



MEMO is produced by the [Scottish Council of Jewish Communities \(SCoJeC\)](#) in partnership with [BEMIS – empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities](#). It provides an overview of information of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, including parliamentary activity at Holyrood and Westminster, new publications, consultations, forthcoming conferences, and news reports.

Contents

Immigration and Asylum

Equality

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Other UK Parliament and Government

Health Information: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Bills in Progress

Consultations

Job Opportunities

Funding Opportunities

Events, Conferences, and Training

Useful Links

Note that some weblinks, particularly of newspaper articles, are only valid for a short period of time, usually around a month, and that the Scottish and UK Parliament and Government websites have been redesigned, so that links published in previous issues of MEMO may no longer work. To find archive material on these websites, copy details from MEMO into the relevant search facility.

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Immigration and Asylum

UK Parliament Debate

Windrush Compensation Scheme

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-05-06/debates/FAC330D5-B098-4038-AB70-88A1017335EE/WindrushCompensationScheme>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Immigrants: Finance

Rachel Hopkins (Labour) [39718] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has undertaken an assessment of the financial effect of the covid-19 outbreak on people who have no recourse to public funds.

Rachel Hopkins (Labour) [39719] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to suspend the no recourse to public funds status during the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office is working closely with other government departments to support people, including migrants with no recourse to public funds, through this crisis. We are taking a compassionate and pragmatic approach to an unprecedented situation. Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have the NRPF restriction lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if there has been a change in their financial circumstances. The Home Office has recently digitised the application form to make sure it is accessible for those who need to remain at home, and I can assure you that the applications are being dealt with swiftly and compassionately.

Many of the wide-ranging Covid-19 measures the government has put in place are not public funds and therefore are available to migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). We therefore do not believe it is necessary to suspend the NRPF condition.

The Coronavirus job retention scheme, self-employment income support and statutory sick pay are not classed as public funds for immigration purposes. Contribution-based benefits are also not classed as public funds for immigration purposes. Additionally, measures we have brought forward such as rent and mortgage protections are not considered public funds and can be accessed by migrants with leave to remain.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

In addition, the Government has made in excess of £3.2 billion of funding to local authorities in England, and additional funding under the Barnett formula to the devolved administrations to enable them to respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including services helping the most vulnerable.

More information on the support available to migrants, including those with NRPF, can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-24/39718/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-24/39719/>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Immigrants: Finance

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40642] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on its reassessment of the restrictions on no recourse to public funds which are preventing some people accessing benefits and other support during the covid-19 outbreak.

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40643] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Work and Pensions on ending no recourse to public funds restrictions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40644] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on ending no recourse to public funds restrictions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40645] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the process is for local authorities to reclaim funding spent on housing homeless people under no recourse to public funds conditions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office is working closely with other government departments, including the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support people, including migrants with no recourse to public funds, through this crisis. We are taking a compassionate and pragmatic approach to an unprecedented situation.

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have the NRPF restriction lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if there has been a change in their financial circumstances. The Home Office has recently digitised the application form to make sure it is accessible for those who need to remain at home, and I can assure you that the applications are being dealt with swiftly and compassionately.

Many of the wide-ranging Covid-19 measures the government has put in place are not public funds and therefore are available to migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). We therefore do not believe it is necessary to suspend the NRPF condition.

The Coronavirus job retention scheme, self-employment income support and statutory sick pay are not classed as public funds for immigration purposes. Contribution-based benefits are also not classed as public funds for immigration purposes. Additionally, measures we have brought forward such as rent and mortgage protections are not considered public funds and can be accessed by migrants with leave to remain.

In addition, the Government has made in excess of £3.2 billion of funding to local authorities in England, and additional funding under the Barnett formula to the devolved administrations to enable them to respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including services helping the most vulnerable.

Funding provided to local authorities under the Covid-19 emergency response will be paid through a grant that is not ring-fenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how this funding is spent.

More information on the support available to migrants, including those with NRPF, can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40642/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40643/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40644/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40645/>

The following five questions all received the same answer

Immigrants: Finance

Stephen Timms (Labour) [41881] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter dated 28 April 2020 to the Chairs of the Work and Pensions and Home Affairs Select Committees, what evidence her Department is considering in keeping under review whether the no recourse to public funds condition

should be suspended.

Stephen Timms (Labour) [41882] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether people whose leave to remain in the UK is subject to no recourse to public funds are entitled to support from Local Welfare Assistance Schemes; and if she will make a statement.

Stephen Timms (Labour) [41883] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter dated 28 April 2020 to the Chairs of the Work and Pensions and Home Affairs Select Committees, what steps her Department is taking to obtain evidence from local authorities in order to keep under review whether the no recourse to public funds condition should be suspended.

Stephen Timms (Labour) [41884] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter dated 28 April 2020 to the Chairs of the Work and Pensions and Home Affairs Select Committees, what steps her Department is taking to obtain evidence from (a) foodbanks and (b) other charities in order to keep under review whether the no recourse to public funds condition should be suspended.

Stephen Timms (Labour) [41885] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter dated 28 April 2020 to the Chairs of the Work and Pensions and Home Affairs Select Committees, what criteria her Department will take account of in determining whether the no recourse to public funds condition should be suspended.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office is working closely with other government departments, including the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care to support people, including migrants with NRPF, through this crisis. Departments are sharing what they are learning from other bodies and charities with each other to ensure we continue to take a compassionate and pragmatic approach to an unprecedented situation. Many of the wide-ranging Covid-19 measures the Government has put in place are not public funds and are available to migrants with NRPF as described in the Home Secretary's letter of 28 April to the Chairs of the Work and Pensions and Home Affairs Select Committee. Furthermore, the Government has published advice and information about the support available to migrants living here, including where they are subject to NRPF. This information covers statutory sick pay, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>

Local Welfare Assistance Schemes are classed as public funds and so not available to migrants with NRPF. Local authorities can, however, provide basic safety net support if it is established there is a care need which does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question. The Government has provided more than £3.2 billion of funding to local authorities in England, and additional funding under the Barnett formula to the devolved administrations to enable them to respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including services helping the most vulnerable.

In addition, on the 8th April the Chancellor announced an additional £750m package of support for charities across the UK to ensure they can continue their vital work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In light of the support available, we do not believe it is necessary to suspend the NRPF condition. We will keep the situation under review and consider further measures if needed.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/41881/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/41882/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/41883/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/41884/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/41885/>

The letter referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/833/documents/5401/default>

Immigrants: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes (Labour) [38512] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the levels of covid-19 infection amongst migrant groups with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) status; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people with NRPF status have access to public health information and services.

Reply from Jo Churchill: Public Health England has updated its guidance on National Health Service entitlements in the migrant health guide to make it clear that people have free entitlement to care related to COVID-19, irrespective of their immigration status. The guidance can be seen at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide#main-messages>

There are ongoing discussions across Government about the needs of vulnerable population groups. More information will be provided in due course.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-21/38512/>

Visas: Coronavirus

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [40514] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will waive the requirement for applicants for Indefinite Leave to Remain not to have spent more than 90 days outside the UK in circumstances where applicants are unable to return to the UK due to travel restrictions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Individuals who hold leave in categories including Tier 2, Start-up and Global Talent are allowed a maximum of 180 days absence from the UK without breaking their continuous residence. However, the published guidance confirms that applicants may exceed the 180 days in the event of serious or compelling circumstances. This would include travel disruption caused by the covid-19 pandemic.

A full list of categories covered by this exemption is available at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/indefinite-leave-to-remain-calculating-continuous-period-in-uk

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40514/>

NHS: Migrant Workers

Gavin Robinson (DUP) [40640] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

what assessment she has made of the potential merits of (a) providing financial support for, (b) extending the terms of the visas of and (c) granting leave to remain to family members of key NHS workers residing in the UK on a Tier 2 visa in the event that those key NHS workers die as a result of covid-19.

Reply from Kevin Foster: As set out in the announcement by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 27 April, family members of NHS workers who die as a result of contracting Coronavirus (Covid-19) will receive £60,000.

The Home Secretary has also confirmed the Home Office will grant Indefinite Leave to Remain to family members of migrant NHS workers who die as a result of contracting Coronavirus (Covid-19).

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40640/>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/health-and-social-care-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-27-april-2020>

The confirmation referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/download/file/?url=%2Fpublications%2F835%2Fdocuments%2F5378&slug=20200429-visa-extensions-for-care-workers-and-the-announced-nhs-visa-extension-offerpdf>

Immigration: Married People

Kirsten Oswald (SNP) [39648] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of applications from the non-EEA (a) spouse and (b) partner of a UK citizens to (a) extend their leave and (b) apply for indefinite leave to remain that will be made in the next 12 months.

Reply from Kevin Foster: As part of UK Visa & Immigration's ongoing operational forecasting activities we regularly review and refresh the number of applications we expect from all routes including non-EEA spouses and partners of UK Citizens.

