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**The Scottish Parliament is in recess until 11 January 2021, and the UK Parliament until 5 January 2021. The next issue of MEMO will be published on 11 January 2021.**

## Immigration and Asylum

### Scottish Parliament Written Answer

#### Asylum: Social and Digital Exclusion

**S5W-33806 Monica Lennon (Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what support is in place for women seeking asylum who are socially and digitally excluded.

**Reply from Aileen Campbell:** The New Scots refugee integration strategy recognises that women seeking asylum face particular challenges that can cause social isolation. The Scottish Government is providing nearly £1 million a year to third sector organisations for projects that support refugees and people seeking asylum in line with the approach of the New Scots strategy, including projects that

support social engagement.

The Scottish Government has set up the Connecting Scotland programme, as part of its response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which provides digital devices and support to develop digital skills for people who are digitally excluded and on low incomes. The Scottish Government has also provided over £550,000 to third sector organisations for projects supporting people subject to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) during the pandemic, including people seeking asylum, as part of efforts to ensure everyone living in our communities can access the support they need. The projects focus on basic needs, including digital access.

Asylum is a matter reserved to the UK Government. The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government has pressed the UK Government to include the cost of digital connectivity in the level of financial support provided to people seeking asylum, as an essential need of daily life.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-33806>

## Scottish Parliament Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

### Immigration: evidence session

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13014&i=117656#ScotParlOR>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

### UK Immigration System: Devolved Administrations

**Neale Hanvey (SNP):** What recent discussions has [the Minister] had with the devolved Administrations on the UK's immigration system after the transition period. (910158)

**Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster):** The new immigration system will deliver a vision of success for the whole of our United Kingdom, as outlined to Members of the Scottish Parliament on Thursday. The key new routes under the points-based system, including the flagship skilled worker route, are already open for applications. The Home Office regularly engages the devolved Administrations, Parliament and Assembly as we take this work forward.

**Neale Hanvey:** Ending free movement will have a profound negative impact on Scotland's public services, not least NHS Scotland. Previously, the Home Office team met quarterly with Scotland's migration Minister, but the last meeting took place in July 2019. Since the Minister took up his post, there have been no further meetings. Why is he repeatedly refusing to have those meetings?

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** From the tone of the hon. Gentleman's question, I can only conclude that he missed my appearance before the Scottish Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee on Thursday. Perhaps he might find the video online. During the session I outlined several meetings I would be delighted to have with Scottish Cabinet Secretaries and the kettle is on if they want to take me up on the offer.

**Joanna Cherry (SNP):** I find that a fascinating reply, Mr Speaker, because it does not really accord with my understanding of what happened at the meeting to which the Minister refers. The UK Government's immigration policies threaten to plunge Scotland's working-age population into decline, to cause serious staffing shortages in key industries such as the farming industry, and to inflict lasting damage on our public services. The Minister has

appeared to dismiss these serious concerns and has point blank refused to meet the Scottish Government Minister with responsibility for migration since he came into office under this Prime Minister. Did I correctly understand his previous comment as saying that that position has changed? If so, when is he planning to meet the Scottish Government's migration Minister?

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** It is unfortunate that the hon. and learned Member appears also to have missed the session, but again, I believe there is a video online—she might find it fascinating—with me giving examples of Scottish Ministers I was prepared to meet to discuss a range of issues. I also gave MSPs examples of how Scotland's needs are directly shaping the future immigration system for the whole of our UK, including the change to the permit-free festival system directly driven by the needs of Edinburgh international festival. But I suspect the actual focus of this question is, as always from the SNP, pushing separatism, not success for Scotland.

