Council resolutions to combat intolerance relating to religion or belief since the Bishop of Truro’s 2019 Independent Review for the UK Foreign Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Office Support for Persecuted Christians.

Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [189133] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken through the UN General Assembly to help implement the recommendations on freedom of religion or belief in the Bishop of Truro’s 2019 Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Office Support for Persecuted Christians.

Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [189138] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has taken steps to press the UN Security Council to (a) review and (b) report on how the UN could better respond to violations of freedom of religion or belief (i) during conflicts and (ii) in non-conflict situations since the Bishop of Truro’s 2019 Independent Review for the UK Foreign Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Office Support for Persecuted Christians.

Andrew Mitchell: The Bishop of Truro’s review provided recommendations for a Government response to support members of all faiths, beliefs, and those of no religious belief. We have taken forward the 22 recommendations in a way that makes a real change for everyone persecuted because of their religion or belief. We continue to work with UN and other multilateral fora to promote Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all. FoRB was a key strand of our successful campaign to be re-elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term January 2021 to December 2023. In March 2021, Lord Ahmad hosted a meeting at the UN Security Council to raise awareness of persecution of religious minorities in conflict zones such as Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq. On 14 June 2023, the UN Security Council adopted unanimously a UK-UAE co-penned resolution on Tolerance and International Peace and Security, including wording on FoRB.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-13/189131
and
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-13/189132
and
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-13/189133
and
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-13/189138

The Review referred to above can be read at

The Security Council Resolution referred to above can be read at

TOP
Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227

** Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475
Bill as introduced
First Reading, House of Commons
https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-06-19/debates/1A5DBD1C-906F-49F4-820B-DDFB2C4AA3E4/PointsOfOrder#contribution-48CC08D2-1A8C-48DB-A00A-84316FCC234D

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186

Holocaust Memorial Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325

** Online Safety Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137
Notice of amendments
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51703/documents/3615

Nakba Commemoration Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438

Schools Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill
Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

Consultations ** new or updated today

** closes in 3 days
Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill (closing date 23 June 2023)
https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3146/

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland (closing date 5 October 2023)