The Home Office publishes data on decisions on applications for leave to remain and indefinite leave to remain in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)' available on GOV.UK

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-24/39648/>

Immigration: Married People

Kirsten Oswald (SNP) [40657] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ask the Migration Advisory Committee to consider and make recommendations on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of non-EEA spouses and partners to meet Minimum Income Requirements.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation closely and take these exceptional circumstances into account.

The minimum income requirement, which was set following advice from the Migration Advisory Committee, can be met in a number of ways in addition to or instead of income from employment or self-employment. For example, income from the couple's investments, property rental or pension may also be taken into account, together with their cash savings.

These are unprecedented times and we may make further temporary adjustments to requirements where necessary and appropriate to ensure people are not unduly affected by or penalised for circumstances beyond their control.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40657/>

Visas: Married People

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [40621] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to grant extensions to family visas for visa holders that are unable to marry before those visas expire during the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation closely and take these exceptional circumstances into account.

The current family Immigration Rules allow a fiancé(e) or proposed civil partner to apply for an extension of leave for a further six-months if there is good reason for their wedding or civil partnership not taking place during the initial six-month period of leave to enter. Cancellation of a wedding due to Covid-19 will be considered a good reason under this policy.

These are unprecedented times and we may make further adjustments to requirements where necessary and appropriate. We will ensure people are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40621/>

Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

Colum Eastwood (SDLP) [40794] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to relax visa-based barriers to work for students who may need to remain longer in the UK to complete their studies as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Work related restrictions for Tier 4 students who are employed or volunteering in NHS Trusts as Doctors, Nurses and Paramedics have been relaxed. Students who are working in these roles for an NHS trust are currently able to work full-time.

Students who aren't working for the NHS can also work full-time where their sponsoring institution has suspended all studies. If an institution is continuing to offer tuition via distance learning, students continue to be restricted in working hours in the normal way.

Where students are unable to complete their courses within the initial validity of their leave, they will be able to apply for further leave within the UK to complete their studies and will be exempt from demonstrating the academic progression requirement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40794/>

Windrush Generation Compensation

Catherine West (Labour) [41561] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress has been made on the Windrush compensation scheme; and what further steps she plans to take to speed up the compensation process for claimants.

Reply from Priti Patel: We publish information on the total number of claims submitted, claims paid and the overall amount paid out by the Windrush Compensation Scheme on a quarterly basis. The latest set of data can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-february-2020>.

We are processing claims as quickly as possible, but all claims are different, and the time taken will depend on many factors, including the complexity of the case.

We are committed to working with the claimant to ensure all possible information is taken into account and this will have an impact on the length of time it takes to process the claim. Wherever possible, we will make interim payments on parts of

the claim that are straightforward to determine, such as immigration fees, thereby speeding up the provision of compensation.

In recent months, we have made several announcements in relation to the Windrush Compensation Scheme to encourage more people to submit a claim, and to help those who already have. We have extended the length of the Scheme by two years, to April 2023, to give individuals more time to submit a claim for compensation. We have also amended the mitigation policy – the criteria by which financial settlements are made – to take a wider range of circumstances into account when deciding awards. This change may help some people qualify for higher awards, particularly relating to loss of employment.

We recently announced that we will launch a dedicated national communications campaign, targeting individuals affected by Windrush across the UK. Further to this, we will open a £500k fund for grassroots organisations to promote the schemes. The fund and communications campaign will help to raise awareness of the Windrush Compensation Scheme and encourage eligible people to apply.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-29/41561/>

Information about the Windrush Compensation Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>

EU Nationals: Immigration

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [41393] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) extending the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme beyond 30 June 2021 and (b) making the EU settlement scheme an automatic registration system in response to additional pressures on the Civil Service resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Kevin Foster: There are no plans to extend the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme or to replace it with an automatic registration system. There is still over a year before the deadline of 30 June 2021 and the latest published statistics, to 31 March 2020, show the scheme is performing well, with more than 3.4 million applications having been received and over 3.1 million concluded. The Home Office has continued to receive and process applications throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

EU citizens can apply online, free of charge, simply by completing three key steps: proving their identity, showing they live in the UK and declaring any criminal convictions. There is support available online, by email and by telephone from our assisted digital provider.

Where a person eligible for leave under the scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the application deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply. Our compassionate and flexible approach will ensure that individuals who miss the deadline through no fault of their own can still obtain lawful status in the UK. We will publish clear guidance for caseworkers in due course to ensure consistency of approach.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-29/41393/>

Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Tracey Crouch (Conservative) [37580] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help prevent illegal migrants from

crossing the English Channel to enter the UK.

Reply from Chris Philp: Keeping our border secure is the Government's highest priority and it is committed to doing everything it can to stop these dangerous Channel crossings which are putting vulnerable lives at risk.

The Home Office liaises directly with the French Interior Ministry on addressing the issue of illegal migration, engaging at an official, diplomatic level and supported at an operational level through regular UK-French Migration Committees.

Through this joint-working, the UK has funded the continued deployment of gendarme reservists along the coast of northern France, who are patrolling constantly in order to detect attempted crossings by migrants. Funding has been allocated, among other projects, for further improvements at ports in northern France and on the ground, this now includes drones, specialist vehicles and detection equipment to stop small boats leaving European shores.

Intelligence flows are also key to dismantling the organised crime groups behind crossings. We have restructured and repurposed our approach to support the growing intelligence feeds which is used to inform and direct how and where resource is deployed.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-20/37580/>

Refugees: Children

Barry Gardiner (Labour) [40461] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of child refugees approved for family reunification in the UK are detained in refugee camps in Greece following the cancellation of flights during the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office does not hold detailed information on the location of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children within European Member States. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the UK remains fully committed to meeting our obligations under the Dublin III Regulation. The Home Office continues to process Dublin cases, including children, as far as we are able given the current circumstances and remains open to receiving transfers into the UK.

Arrangements to complete a transfer have always been and still are the responsibility of the sending State. We continue to liaise with our counterparts in Member States so that we can effect transfers as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40461/>

Refugees: Children

Rachel Hopkins (Labour) [39717] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the UK meets its obligation to reunite child refugees with family members in the UK where their applications have been accepted.

Reply from Chris Philp: The UK remains fully committed to meeting our obligations under the Dublin III Regulation. The Regulation makes it very clear that once a take charge request has been accepted for an unaccompanied child, the transfer is the responsibility of the requesting State.

Despite covid-19 restrictions the UK remains ready to accept transfers under Dublin whenever Member States are in a position to make those arrangements. We are continuing to liaise with our counterparts in Member States so that we can effect transfers as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-24/39717/>

Refugees: Children

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [41086] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure child refugees with family in the UK are able to access flights to enter the UK.

Reply from Chris Philp: The UK remains fully committed to meeting our obligations under the Dublin III Regulation. Despite covid-19 restrictions the UK remains ready to accept transfers under Dublin whenever Member States are in a position to make those arrangements.

The Dublin Regulation makes it very clear that once a take charge request has been accepted for an unaccompanied child, the transfer is the responsibility of the requesting State. We are continuing to liaise with our counterparts in Member States so that we can effect transfers as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-28/41086/>

Asylum: Coronavirus

Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op) [42256] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure adequate (a) healthcare and (b) financial support for asylum seekers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Chris Philp: Asylum seekers have full access to the NHS and all those being accommodated by the Home Office are receiving translated public health guidance in relation to Covid-19, including how to prevent its spread and measures they should take to protect themselves and others.

We are currently reviewing the level of the cash allowances, as we do each year, to ensure that they remain capable of meeting the essential living needs of asylum seekers

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/42256/>

Detention Centres: Coronavirus

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [39786] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure migrants in immigration detention are able to access soap and sanitiser.

Reply from Chris Philp: The safety and health of people in the detention estate is of the utmost importance. We are following all Public Health England guidance on COVID-19 and have robust contingency plans in place, including measures such as shielding and use of personal protective equipment.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling COVID-19. Handwashing facilities are available in all immigration removal centres and we are working closely with suppliers to ensure we have an adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials. In addition, each centre has posters and leaflets to inform staff and detainees about the importance of handwashing and social distancing to minimise the risk from COVID-19. Detainees are also able to speak to staff directly for advice on the protective measures in place.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-24/39786/>

Detention Centres: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [41564] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to protect people in immigration removal centres from covid-19 by ensuring access to (a) testing, (b) personal protective equipment and (c) space to self isolate.

Reply from Chris Philp: The safety and health of people in the detention estate is

of the utmost importance.

We are following Public Health England guidance on COVID-19 and have robust contingency plans in place. Measures such as protective isolation and shielding will be considered on a case-by-case basis to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading to vulnerable groups in the immigration removal estate. Additionally, all those who fall into the PHE 'high risk' cohort receive personal care plans. Further measures including reverse cohorting, single occupancy rooms and the cessation of social visits have been introduced in line with the Government direction on social distancing.

Handwashing facilities are available in all immigration removal centres and we are working closely with suppliers to ensure we have an adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials. In addition, each centre has posters and leaflets to inform staff and detainees about the importance of both personal hygiene and social distancing to minimise the risk from COVID-19. Detainees are also able to speak to staff directly for advice on the protective measures in place.