**Joanna Cherry:** The Minister would do well to appreciate that the SNP represents the majority of voters in Scotland. At the meeting last week that he is referring to, my understanding, from speaking to colleagues, is that he said he would not be meeting what he described as the SNP's "migration spokesperson", so can he now put this on the record? Will he meet my colleague and friend, the democratically elected SNP Government's spokesperson for migration? Will he meet him, as he has refused to do since last summer—yes or no? It is a very simple question; I want a clear yes or no answer.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** I regularly meet the SNP spokesperson in this place on migration matters for constructive discussions. This Government are going to focus on building a future migration system focused on ensuring that the world's talent sees Scotland at the heart of our United Kingdom as its natural home. The SNP sees it as an opportunity to ensure that the Scottish Government can always seek to recruit care workers at the legal minimum wage and as a chance to fulfil their ambition to rebuild Hadrian's Wall and get England to pay for it.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-14/debates/4A036468-A9BA-4BAB-A9AF-BB775592BF4E/UKImmigrationSystemDevolvedAdministrations>

*The video of Kevin Foster's evidence to the Scottish Parliament Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, referred to above, can be watched at*

<https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/culture-tourism-europe-and-external-affairs-committee-december-10-2020>

### **Topical Questions: Windrush**

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):** The Windrush generation helped build the Britain we know and love today. The Windrush compensation scheme is a key part of our efforts to right the wrongs they endured. Today I am announcing substantial changes to the compensation scheme, so that those eligible will receive more compensation and more quickly. I am increasing the minimum payments for the impact on life to £10,000, with payments starting this week. I am raising the bar for the amount someone can claim for the impact on their life to £100,000, with exceptional cases able to receive more. The changes under the terms of the scheme will apply retrospectively and together will make a real difference to people's lives. I have always promised to listen and act to ensure that the victims of Windrush have received the maximum amount of compensation they deserve, and it is my mission to correct the wrongs of the past. I will continue to work with the Windrush working group to do exactly that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-14/debates/273816F5-7FD9-4333-8AAF-96AF5F1F89CD/TopicalQuestions#contribution-5C66F971-E0A8-42E0-8A2B-B73C4CA1F209>

## **Immigration Rules: Supported Accommodation**

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative):** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will make a statement on whether the changes to the immigration rules laid last week will reduce the numbers of asylum seekers in supported accommodation.

**Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Chris Philp):** This Government are taking action to fix the asylum system so that it is firm and fair—firm where the system is being abused, but fair to those who need protection. And we have been clear: we will use every means at our disposal to make the use of small boats to cross the channel unviable.

Last week we laid changes to the immigration rules that are vital to curb irregular migration, which is often facilitated by ruthless criminal gangs. Channel crossings are not only highly dangerous but unnecessary, because France and other European countries are safe. Asylum should be claimed there. These changes will mean that individuals who could and should have claimed asylum previously in a safe country may not have their asylum claims determined in the UK where we are able to safely return them. The changes also enable us to consider the return of these individuals to any safe country besides the safe country where they could have claimed asylum. Individuals will also not be able to make asylum claims at sea.

At the end of the transition period, the UK is no longer bound by the Dublin regulation. These new measures will enable us, by agreement, to replace Dublin with more flexible returns arrangements. This will have a deterrent effect, by sending a clear message to anyone thinking of coming to the UK dangerously from a safe country that they should not risk their lives by doing so. This deterrent effect will also destroy the business model of the ruthless criminal gangs.

Such returns would, of course, reduce numbers in accommodation. I want to be clear that we are not turning our back on those who need our help after fleeing persecution, oppression or tyranny. We stand by our obligations under the 1951 refugee convention, the European convention on human rights and other relevant treaties. We will continue to welcome people to the UK through safe and legal routes, assisting the most vulnerable, providing accommodation and meeting essential living needs.

As I have set out, we are taking a number of steps to tackle irregular, dangerous migration. But addressing the problem really requires a complete overhaul, and in the first half of next year we will bring forward a Bill to fix the immigration and asylum system once and for all. This country will be fair to those who need protection, but firm where the system is being abused.