Appropriate PPE equipment is available to Home Office, contractor and healthcare staff when interacting with detainees being held in isolation and at times of heightened risk of transmission, including on reception.

The Home Office is working closely with NHS England health and justice teams and regional commissioning teams to support their planning and delivery of healthcare services, including testing, in immigration removal centres during the COVID-19 outbreak.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-29/41564/>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Detention Centres: Coronavirus

Barry Gardiner (Labour) [40458] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) detainees and (b) staff of immigration detention centres have been tested for covid-19.

Immigrants: Detainees

Barry Gardiner (Labour) [40459] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many detainees in immigration detention centres have tested positive for covid-19.

Detention Centres: Disease Control

Barry Gardiner (Labour) [40460] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been released from immigration detention centres since social distancing measures were introduced.

Reply from Chris Philp: The health of those in immigration removal centres is of the utmost importance but we remain committed to removing foreign national offenders or those who violate our immigration rules. Detention plays a key role in securing our borders and maintaining effective immigration control and it is only right that we protect the public from high-harm individuals, which is why the vast majority of those in detention are foreign national offenders.

Decisions to detain an individual are based on all of the information known at the time. As circumstances change, temporary release may then become the most appropriate option.

We are following all Public Health England guidance and have robust contingency plans in place. Measures such as protective isolation will be considered to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading to vulnerable groups in the immigration detention estate.

All immigration removal centres have dedicated health facilities run by doctors and nurses which are managed by the NHS or appropriate providers.

There are currently no cases of Coronavirus, in detainees, in immigration removal

centres.

Provisional management information indicates that as of 27 April four members of IRC supplier staff have tested positive for COVID-19, one of whom has now fully recovered and returned to duty. In addition, there have been two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in detainees. A third individual was identified but after his release from detention had been agreed. Whilst in the IRC the individual was in isolation. He was released as there was no immediate prospect of removal. No other detainees have tested positive for COVID-19.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40458/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40459/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40460/>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Immigrants: Detainees

Olivia Blake (Labour) [42219] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to suspend the detention of migrants in detention centres during the covid-19 outbreak.

Detention Centres: Coronavirus

Olivia Blake (Labour) [42220] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on placing people in detention centres during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps she is taking to protect detainees in those centres from the spread of covid-19.

Reply from Chris Philp: The health and safety of those in immigration removal centres is of the utmost importance but we remain committed to removing foreign national offenders or those who violate our immigration rules. Detention plays a key role in securing our borders and maintaining effective immigration control.

There is a general presumption of liberty for all individuals. Detention is used only when necessary, and decisions to detain an individual are made on a case by case basis and are based on all of the information known at the time of the review. As circumstances of the case change, detention is reviewed in light of these changes and release may then become appropriate.

The Home Office is following all Public Health England guidance and have robust contingency plans in place including measures such as protective isolation and shielding to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the immigration detention estate. All detainees are seen by a nurse within two hours of arrival in an immigration removal centre and have the option to see a doctor within 24 hours of arrival.

Additionally, all those who fall into the Public Health England 'high risk' cohort receive personal care plans. Further measures including reverse cohorting, single occupancy rooms and the cessation of social visits have been introduced in line with the Government direction on social distancing.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling COVID-19. Handwashing facilities are available in all immigration removal centres and we are working closely with suppliers to ensure we have an adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials. In addition, each centre has posters and leaflets to inform staff and detainees about the importance of both personal hygiene and social distancing to minimise the risk from COVID-19. Detainees are also able to speak to staff directly for advice on the protective measures in place.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/42219/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/42220/>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

National Asylum Support Service

Baroness Doocey (Liberal Democrat): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that those accommodated by the National Asylum Support Service are able to follow social distancing guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Question was considered in a Virtual Proceeding via video call.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford):

My Lords, we have worked closely with Public Health England to ensure that asylum accommodation providers follow relevant guidance and are supporting asylum seekers to social distance within the accommodation estate. All supported asylum seekers receive translated guidance and increased contact management. In hostel-based accommodation, measures taken include segregation of symptomatic service users, sequencing of mealtimes, two-metre marking to ensure social distancing and increased cleaning and hygiene regimes.

Baroness Doocey: I thank the Minister for that response, but what she has said is just not consistent in any way with the experience of charities working with these people on a daily basis. Refugee Action, Asylum Matters and the Scottish Refugee Council have described the situation in detention centres as life threatening. People are being forced to share kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms and sometimes even beds with complete strangers. This goes against everything the Government are advising. Will the Minister agree to meet me and some of these charities so that she can see for herself exactly what the situation is on the ground?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are working with accommodation providers and NGOs—and in the detention estate, as the noble Baroness outlines—to ensure that they are providing services to vulnerable asylum seekers. Our providers have identified vulnerable service users and are providing them with additional support, including supplying food parcels where needed. We have also procured 4,000 single hotel rooms to assist with initial asylum seekers at this time.

Lord Judd (Labour): My Lords, I thank the Lord Speaker for calling me and the noble Baroness, Lady Doocey, for asking this Question. Is it not essential that all those dealing with asylum seekers constantly remember that these people—women, children and men—have been through terrible experiences, too often involving torture, which in many instances have left them scarred? Is it not therefore essential that, in all that we do, we take as warm and supportive an attitude as possible and that we avoid a minimalist, regimented regime? Should the good Samaritan not constantly be our example?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, the noble Lord is absolutely right. Some of these people will have had the most terrible experiences. Nobody whose asylum application is complete will be asked to leave the country. As I said, we are procuring 4,000 hotel rooms. People in both our asylum estate and our detention estate are treated as any other member of the public would be, whether they are vulnerable, as the noble Lord outlined, or not.

Lord Dholakia (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, it is not easy to provide a safe distancing policy in our overcrowded penal institutions. Once the state detains inmates, it assumes full responsibility for their safety and welfare. What effort has been made to ensure that people are released from detention centres to places of safety in the community? Will the

Minister ensure that there is a moratorium on deportation until it is safe to deport people?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: As I explained to the noble Lord, Lord Judd, at this point in time nobody whose case has been concluded and who is due to leave will be asked to leave. That will be the position up to June and possibly beyond. The noble Lord is absolutely right: the asylum estate has as many obligations in terms of social distancing as any other place in the UK. I do not think that deportations are happening at the moment either.

Baroness Pidding (Conservative): My Lords, my question refers to the wider issue of migrants arriving in the UK. Last month, four boats carrying up to 57 migrants were intercepted by HM Coastguard and the Border Force in the English Channel. Can my noble friend reassure us that our coastguard and Border Force officers are adequately provided with PPE when dealing with such eventualities, and that any such migrants will be given health checks and monitored for signs of Covid-19?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My noble friend is absolutely right that migrants arriving in the UK should be assessed. Certainly, if they are being put into accommodation, we want to ensure that they are not Covid-positive. If anyone moved into initial accommodation—possibly a hostel-type arrangement—is symptomatic, they are moved into hotel-type accommodation so that they can segregate and isolate. I join calls every day with our Border Force colleagues, and I understand that their PPE requirements are adequate.

Baroness Coussins (Crossbench): My Lords, what advice and information on Covid-19 is available in languages other than English, in what format and in which languages? How is it made accessible to people needing help from the National Asylum Support Service, including through the use of registered public service interpreters?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, all asylum seekers currently accommodated in asylum support properties can receive advice on asylum support and associated Covid-19 guidance and signposting through our advice, issue reporting and eligibility provider, Migrant Help. They can contact Migrant Help 24 hours a day on a freephone number if they need assistance or guidance. The AIRE service provides all the current process, policy and health guidelines, as well as immediate access to service providers for escalation. The translated public health guidance is available in 12 languages, with instructions to service users.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour): My Lords, the daily asylum support rate of £5.39 is insufficient to meet health and hygiene needs. Will the Minister therefore undertake to press for an emergency uplift in line with UC as a matter of urgency?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Baroness might be pleased to know that we are currently reviewing the level of allowance, taking Covid-19 factors into consideration. However, I cannot promise uplifts to UC levels.

Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, my noble friend Lady Doocey outlined the shocking plight of refugees, who are forced to make the impossible choice between enduring dangerously unsanitary conditions here or the dangers of returning home to the source of their persecution. I was very pleased to hear the Minister talk about the 4,000 hotel rooms that have been made available; we know that hotel chains have been very generous in their offer of rooms. How many refugees are currently staying in hotel accommodation? How many are left living in other types of accommodation, and what are the plans to ensure that they have safe, sanitary conditions in which to sit out the pandemic?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: There are basically three types of accommodation: the initial, hostel-type accommodation facilities for people arriving here; hotel accommodation facilities, as the noble Baroness mentioned and as I pointed out earlier; and dispersed accommodation, which is where the significant majority of our service users reside. The latter consists of houses or homes of

multiple occupancy, which obviously accommodate smaller numbers. I cannot give her the figures on hotel accommodation, but I can certainly write to or email her with these.