**Caroline Nokes:** Coming into force on 1 January, the Home Office's proposed changes to the asylum system have far-reaching implications. Intended to act as a deterrent to people traffickers, which of course is laudable, they instead create a separate tier of asylum seekers, who will not have their claims considered and who the Minister will seek to return, albeit with no mechanism yet to do so. They will also be housed in camps, such as the one proposed in Test Valley, with no mains electricity or mains water. How does the Minister intend to issue written guidance as to how these changes will be processed? He has just 10 working days before they come into force. Will the permitted development powers that the Minister intends to use to create several of these camps be extended by statutory instrument, like these rules, avoiding parliamentary scrutiny? Does he think the changes might in fact see an increase to the asylum application backlog? Does he have a strategic plan or does he hope that housing people on sites where he admits he will not provide healthcare will just act as a deterrent? He acknowledges that, even without covid, only a few thousand failed asylum seekers are returned each year, and in 10 working days he loses Dublin. I know he is working with the French to secure a replacement, but what about Greece, Spain and Italy, and will those agreements be in place by 1 January?

The Home Office is already in court over its inhuman treatment of asylum seekers housed in barracks and it has settled some claims, moving people into more appropriate accommodation. Is the Minister concerned he has laid these rules before the rest of those cases are heard, and just a matter of days after the Equality and Human Rights Commission stated that the Home Office had “a culture where equality was not seen as important”?

Last year, Wendy Williams identified that the Home Office needed to examine the development of policies to make sure that the person was put at the heart of its services. How do these rules fit with that?

The Minister has talked of legal routes, but he has committed to resettle only 232 people—the final step in delivering the pledge to resettle 20,000 Syrians, of which we were all proud. When will he finally launch the programme to resettle 5,000 refugees this year, which was announced in 2019?

The Minister plans to put people in camps with no mains water at a time when we know hygiene is critical. If it were not for you having granted this urgent question today, Mr Speaker, he would not even have come to the House to explain himself.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** On the first question, about the asylum track, after somebody arrives—having come, we believe, from a safe country where they could have claimed asylum—and if they are declared inadmissible, we will seek for a short period to get the agreement of that other country to return them there, where their asylum claim can be substantively and properly considered. If that is not possible, the asylum claim will of course be substantively and properly considered in this country.

My right hon. Friend asked some questions about our asylum system more generally—I think she was in some way seeking to insinuate that it was not reasonable or fair. The accommodation that we provide is reasonable and good, and there are 60,000 people currently being accommodated.

In terms of our system more widely, last year we made 20,000 grants of asylum or other forms of protection—that is a very high number. We welcomed and received more unaccompanied asylum-seeking children last year than any other European country, including Greece. Over the last five years, our resettlement schemes have seen 25,000 people taken directly from conflict zones and resettled in the United Kingdom—more than any other European country. After the 232 remaining people have come over, we will continue with resettlement, as far as we are able to, given the context of coronavirus and everything else. I therefore think we have a proud record of helping people who are genuinely in need.

My right hon. Friend asked about safe and legal routes. In addition to what I have described, last year over 6,000 people came into the UK under the refugee family reunion routes, which of course continue to exist.

The purpose of these changes is to prepare us for life after Dublin, and it is quite right that we make preparations, but at the heart of this is a desire to dissuade people—indeed, prevent people—from making unnecessary and dangerous journeys, particularly across the English channel, endangering their own lives and feeding ruthless criminal people smugglers, and all for no purpose, because France is a safe country where asylum can easily be claimed, as are the other European countries these migrants have travelled through. My right hon. Friend asked about future agreements. She referenced France, and we are of course in close dialogue with France—we have a very close and friendly relationship. We will also be entering into discussions with other countries, including some of the ones she mentioned, as soon as the current European-level negotiations are concluded. These rules lay the foundations for those future discussions and negotiations, but most of all they will deter dangerous and unnecessary journeys, and I hope the House will join me in supporting that objective.



**Holly Lynch (Labour):** ... As we have heard, these changes will allow a claim to be found inadmissible if someone has had the opportunity to claim asylum in another safe third country prior to claiming asylum in the UK. That is not dissimilar to the current arrangements under the Dublin III regulations that we have in place with our European neighbours, but which will cease at the end of this month. We are leaving the Dublin III regulations, so this change allows the Government to deem a claim inadmissible without any co-operation or agreement in place to facilitate returning the person concerned to a third country. This is an unworkable half-plan, being introduced by the back door as changes to the immigration rules, with no opportunity for proper parliamentary scrutiny. On Monday, the Minister outlined that it is this Government's intention to open discussions with those countries as soon as we are able to do so. Can he confirm that those talks are yet to start and that there will be no such arrangements in place by 1 January, when these changes come into effect? Will he clarify what a person's rights will therefore be in the period between their claim being found inadmissible and a returns agreement being reached?