Lord Rosser (Labour): The Refugee Council has persistently campaigned for better access to healthcare for asylum seekers, noting that a lack of confidence in communicating in English and confusion over the support available act as huge obstacles. Will the Minister make urgent representations to the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure that all asylum seekers have access to healthcare, and specifically testing, during the Covid-19 pandemic? Secondly, I think that the noble Baroness, Lady Doocey, asked the Minister for a meeting. Did the Minister agree to that?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I did not confirm that, but I am very happy to have a virtual meeting with the noble Baroness. On healthcare, as I said earlier, all asylum accommodation providers continue to provide translated public health guidance, which is available in 12 languages, and instructions to service users. Nobody, whether an asylum seeker or not, need worry that healthcare will not be available to them.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-05-06/debates/34B285A7-F1A0-4C18-AB8C-38A3F59CCDDF/NationalAsylumSupportService>

Information about Migrant Help, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.migranthehelpuk.org/>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Immigrants: Health Services

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL3040] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the immigration health surcharge on NHS and care workers; and what plans they have to suspend the charge for this group in the light of their contribution to health and social care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government is immensely grateful for the dedication of all those working to tackle coronavirus.

On 31 March the Home Secretary announced that the Home Office will automatically extend the visa of any NHS doctor, nurse or paramedic, where it will expire before 1 October, for 12 months, free of charge. This includes an exemption from payment of the immigration health surcharge.

We will continue to look at whether we can provide further assistance during the fight against this virus.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3040/>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nhs-frontline-workers-visas-extended-so-they-can-focus-on-fighting-coronavirus>

Doctors and Nurses: Migrant Workers

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL3064] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) nurses, and (2) doctors, whose countries of origin are outside the UK, are working in the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Lord Bethell: NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care or in general practitioner surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The latest data shows that, on a headcount basis, as at December 2019 there were:

- 35,204 non-United Kingdom national doctors, that is 29% of all doctors (excluding unknowns); and
- 56,805 non-UK national nurses and health visitors, that is 18% of all nurses and health visitors (excluding unknowns).

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3064/>

Social Services: Migrant Workers

Baroness Kennedy of Cradley (Labour) [HL3027] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many care workers in England are currently working on a Tier 2 visa that is due to expire before 1 October 2020

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Whilst some senior and managerial roles as well as other health professionals, including nurses, working within the care system may be eligible to apply under Tier 2, care workers, including senior care workers, do not currently meet the required skill level to qualify for this route.

Under the UK's Points-Based Immigration system we will expand the skills threshold to jobs at Regulated Qualification Framework level 3 and above.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3027/>

Social Services: Migrant Workers

Baroness Kennedy of Cradley (Labour) [HL3028] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many care workers in England are currently working on a family reunion visa that is due to expire before 1 October 2020.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are extremely grateful for the vital contributions of medical professionals during these unprecedented times, however the information requested on care workers currently on a family reunion visa is not collated or published by the Home Office.

Individuals who enter the UK under family reunion have the right to work, but are under no obligation to inform the Home Office if they enter into employment after they arrive.

The Home Office published data on Family Reunion visa grants can be found here 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of on Family Reunion visas granted to family members of refugees, broken down by nationality, sex and age are published in tables Fam_D01 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3028/>

The Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Baroness Smith of Gilmorehill (Labour) [HL3084] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Second Reading of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill not occurring in the House of Commons on 21 April, what steps they are taking to ensure that new immigration arrangements are in place by the end of December.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government remains committed to ending free movement and introducing a new Points-Based Immigration System. The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill will proceed when Parliamentary time allows and taking into account the new virtual operating arrangements in Parliament.

The Government set out proposals for its new Points-Based Immigration system in

its policy statement on 19 February.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3084/>

The proposals referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uks-points-based-immigration-system-policy-statement/the-uks-points-based-immigration-system-policy-statement>

Sleeping Rough: Immigrants

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL3039] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of migrants sleeping rough; and what guidance they have issued to local authorities about the provision of emergency accommodation for such migrants.

Reply from Lord Greenhaigh: My Department's latest official annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot Statistics published on 27 February 2020 provide information about the estimated number of people sleeping rough across all local authorities on a single night between 1 October and 31 November 2019. These statistics provide a way of estimating the number of people sleeping rough across England on a single night and of assessing change over time.

The majority of people sleeping rough on a single night in England in 2019 were from the UK. In 2019, there were 2,735 people from the UK (64 % of the total) estimated to be sleeping rough on single night, 937 people (22 % of the total) who were EU (Non-UK) nationals and 151 people (4 % of the total) who were from outside the EU and the UK. The nationality of 443 people (10 % of the total) was 'not known'. For more information please see the following (attached) link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>.

We are providing £3.2 million in targeted funding to help support individuals who are sleeping rough off the streets, and an additional £3.2 billion for local authorities as part of the wider Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is at the discretion of local authorities, using their existing legal powers, to decide who they can accommodate during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether this is British citizens or foreign nationals.

[Rough sleeping snap shot](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3039/>

Refugees: Children

Lord Dubs (Labour) [HL3256] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied child refugees have been admitted to the UK under (1) section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, and (2) the Dublin Treaty, since 2016.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Over 220 children were transferred to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 when the Calais camp was cleared in late 2016. Since then we have been making continuous progress towards achieving our commitment of relocating 480 unaccompanied children. We will publish the current number of transfers under section 67 on 21 May 2020 along with the publication of the quarterly immigration statistics.

Between 2016 and 2019, 590 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were transferred to the UK under articles 8.1 and 8.2 of the Dublin III Regulation – the two principle articles in Dublin that allow an unaccompanied child to join a family member lawfully present in the UK.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3256/>

Asylum: Interviews

Baroness Doocey (Liberal Democrat) [HL3374] To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in using conducting asylum interviews and other procedures at Asylum Screening Units through remote means; and how many cases have been processed remotely.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We take the wellbeing of asylum seekers extremely seriously and we are adjusting processes and procedures to ensure asylum claims can be registered in a safe way that adheres to social distancing guidance – with in person contact and travel requirements for the asylum registration process being minimised.

Asylum in the UK should continue to be sought at the first available opportunity, however for those who have failed to claim on arrival, or whose circumstances have changed since arrival the Home Office has temporarily introduced additional locations to register claims. These are temporary arrangements which will be kept under review to align with HMG guidance.

An overview of key changes and messages are outlined below.

1. Locations have been identified across the UK to facilitate this. The AIU in Croydon will continue to function as normal but will additionally be supported by limited operations in Glasgow, Belfast, Liverpool, Leeds, Solihull and Cardiff. These will be to meet the demands of asylum registrations within the geographical area and will not operate a 5-day service.
2. These changes do not represent a new operating model. They are contingency measures put in place during the COVID-19 epidemic in order to fulfil the UK's statutory requirement to register asylum claims.

Following guidance from Public Health England, we have cancelled all face-to-face substantive asylum interviews. We are continuing to explore ways to conduct interviews over video link.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3374/>

Asylum: Finance

Lord Judd (Labour) [HL3263] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) increase asylum support rates in line with Universal Credit, and (2) provide further support to asylum seekers to assist with essential living requirements, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are currently reviewing the level of the cash allowances, as we do each year, to ensure that they remain capable of meeting the essential living needs of asylum seekers. There are no plans to increase the level of the cash allowances to Universal Credit levels.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3263/>

Asylum: Coronavirus

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL3036] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the level of subsistence support given to asylum seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic is sufficient to ensure they are able to meet their essential living needs.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are currently reviewing the level of the cash allowances, as we do each year, to ensure that they remain capable of meeting the essential living needs of asylum seekers.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3036/>

Asylum: Coronavirus

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL3391] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that asylum seekers and people who do not have a settled immigration status are encouraged to seek medical assistance as appropriate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has been working with a Public Health England embed during the current crisis and we have put in place a number of measures to support people in the asylum system who are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, including working closely with providers to make sure the most vulnerable people within the system receive the support they need.

Those currently accommodated within our support accommodation can receive advice and have access to our Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) provider, Migrant Help. They can contact Migrant Help 24 hours a day on a freephone number if they need assistance or guidance. AIRE are working closely with the Home Office's Asylum Safeguarding Hub.

All asylum accommodation providers continue to provide translated public health guidance, available in 12 languages, and instructions to service users and we are looking at options to provide a level of internet access across our Initial Accommodation estate.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3391/>

Information about Migrant Help, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.migranthehelpuk.org/>

Asylum: Housing

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL3329] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of (1) homeless people, and (2) asylum-seekers, who are sharing emergency or asylum accommodation and are unable to self-isolate if necessary; and what steps they are taking to address this issue. [T]

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: (1) This is a public health crisis more than anything and so requires a health response. To enable this our priority is to bring vulnerable people inside so they can self-isolate and stop the virus spreading. More than 5,400 rough sleepers and people who have been living in accommodation with communal sleeping spaces such as night shelters – over 90% of those known to local authorities at the beginning of the crisis have now been made offers of safe accommodation – ensuring some of the most vulnerable in society are protected from the pandemic. This is a truly remarkable achievement, and one which is the result of the hard work of local government, agencies and charities across the country, who have helped to get people off the street and into safe accommodation, protecting the most vulnerable in society and ultimately saving lives. We announced that councils across England will receive another £1.6 billion in additional funding to enable them to respond to other COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, stepping up support for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people. This takes the total funding to support councils to respond to the pandemic to over £3.2 billion. This is in addition to £3.2 million in targeted funding for councils to support vulnerable rough sleepers.

(2) The Accommodation providers recognise the challenge of managing COVID 19 within our accommodation estate and are working closely with Public Health England (PHE) on how their guidance on social distancing and self-isolation is properly applied, while ensuring that people can continue to access essential services.

In Initial Accommodation facilities, which tends to be hostel based, PHE Guidance recommends that separate rooms and segregation be provided for symptomatic people, or they should be moved to hotels. Our providers have configured their accommodation estate to meet this guidance.

In Dispersed Accommodation, which is houses or homes of multiple occupancy accommodating small numbers, Service Users have been provided guidance to ensure they socially distance or self isolate in line with the advice provided to the general public. Additionally, services providers have enhanced their contact management and wraparound services to ensure access to medical care, food packages and other essential items.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3329/>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Housing

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL3387] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Home Office and its contracted providers have made a public health assessment of asylum accommodation in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Asylum: Coronavirus

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL3388] To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures asylum accommodation providers have made to ensure that people seeking asylum are able to follow the Government's guidance on social distancing and staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has been working with a Public Health England embed during the current crisis and we have put in place a number of measures to support people in the asylum system who are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, including working closely with providers to make sure the most vulnerable people within the system receive the support they need.

The Accommodation providers recognise the challenge of managing COVID 19 within our accommodation estate and are working closely with Public Health England (PHE) on how their guidance on social distancing and self-isolation is properly applied, while ensuring that people can continue to access essential services.

In Initial Accommodation facilities, which tends to be hostel based, PHE Guidance recommends that separate rooms and segregation be provided for symptomatic people, or they should be moved to hotels. Our providers have configured their accommodation estate to meet this guidance.

In Dispersed Accommodation, which is houses or homes of multiple occupancy accommodating small numbers, Service Users have been provided guidance to ensure they socially distance or self isolate in line with the advice provided to the general public. Additionally, services providers have enhanced their contact management and wraparound services to ensure access to medical care, food packages and other essential items.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3387/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3388/>

Detention Centres: Coronavirus

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL3389] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of Immigration Removal Centres in the light of the

COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular (1) how many detainees have been released from detention since 23 March; (2) how many detainees remain in detention; (3) whether any asylum seekers have been placed in detention since 23 March, and if so how many; and (4) what measures have been taken to shield detainees and to maintain social distancing both for detainees and staff.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The safety and health of those in immigration removal centres is of the utmost importance but we remain committed to removing foreign national offenders or those who violate our immigration rules. Detention plays a key role in securing our borders and maintaining effective immigration control.

There is a general presumption of liberty for all individuals. Detention is used only when necessary, and decisions to detain an individual are made on a case by case basis and are based on all of the information known at the time of the review. As circumstances of the case change, detention is reviewed in light of these changes and release may then become appropriate.

There is no-one currently detained and going through the Detained Asylum Casework process. The majority of asylum claims are processed in the non-detained system, with claimants living in the community. Only a minority of claimants are detained whilst their claim is considered and almost all of those who have their claim considered in detention only claim asylum after being detained for removal. Asylum claims in detention are considered in accordance with published detention guidance, incorporating the policy on safeguarding adults at risk.

The Home Office is following all Public Health England guidance and have robust contingency plans in place including measures such as protective isolation to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the immigration detention estate. Further measures including shielding, single occupancy rooms and the cessation of social visits have been introduced in line with the Government direction on social distancing.

The Home Office publishes data on people leaving and in detention in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of people detained under immigration powers at the end of each quarter are published in table Det_D02 and of those leaving detention are published in table Det_D03 of the immigration detention detailed datasets.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to those in detention as at 31 December 2019. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

Figures covering the first quarter of 2020, including those detained as at 31 March 2020 will be released on 21st May 2020. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3389/>

Immigrants: Detainees

Baroness Doocey (Liberal Democrat) [HL3373] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals at immigration detention centres and other accommodation for asylum seekers have reported COVID-19 symptoms; how severe the symptoms have been in these cases; and what medical treatment has been provided.

Reply from Lord Bethell: There are currently no individuals within the immigration detention centre estate showing symptomatic signs of COVID-19. There have been three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the immigration detention centres since the outbreak began, none of whom were hospitalised. Information about the severity of

these cases or what medical treatment has been provided is not centrally collected and neither is information on individuals in other accommodation for asylum seekers.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3373/>

Immigrants: Detainees

Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL3386] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were held in immigration detention centres in each month of 2020 to date.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on people in detention in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>
Data on the number of people detained under immigration powers at the end of each quarter are published in table Det_D02 of the immigration detention detailed datasets.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/returns-and-detention-datasets#immigration-detention>

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to those in detention as at 31 December 2019. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

Figures covering the first quarter of 2020, including those detained as at 31 March 2020 will be released on 21st May 2020. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/returns-and-detention-datasets#immigration-detention>
[copy of detention summary tables](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3386/>

New Publications

Letter from the Home Secretary on visa extensions for care workers and NHS staff

<https://committees.parliament.uk/download/file/?url=%2Fpublications%2F835%2Fdocuments%2F5378&slug=20200429-visa-extensions-for-care-workers-and-the-announced-nhs-visa-extension-offerpdf>

Letter from the Home Secretary to the Chair and the Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee on no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/download/file/?url=%2Fpublications%2F833%2Fdocuments%2F5401&slug=20200428-nrpf-hasc-wpc-hspdf>

News

Immigration pushes UK population to 66.8m despite low birthrate

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/immigration-pushes-uk-population-to-66-8m-despite-low-birthrate-m8qcd7hmv>

Home Office accused of pressuring judiciary over immigration decisions

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/may/06/home-office-accused-of-persuading-judiciary-over-immigration-decisions>

Home Office chartered plane to deport EU citizens during lockdown

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/07/home-office-charters-plane-to-deport-eu-citizens-despite-coronavirus-rules>

UK discriminating against EU citizens, say MEPs

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/05/uk-discriminating-against-eu-citizens-say-meps>

Home Office's denial of benefits to migrant families unlawful, court rules

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/07/home-offices-denial-of-benefits-to-migrant-families-unlawful-court-rules>

Eight-year-old boy left street homeless with his mother because Home Office unlawfully refused them benefits

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homeless-boy-home-office-high-court-unlawful-recourse-public-funds-a9503436.html>

'£5 a day is not enough': Asylum seekers surviving on 'scandalously low' financial support during pandemic

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-job-losses-laid-off-domestic-workers-carers-homeless-visa-a9498581.html>

This is what it feels like to be a destitute asylum seeker in a pandemic

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/coronavirus-uk-lockdown-hostile-environment-asylum-seeker-destitute-a9497296.html>

Coronavirus: Asylum seekers and detainees unable to get tests despite confirmed cases in living facilities

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-asylum-seekers-immigration-detention-testing-home-office-a9504196.html>

Hundreds of foreign school pupils repatriated amid coronavirus fears

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/hundreds-foreign-school-pupils-repatriated-amid-coronavirus-fears-2611988>

Coronavirus repatriation policy 'has echoes of Windrush'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-52490991>

Extradition warrant for suspect in migrant deaths' case 'wholly unsatisfactory'

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/ireland/extradition-warrant-for-suspect-in-migrant-deaths-case-wholly-unsatisfactory-ss2cpc258>

Priti Patel seeks French backing for plan to return Channel migrants to France to end people trafficking

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/05/06/priti-patel-seeks-french-backing-plan-return-channel-migrants/>

More migrants intercepted at Dover amid lockdown spike

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-52599696>

Channel migrants: More than 130 people bid to reach UK in 24 hours

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-52527734>

At least 140 migrants picked up in Channel

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/at-least-140-migrants-picked-up-in-channel-6qcz6vw6h>

Migrant crossings: 227 people intercepted amid lockdown spike

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-52599696>

Six children among migrants rescued from stricken boat in the Channel

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/04/six-children-among-migrants-rescued-stricken-boat-channel/>

Record numbers of migrants intercepted as they cross English Channel

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/09/record-numbers-migrants-intercepted-cross-english-channel/>

Ministers accused of 'paralysis' as 3,000 migrants cross the Channel

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ministers-accused-of-paralysis-as-3-000-migrants-cross-the-channel-tqtj2pgg7>

Britain's failure to remove illegal migrants is fueling 'dangerous' cross-Channel attempts

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/05/07/britains-failure-remove-illegal-migrants-fueling-dangerous-cross/>

'I feel I've come home': can forest schools help heal refugee children?