The changes also suggest that an asylum claim can be reinstated after a reasonable period of time, if another safe country is unable to admit that person. How long is "a reasonable period"? Further still, as the Minister has confirmed, these changes will allow someone to be removed to any safe third country, including countries that the person has never been to and has no connection with. How does he envisage that that could possibly work in practice?

The changes before us come into effect in less than a month's time. The Minister must realise the widespread concern about leaving some incredibly vulnerable people in limbo, at risk of homelessness and destitution.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Let me reassure the shadow Minister on one or two points. She concluded her questions by asking about the risk of destitution. To be clear, if somebody who is in the inadmissible cohort is unable to make provision for their own accommodation or upkeep, they will be eligible for accommodation in the normal way, just as people currently in the Dublin third country cohort, awaiting return to a European country, are accommodated and supported. There will be no risk of destitution, which would of course infringe their article 3 rights were it ever to happen.

The hon. Lady asks about the status of people who may fall into that cohort. Clearly, the intention is that a period of time will pass when we seek the agreement of a third country to return them. That will happen within a reasonable time—we will set that out in guidance, but it will be a matter of a few months; it will not be a long time. If, after that reasonable time, no agreement is forthcoming, their asylum claim will be substantively considered here. There will not be any extended period of limbo, which I do not think would be in anybody's interests.

The hon. Lady refers to the fact that these arrangements are in some regards similar in concept to Dublin. I hope the House will take from that that they are reasonable in spirit, because no one has objected to the principles that underpin the Dublin regulations—indeed, many people have pointed to them as exemplars.

Finally, the message all of us in this House should be sending out, the Opposition Front Bench included, is that if somebody is in continental Europe and they feel they have a protection claim that needs to be heard, they should not attempt a dangerous crossing of the English channel. They should not pay money to ruthless people smugglers. They should use the very well-functioning asylum systems in our very civilised European neighbours. Let that message go out from this House today; it will save life.

**John Redwood (Conservative):** Many people in the country share the views the Minister has just expressed; they are appalled by the dangerous and illegal trade in people across the channel, both in dangerous boat voyages and in trucks and cargo containers. He has

every support from millions of people to do something. Will he also ensure in the new law that comes in that, while there is the opportunity for appeal, there are not repetitive, constant and frivolous appeals, delaying the judgment and wasting the time and resource of the Home Office?

**Reply from Chris Philp:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his comments. As he says, I think these proposals and this approach will command widespread public support. The public do not understand why people should cross the English channel in dangerous circumstances, facilitated by criminals, when they could perfectly easily claim asylum in France or somewhere else, which is of course what they should do. Characteristically, he makes an extremely pertinent and prescient point about the legal process, which the new Bill next year will most certainly address. At the moment, it is possible to bring a series of claims over a period of time—repetitively, sometimes vexatiously and sometimes even in contradiction with one another—with the express purpose in mind of preventing, frustrating or delaying the proper application of our immigration rules. We will be legislating to prevent that kind of abuse of the legal process, and I look forward to working with him on making that law a reality.

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP):** ... It seems to me that this is not about fixing the asylum system; rather, it is about blocking access to it, leaving people in limbo and undermining the refugee convention in doing so. The Minister has focused on the channel, but putting aside those crossing the channel, can he be clear on what percentage of asylum applicants the Department thinks is likely to be impacted by these inadmissibility rules and left in limbo? Can he be clearer on what statutory support and accommodation will be available to those who are put in that limbo situation? If this is really about replacing Dublin, surely we must wait to see what replacement agreements are concluded and what safeguards are in place before being asked to look at these changes.