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/09/i-feel-ive-come-home-can-forest-schools-help-heal-refugee-children>

More than 700 released from immigration detention centres as coronavirus prevents deportation

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/05/07/700-released-immigration-detention-centres-coronavirus-prevents/>

'It is very rewarding': How two refugees are working as NHS doctors during coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/coronavirus-nhs-uk-refugees-doctors-home-office-covid-19-a9500926.html>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Food Supply: Coronavirus

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [39632] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment is made of the suitability of the contents of food parcels, provided to vulnerable people, in regard to their (a) medical, (b) religious and (c) ethical preferences.

Reply from Christopher Pincher: This offer is an emergency response to a very fast-moving situation, to support those in greatest medical need. Some of the boxes

may contain some products that are not permitted culturally or for faith reasons by some groups.

In the standardised box which is delivered to individuals there is an A4 note which explains that should the individual have any allergies or religious/cultural dietary requirements and are not able to eat some of the food and feel that the remaining contents of the package are not enough to provide food for 1 week, they should contact their local authority.

The packages include tinned meat and tinned tuna, but as the product is packaged there is no risk of individuals having to touch foodstuffs that are unsuitable.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-24/39632/>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Travellers: Coronavirus

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative) [HL3116] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have access to basic utilities, water and sanitation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Lord Greenhaigh: Local authorities have a responsibility to look after vulnerable groups in their area, including Gypsy and Traveller communities. That is why I wrote to local authority Chief Executives on 11 April highlighting the need to mitigate potential impacts of COVID-19 amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities. In this letter, I noted that some Gypsies and Travellers may need assistance in accessing basic facilities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal, to enable them to adhere to public health guidelines around self-isolation and social distancing.

The Government is determined to ensure everyone gets the support they need to look after themselves and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak and are enabled to take the necessary measures to reduce the spread of the virus. We are holding regular discussions with representatives from Gypsy and Traveller communities to understand the issues they are facing, and to understand what guidance and support is needed, including for local authorities. On 18 April, the Local Government Secretary announced that councils across England will receive a further £1.6 billion to help them to deal with the immediate impacts of coronavirus. This takes the total funding to support councils to respond to the pandemic to over £3.2 billion.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3116/>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Press Release

Secretary-General Denounces 'Tsunami' of Xenophobia Unleashed amid COVID-19, Calling for All-Out Effort against Hate Speech

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sgsm20076.doc.htm>

News

Why new Hate Crime bill won't criminalise critics of Scottish Government – Humza Yousaf

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/crime/why-new-hate-crime-bill-wont-criminalise-critics-scottish-government-humza-yousaf-2846070>

MSPs seek public views on new hate crime laws

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/msps-seek-public-views-new-hate-crime-laws-2841605>

Murdo Fraser claims hate crime plans 'would be an assault on free speech'

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/scotland/murdo-fraser-claims-hate-crime-plans-would-be-an-assault-on-free-speech-5dlm3q7b>

Fighting prejudice is good. Putting people in jail for having the 'wrong' thoughts is not

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18426465.opinion-stuart-waiton-fighting-prejudice-good-putting-people-jail-wrong-thoughts-not/>

Islamophobia: Muslim women's experiences in Scotland

<https://theferret.scot/islamophobia-scotland-muslim-women/>

Coronavirus: Hate crimes against Chinese people almost triple in UK during pandemic, police data shows

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-uk-hate-crimes-chinese-people-china-a9499991.html>

Sexual crimes and racism rise on Wales railway network

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-52471938>

Threat to 'bomb' the Board of Deputies reported to police

<https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/threat-to-bomb-the-board-of-deputies-reported-to-police/>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

Debate

Census

Includes discussion relating to the prevention of racism against the Roma and Sikh communities

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-05-06/debates/B309CA27-65B7-42BC-BB30-BFA732BD0FA0/Census>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Female Genital Mutilation

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [40519] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much and what proportion of his Department's budget has been spent on tackling female genital mutilation in the UK in each financial year since 2015.

Reply from Nadine Dorries: The Department funded the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Prevention Programme between 2014 and 2018. The spend is shown in the following table:

Financial Year	Amount	Proportion of Department's budget
2015-16	£900,014	0.00%
2016-17	£607,808	0.00%
2017-18	£494,265	0.00%
2018-19	£349,050	0.00%

NHS England and local National Health Service bodies also fund healthcare services for women and girls who have undergone FGM, alongside Departmental funding for national FGM prevention work.

Note:

The above figures are based on the Department's financial records. The proportion of Department's budget spent on FGM is shown as a percentage of the Department's total revenue spend.

-	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
FGM spend (£ million)	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.3
Department Group spend (£ million)	113,700.00	117,000.00	120,700.00	125,300.00
FGM spend as % of Department Group spend	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Spend for 2019-20 is not yet available as accounts have yet to be audited.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40519/>

TOP

Health Information: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS

NHS Inform (Scotland)

Latest guidance about COVID-19 from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government, including social distancing and stay at home advice.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

Healthcare for overseas visitors

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/access/healthcare-for-overseas-visitors>

Healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/access/healthcare-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

NHS Near Me (Scotland)

Near Me is a video consulting service that enables people to have health and social care appointments from home or wherever is convenient. All you need is a device for making video calls like a smartphone and an internet connection. Near Me is a secure form of

video consulting approved for use by the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland.
<https://www.nearme.scot/>

NHS (England and Wales)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Support for Churches and Religious Bodies in Scotland

S5W-28299 Liam Kerr (Conservative): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has regarding whether churches and religious bodies in Scotland will be eligible to apply for support from the funding package for charities that has been announced by the UK Government in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Reply from Kate Forbes: The Third Sector Resilience Fund (TSRF) is a £20 million emergency fund for charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations working in Scotland. The fund will support organisations that already deliver services and products but find themselves in financial difficulties directly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The primary intention of the fund is to help third sector organisations to stabilise and manage cash flows over this difficult period. The Fund is being delivered by Firstport, Social Investment Scotland and the Corra Foundation and will provide grants between £5,000-£100,000. In addition there will be up to a further £5 million available in fully flexible, 0% interest loans starting at £50,000. The fund will be complemented by specialist business advice from Just Enterprise to help grant recipients maximise the impact of the financial support. More information about Covid-19 related support available to third sector organisations, including the Third Sector Resilience Fund is available at: <https://scvo.org.uk/support/coronavirus>

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-28299>

Information about the Third Sector Resilience Fund, referred to above, can be read at

<https://scvo.org/support/coronavirus/funding/scottish-government/third-sector-resilience-fund>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Covid-19: BAME Communities

Diane Abbott (Labour): What steps [are] the Government taking to tackle the disproportionate number of BAME deaths from covid-19. [902293]

Lilian Greenwood (Labour): What steps [are the Minister's] Department has taken to tackle the disproportionate effect of the covid-19 outbreak on BAME communities. [902306]

Reply from the Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch): We are very concerned by reports of a disproportionate impact of covid-19 on ethnic minorities. It is important that we understand what is underpinning these disparities and that we have robust and accurate data to do so, in order to take effective action.

Diane Abbott: The Minister will be aware that of the 17 doctors who have died from covid-19, 16 are from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. So will she be speaking to her ministerial colleagues in the Department of Health about the NHS surcharge for migrants? It cannot be right that NHS migrant workers, who are frequently BAME, pay twice for the NHS, first in taxation and then through the surcharge—and, increasingly, with their lives.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: This is an issue that I personally have taken a keen interest in. It is one of the reasons we have commissioned Public Health England to review exactly what the impact is on ethnic minorities. Specifically on fees for migrants, migrants who are ordinarily resident in the UK already receive their NHS care for free. Many more are exempt from charges, including temporary migrants who pay the immigration health surcharge, and asylum seekers. However, it is important to note that we remain committed to fighting this virus, and that is why we changed our regulations in January to ensure that no overseas visitor or anyone living here would be charged for diagnosis of or treatment for covid.

Lilian Greenwood: Dr Amir Burney of the Association of Pakistani Physicians of Northern Europe and Dr Kashif Chauhan of the Nottinghamshire Doctors Families Association have both written to me raising concerns about the safety of BAME medical staff. They tell me that their members are scared. NHS trusts have reported problems in moving at-risk BAME NHS staff away from the frontline of the crisis, despite calls from Public Health England to do so. What discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for Health to ensure that the risk to BAME staff is properly assessed and their health and safety is properly protected?

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: The Public Health England review is going to look into this specific issue, but I must stress that we are working round the clock to protect everyone—absolutely everyone—on the frontline during this pandemic for as long as is required. NHS England has sent a letter to those running NHS care organisations recommending that employers should risk-assess staff as a precautionary measure to see if they are at greater risk and, if so, put other measures in place to protect them. That is something that will be going on around the country. ...

Caroline Nokes (Conservative): We heard on Monday from the Health Secretary, and my hon. Friend the Minister has reiterated it, about the importance of robust data. Is my hon. Friend confident that the right data is being collected at sufficient pace? Specifically, what input is the Government Equalities Office having into the work of Public Health England, and is she confident that we will find out not only why and how BAME communities are affected, but what needs to be done to protect them?