Finally, if the Government are serious about fixing the asylum system, will they start by addressing yesterday's news of 29 deaths in asylum accommodation this year alone? Can we have a clear Government commitment and published policy to record and investigate such deaths, to support the bereaved and to learn lessons so as to prevent further tragedies? Surely creating a legal limbo of several months will only make things worse, not better.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** First, as I have said, the people in this cohort will not be in limbo, because after a reasonable period, if no return to another country is possible, the asylum claim will be substantively considered here. The possibility of limbo that the hon. Gentleman referred to does not exist, as I have said twice already.

Secondly, the hon. Gentleman raised the question of destitution. As I said in response to the hon. Member for Halifax (Holly Lynch), the people in this cohort will be eligible for accommodation and support, so the risk of destitution, which would be in contravention of article 3, does not exist either.

The hon. Gentleman asked about people crossing the channel and referenced the refugee convention. He will know that article 31 of the refugee convention talks about people "coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened" being immune to various forms of penalty. He will know that France is a safe country where people's life and freedom are not threatened. Human rights are respected in France. Asylum claims can be processed in France and, indeed, in other countries through which this cohort typically pass prior to their arrival in France. That deals with the questions that he raised.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned the very sad deaths in accommodation, every single one of which is, of course, a tragedy. I remind him that we have 60,000 people in asylum accommodation. While each individual case is very sad, if he studies the statistics he will see that the numbers are not out of line with what we

would expect among a population of 60,000 people.

**To continue reading this very lengthy question and answer session in full see**  
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-16/debates/06EA3DD8-026C-4AAF-BCBA-60F1B5D2E3F6/ImmigrationRulesSupportedAccommodation>

### **Topical Questions: Immigration Rules**

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP):** ... the Home Office has just made some extraordinary immigration rule changes that are completely at odds with the refugee convention and could see almost every asylum seeker in the UK left in limbo or removed to a country they have never even been near. Why will someone in the Department not have the courage to make a full statement to the House, so that MPs can properly scrutinise these drastic changes before they come into force in January? (910215)

**Reply from Priti Patel:** It is absolutely right that we have made changes to our immigration rules. I hope the hon. Gentleman recognises that when it comes to illegal migration and the issues that we face, too many people are putting their lives at risk by crossing the channel in unseaworthy vessels—and they are putting not only their lives at risk but the lives of Border Force officers as well. We are determined to make that route unviable, and these rule changes are part of that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-14/debates/273816F5-7FD9-4333-8AAF-96AF5F1F89CD/TopicalQuestions#contribution-F417375B-809E-4ABC-B489-A20648050824>

### **Asylum System Reform**

**Peter Gibson (Conservative):** What plans [the Minister's] Department has to reform the UK's asylum system. (910160)

**Chris Green (Conservative):** What plans [the Minister's] Department has to reform the UK's asylum system. (910165)

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative):** What plans [the Minister's] Department has to reform the UK's asylum system. (910169)

**Aaron Bell (Conservative):** What plans [the Minister's] Department has to reform the UK's asylum system. (910176)

**Gareth Bacon (Conservative):** What plans [the Minister's] Department has to reform the UK's asylum system. (910186)

**Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Chris Philp):** As the Home Secretary has already announced, we will embark next year on one of the biggest ever reforms of our asylum system. The system is in need of fundamental reform in which the principles will be firmness and fairness—fair in that we will rapidly grant claims that are meritorious, but firm in the sense that, where claims do not have merit, we will rapidly refuse them and ensure that people cannot have endlessly repeated bites of the cherry, which sadly is the case at the moment.

**Peter Gibson:** We are all rightly proud of the UK's history as a safe haven for the persecuted, but can my hon. Friend outline what steps his Department is taking to ensure that claims of asylum from unsafe countries are being prioritised over those from inherently safe countries such as France?