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: The Government Equalities Office is refocusing the equality hub. The race disparity unit, the GEO and the disability unit want to spend more time on research and data so that we can help to inform Government Departments on their activity. We want to become more evidence-led. The Public Health England review is going to fit in with this overall strategy. It will be analysing how different factors, including ethnicity, gender and age, can impact on people's health outcomes from covid-19. We are confident that this review will be able to analyse available data on health outcomes for NHS staff as well. We expect it to be published at the end of May. ...

Marsha De Cordova (Labour): The British Medical Association found that black, Asian and minority ethnic doctors have been pushed to the frontline of this covid-19 crisis and that almost two thirds of them have felt pressured to work without vital personal protective equipment. This comes amid reports that 72% of all NHS workers' deaths were of those from a BAME background. Finally, last week, Public Health England asked all NHS trusts to risk-assess their BAME staff and, where necessary, remove them from the frontline. What steps is the Minister's Department taking to monitor the impact of this new measure and ensure that no more workers are risking their lives to save lives?

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: This is something that we are keeping a close eye on. We are seeing a disproportionate impact on ethnic minorities, as I mentioned before, but NHS England is the right body to make the decisions on how each and every care organisation should look after its staff. We are not calling for ethnic minority medical staff to be taken off the frontline, as that would disproportionately

impact ethnic minority communities, but we are doing everything that we can to ensure that they are protected. With regard to PPE, this is something, as I said earlier, that we have been working round the clock to deliver. We have had more than 1 billion items of PPE delivered to health organisations across the country, and we will continue to ensure that our frontline staff are very well protected.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-05-06/debates/E3D61967-006E-4707-9D90-A2EE43059859/Covid-19BAMECommunities>

BAME Covid-19 Review Taskforce

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat): [To ask] If the Government will convene a cross-party taskforce to (a) oversee the BAME covid-19 review announced on 17 April 2020 and (b) monitor the implementation of actions arising from that review. [902301]

Reply from the Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch): As someone who is affected by this issue of ethnic minorities and the disproportionate impact they suffer from covid, I am glad to see that it is being taken seriously across the House. I am confident that both Parliament and the Health and Social Care Committee will have the opportunity to scrutinise the Government and hold them to account on this in due course, and this is where cross-party work will be most effective.

Layla Moran: I and the Liberal Democrats welcome the review that Public Health England is undertaking. I thank the Minister for her response to my question. I hope it means that she will come to the House to make a statement when we finally have the outcome of that review, but there are some things that we can do right now to better understand the disproportionate impact of covid-19 on the BAME community. One of those would be to ask a question on ethnicity on the NHS coronavirus symptom checker, which would surely give us the data that the review needs. Will she commit to speaking to the Department of Health and Social Care on adding that question to the survey?

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: I thank the hon. Lady for her letter on this issue in April; the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is aware of it, and I am sure she will receive a response from him in due course. It is important to remember that Public Health England is conducting an independent and expert-led review, and we trust Public Health England to collect the information appropriately, as it sees fit.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-05-06/debates/C21E5673-004C-4550-8328-EBC3B88B8BF9/BAMECovid-19ReviewTaskforce>

Covid-19: BAME and Working-class Communities

Chi Onwurah (Labour): What recent assessment [has the Minister] made of the disproportionate effect of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) BAME and (b) working-class communities. [902307]

Reply from the Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch): Understanding the impacts on different groups and the factors underpinning them is extremely complex. It is important that we have the right information on which to base our action, which is why, as I mentioned earlier, we have asked Public Health England to review covid-19 outcomes among different groups and to explore the reasons for disparities. It is also why the Government have taken numerous steps to protect those who would be most disadvantaged by this disease.

Chi Onwurah: We do have some other information: according to Office for National Statistics figures, the coronavirus mortality rate in the most deprived areas, such as Elswick in Newcastle, is more than twice that in the least deprived areas—no doubt that is a consequence of health inequalities, which have risen sharply in the past 10 years—and those on lower incomes are more likely to be in frontline occupations. Now we have learned that the infection rate in the north-east is the highest in the country. What is the Minister doing to address the disproportionate impact of the virus on BAME and working-class communities?

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: The hon. Lady is right. We are increasingly worried about the number of deaths in deprived areas of the country. As she said, the rate of deaths in the most deprived areas was more than two times higher than in other places, but it is important to note that the underlying factors are extremely complex—these things may be related, but we do not have definitive evidence about the relationship between covid-19 and deaths in deprived areas. We are taking many steps to look after people from disadvantaged backgrounds and from working-class communities. We have protected people's incomes and jobs, supported businesses and looked at universal credit and statutory sick pay. We are doing every single thing we can to make sure that individuals and communities are protected, on the whole, from any adverse impact of the lockdown.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-05-06/debates/4CE7AF48-1970-4390-86A3-2FB11F841B16/Covid-19BAMEAndWorking-ClassCommunities>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Shabana Mahmood (Labour) [40547] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment the Government has made of for what reasons black, Asian, and ethnic minority communities are disproportionately affected by covid-19.

Reply from Jo Churchill: Public Health England (PHE) has been asked to review the potential that some ethnic minority groups are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. As part of this review, PHE is matching laboratory records of COVID-19 cases to other health records to draw down accurate data on ethnicity, age, sex and geographical region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40547/>

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Voluntary Work

Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru) [41576] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will add an exemption to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme guidance allowing furloughed workers employed by faith-based organisations to participate in activities usually undertaken by volunteers in their faith community.

Reply from Jesse Norman: The purpose of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is to support people who would otherwise have been made redundant. To prevent fraudulent claims, the Government made clear that individuals cannot work or volunteer for their organisation. This aims to protect individuals too; if workers were allowed to volunteer for their employer, the employer could ask them to effectively work full time while only paying them 80% of their wages. DCMS is working with other Government departments and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to identify areas where volunteers can contribute to the COVID-19 response.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-29/41576/>

Churches: Coronavirus

Alexander Stafford (Conservative) [42228] To ask the right hon. Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, for what reasons churches and other places of worship were not listed as essential services in the covid-19 lockdown guidance.

Reply from Andrew Selous: Following the address to the nation made by the Prime Minister on the 23rd March, the Church of England took the difficult decision

that it would ask this clergy to close their parish churches to the public due to the unprecedented high risk of transmission of the covid-19 virus. While the church buildings and halls were shut, their congregations have continued, where possible, to live out their vocation and mission to serve the needs of their local communities during the lockdown period.

The Government listed the clergy as key workers during the medical emergency, and it has enabled them to continue to meet the needs of their communities right across the country, serving as chaplains, officiating at funerals, administering last rites, operating food banks and other essential community services.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-01/42228/>

The address referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-23-march-2020>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon (Labour) [HL3034] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that a higher proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic people are dying as a result of COVID-19 than people of other ethnicities; whether they have now established an inquiry into the issue; and if so, what that inquiry has discovered to date.

Reply from Lord Bethell: We are very concerned by the apparent disproportionate number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds who have died, both within the National Health Service and overall. We have asked Public Health England (PHE) to complete a rapid review to understand how COVID-19 may be having an impact on different ethnic groups, and other groups of concern. PHE has begun linking thousands of existing health records for people who have had COVID-19 in order to gather more robust data.

To complement this rapid review by Public Health England, the National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation issued a joint call on 22 April for research proposals to investigate emerging evidence of an association between ethnicity and COVID-19 incidence and adverse health outcomes.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3034/>

The call for research proposals referred to above can be read at

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/highlight-notice-covid-19-and-ethnicity/24657>

Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Baroness Doocey (Liberal Democrat) [HL3377] To ask Her Majesty's Government when they started to (1) collect, and (2) publish data relating to the ethnicity of those infected with COVID-19; and for what reasons this did not start at the beginning of the pandemic in the UK.

Reply from Lord Bethell: Data on those infected with COVID-19 are collected by Public Health England (PHE) for new diagnoses and hospitalised patients. Standard recording practice across laboratory systems requires recording of only minimal data (such as date of birth and name) as these records are not intended for disease surveillance purposes.

PHE has begun a rapid review to better understand how COVID-19 may be having an impact on different ethnic groups. As part of this review, PHE is matching

thousands of laboratory records of COVID-19 cases to other health records to draw down accurate data on ethnicity, age, sex and geographical region. The first results will be published by the end of May.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3377/>

Religion: Coronavirus

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative) [HL3367] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with representatives of faith communities concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: Faith leaders and communities have a critical role to play during the Covid-19 response and we recognise their contribution, as well as the significant importance of respecting different faith groups, religious practices and personal preference. As the Department responsible for Faith, MHCLG has played a facilitative role in ensuring Government understands the needs of faith communities and the challenges they are facing due to the pandemic. We have consulted widely with key faith and belief stakeholders through ministerial and official level engagement.

We are committed to ensuring faith and belief communities have access to the latest public health advice to support them to adapt their practices to meet the governments Covid-19 guidance. We will continue to engage with national and local faith and belief communities to ensure that any needs arising are understood.

We worked closely with faith and belief groups throughout the passage of the Coronavirus Act to ensure that the religious practices of the deceased are taken into account by local authorities as far as possible. Local authorities are now under an obligation to have regard to the deceased's wishes, religion and belief, as to their final committal, where known, in accordance with Section 58 and Schedule 28 to the Coronavirus Act 2020.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3367/>

Travellers: Coronavirus

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative) [HL3366] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is determined to ensure everyone gets the support they need to look after themselves and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak and are enabled to take the necessary measures to reduce the spread of the virus. We are holding regular discussions with representatives from Gypsy and Traveller communities to understand the issues they are facing, including what guidance and support is needed locally.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3366/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Apsana Begum (Labour) (427) Covid-19 and BAME communities – That this House is alarmed at the growing evidence that black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) people are over-represented in hospitalisations and deaths from covid-19 and that there are clear systemic economic inequalities that are meaning that ethnic minority communities are being disproportionately affected by the coronavirus crisis; is concerned at reports that almost three quarters of NHS and social care staff who have died of covid-19 have a BAME

background; laments that years of austerity has had an utterly devastating impact on ethnic minorities, who have been disproportionately disadvantaged by public sector cuts; and calls on the Government to take urgent steps to ensure the safety of BAME workers, particularly NHS and care staff, on the frontline and to take immediate action to address the unequal health and economic effects of covid-19 on the UK's black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) groups.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/56921/covid19-and-bame-communities>

Scottish Government Press Releases

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's speech 10 May 2020

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-10-2020/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): trends in daily data

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/trends-in-number-of-people-in-hospital-with-confirmed-or-suspected-covid-19/>

Changes to advice on going outdoors

<https://www.gov.scot/news/changes-to-advice-on-going-outdoors/>

Uptake in those with urgent health concerns using NHS

<https://www.gov.scot/news/uptake-in-those-with-urgent-health-concerns-using-nhs/>

Support for lockdown restrictions

<https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-lockdown-restrictions/>

Consultation: COVID-19 Move out of lockdown (closing date 29 May 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115116.aspx>

Looking after each other during Covid-19

<https://www.gov.scot/news/looking-after-each-other-during-covid-19/>

Getting people online

<https://www.gov.scot/news/getting-people-online/>

UK Government Press Releases

PM address to the nation on coronavirus: 10 May 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-10-may-2020>

Number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and risk in the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Other Organisations

Office of National Statistics: Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020/pdf>

Muslim Council of Britain launches consultation on keeping Muslim institutions safe post-lockdown

<https://mcb.org.uk/general/mcb-launches-consultation-on-keeping-muslim-institutions-safe-post-lockdown/>

BEMIS: Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network Emergency Sustenance Grant Fund

From Friday 17th April until Friday 29th May 2020 the EMNRN will provide emergency grant relief to those facing acute financial vulnerability due to the ongoing situation.

They can support people/families who meet the following self-defined criteria:

- Have run out of or will run out of money between 9th April and 15th May
- Not in receipt of funding from other similar programmes
- Are unable to support their family due to delays in universal credit or self-employment support
- Have household member(s) who are showing virus symptoms making it impossible for to go to shops or shop online
- Are individuals and experiencing Covid-19 hardships with no family support, etc
- Any other reason connected to the public health emergency that has material impact of placing the household in acute hardship

They will pay grants of:

- £60 per individual household adult to a maximum of £120.
- £40 per child (under the age of 16) up to a maximum of £200 per family unit.

For full details and to apply see

<https://bemis.org.uk/emergency-sustenance-grant-scheme/>

News

Coronavirus: Black Britons face 'twice the risk' of death, says ONS

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52574931>

Black people four times more likely to die from Covid-19, ONS finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/07/black-people-four-times-more-likely-to-die-from-covid-19-ons-finds>

Black coronavirus deaths have exposed Britain for what it really is

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/coronavirus-deaths-black-ons-trevor-phillips-a9504181.html>

'Structural Racism' doesn't explain why black people are more likely to die from Covid

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/07/structural-racism-doesnt-explain-black-people-likely-die-covid/>

Campaigners are twisting BAME Covid data to further their 'victimhood' agenda

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/04/campaigners-twisting-bame-covid-data-victimhood-agenda/>

Coronavirus: Churches may not be back to normal by end of year

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52600707>

TOP

Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Children (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112632.aspx>

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

Disclosure (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/111895.aspx>

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill

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

UK Parliament

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/asylumseekerspermissiontowork.html>

Asylum Support (Prescribed Period) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/asylumupportprescribedperiod.html>

Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-21/immigrationandsocialsecuritycoordinationeuwithdrawal.html>

Immigration Control (Gross Human Rights Abuses) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/immigrationcontrolgrosshumanrightsabuses.html>

Marriage (Approved Organisations) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageapprovedorganisations.html>

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/refugeesfamilyreunion.html>

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (Legal Advice and Appeals) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/unaccompaniedasylumseekingchildrenlegaladviceandappeals.html>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated this week

**** COVID-19 Move out of lockdown** (closing date 29 May 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115116.aspx>

**** Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 24 July 2020)
<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115038.aspx>

Your Police 2020-2021 (closing date 31 March 2021)
Police Scotland recognise the importance of understanding the views and priorities of Scotland's diverse communities. This is especially important during the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This survey is an opportunity for you to give your views and opinions during these challenging times, and beyond.
<https://consult.scotland.police.uk/surveys/your-police-2020-2021/>

Equality and human rights impact of Covid-19 (closing date not stated)
<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/114975.aspx>

Experiences of Islamophobia (closing date not stated)
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/amina-islamophobia>

Raising skills and standards of supporters of refugees and asylum seekers
(closing date not stated)
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3R8SDYN>

TOP

Job Opportunities

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

[Click here](#) to find out about Graduate, Modern, and Foundation Apprenticeship opportunities.

TOP

Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Grants online: Coronavirus

A number of Community Foundations and other organisations have launched funding programmes to assist local organisations in responding to the challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic. To read a list of organisations and the types of funding they have made available, see <https://www.grantsonline.org.uk/coronavirus.html>

**** Small Grants for Communities: Covid-19**

Closing date 13 May 2020

Scottish Refugee Council Small Grants Programme to support refugee led community groups and local groups working with refugees, asylum seekers and persons with no recourse to public funds across Scotland so they are able to adapt or increase existing services and resources in support of their community during this emergency period. For information and to apply see

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/communities/small-grants-scheme/>

**** Wellbeing Fund**

Closing date 22 May 2020

The Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund aims to support organisations across the third

sector that are providing important services to people who are most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The fund will support activities that are focused on immediate and emerging forms of support working with at risk groups with new needs which are not currently being met by existing services, providing vital wellbeing support on issues such as mental health, personal finances, employment, housing, food, physical health and home life. For full details and to apply see

<https://scvo.org.uk/support/coronavirus/funding/scottish-government/wellbeing-fund>

Third Sector Resilience Fund

Closing date not stated

Scottish Government grants and loans from £5,000 to £100,000 for the Third Sector in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Third Sector Resilience Fund is an emergency fund for charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations working in Scotland. The fund will support organisations that already deliver services and products but find themselves in financial difficulties directly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The primary intention of the fund is to help third sector organisations to stabilise and manage cash flows over this difficult period. For information and to apply see

<https://scvo.org/support/coronavirus/your-funding/for-organisations/third-sector-resilience-fund/>

**** Covid-19 Transition Fund**

Closing date not stated

Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network funding for organisations to respond to the changing needs of their members in a sustainable way. Funding priorities will be to ensure that community organisations can:

- set up sustainable networks that support access to food and sustenance needs initially up until August 2020
- support their communities to be connected to services, information and communication
- provide services to tackle isolation, such as online events and befriending

For information and to apply see

<https://bemis.org.uk/emnrn/transition-fund/>

**** Covid-19 Rapid Response Fund**

Closing date not stated

This small grant fund has been established by the William Grant Foundation, Faith in Community Scotland and the National Lottery Community Fund so that Scotland's network of local faith groups and related community organisations can provide immediate support for individuals and families. For information and to apply see

<https://www.faithincommunity.scot/covid19info>

Fife Centre for Equalities Diversity Week Activity Fund 2020

Closing date not stated

Grants of up to £100 for charities, community and voluntary groups, sporting groups, and informal groups to host a one-off activity celebrating the diverse population of Fife during Fife Centre for Equalities Diversity Week 7-13 September 2020. For information and to apply see <https://tinyurl.com/stbmu24>

TOP

Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

Talking Prejudice

The YouthLink website states that this event is likely to be run as an online event, and that further details will be posted soon.

2 June 2020 in Stirling (9.30–4.00)

YouthLink event for youth workers and others working in diverse communities to hear from other professionals about the tools and services available to address hate crime and prejudice. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/v29nlow>

3rd International Conference on Migration and Mobilities

8–10 July 2020 in St Andrews

The conference is orientated around the four themes that reflect key contemporary conceptual and policy concerns: internal migration and urban change, forced migration and bordering, visualising mobilities, and European migration in turbulent politics. For information see <http://www.imigmob2020.org/home>

TOP

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>

European Parliament <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disclosure Scotland <https://www.mygov.scot/working-jobs/finding-a-job/disclosure/>

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/>

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

TOP

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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