**Reply from Chris Philp:** My hon. Friend is right to raise this issue. The United Kingdom's resettlement scheme aims to take people directly from dangerous conflict zones, such as those around Syria, into the United Kingdom. We have run the biggest resettlement scheme of any country in Europe over the last five years. In terms of preventing claims from safe countries, he will be aware that we introduced some inadmissibility rules a few days ago, and we are working with our French colleagues to prevent these very dangerous small boat crossings from France to the UK. Thanks to that work, I am pleased to be able to report to the House that over the last three months since September, the number of small boat



crossings per calm-weather day has come down by over 60%. That is testament to the great work being done by UK officers and by our colleagues in France as well.

**Chris Green:** It is immensely important that asylum seekers and refugees received the welcome and support they need when seeking sanctuary in the United Kingdom, but does my hon. Friend agree that those who are rejected should leave the country promptly?

**Reply from Chris Philp:** I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. Where an asylum claim has been rejected, it is only right and fair that the person whose claim has been rejected should leave quickly. Sadly, that is not always the case. In fact, we are currently accommodating some thousands of failed asylum seekers at public expense, but it is right that they should leave when their asylum claim has been rejected. One of the problems is that repeated appeals and last-minute claims can go on almost without limit and we intend to legislate in the first half of next year to ensure that that breakdown in process—that breakdown in the system—no longer happens.

**Caroline Nokes:** The failure to manage the backlog of asylum claims has led to the Minister planning open prison-style camps in temporary accommodation in unsuitable locations, remote from healthcare services. Can he explain to the residents of Barton Stacey how the changes laid to the immigration rules last week are going to help? Does he not run the risk of establishing a separate tier of asylum seekers who cannot have their claims processed but cannot be returned to any European Union country because no agreement exists to enable that to happen? And does that mean that they will be permanently stuck in limbo?

**Reply from Chris Philp:** The large numbers being accommodated are to some degree a consequence of covid because, as my right hon. Friend will know, we have been running significantly lower levels of move-ons for people whose asylum claims have been decided. For example, no negative cessations are happening at all at the moment, and that has led to a significant increase in the number of people being accommodated. As we move out of coronavirus next year, we hope to get those numbers rapidly back down again.

In relation to my right hon. Friend's question about the immigration rules, they are laying the foundations for our post-transition period system. As she knows, we are currently in the Dublin system, which provides for people who have claimed asylum elsewhere to be returned to those countries, including France, Germany and Spain. It is our intention to open discussions with those countries as soon as we are able to do so, in order to bring into force similar measures after the transition period ends.

**Aaron Bell:** My hon. Friend will be aware that approximately 60,000 people are currently stuck in our asylum system. Does he agree with me and my constituents in Newcastle-under-Lyme that we must get this reform through, not only to treat those people fairly but to treat the taxpayer fairly? We should not be picking up the tab for a bloated and broken system.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** My hon. Friend puts it perfectly. It is unfair on the taxpayer to have people whose claims have been rejected still subsisting in accommodation, and it is unfair on people with meritorious claims, whose claims take longer to hear because the system is not operating in the way it should. We certainly will be reforming it to address the issues he is rightly raising, and he can look forward to supporting legislation in this House in the first half of next year to do exactly that.

**Gareth Bacon:** The law on asylum is dated and complex. Loopholes have been exploited for many years and, as my hon. Friend has stated on many occasions, tougher legislation is required. Will he advise the House as to when that legislation will be presented?

**Reply from Chris Philp:** ... As I said, we will be introducing legislation in the first half of next year. It will aim to be fair to people with meritorious claims, to make sure that their claims are decided quickly and they are properly looked after. For people

who have no valid claim or who seek to bring repeated, vexatious claims, often at the last minute, in order to frustrate removal, we will be shutting down those avenues, which are being abused. This is to make sure the system works fairly for those who need protection, but prevents abuse.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-14/debates/F33C880C-D0B5-4A18-9FEA-F9DBF9062F94/AsylumSystemReform>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

### Immigration: Homelessness

**Apsana Begum (Labour)** [128297] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether police data on individuals with no fixed abode will be used by immigration enforcement officials.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Police Officers refer any suspected immigration offenders to the Home Office's National Command and Control Unit (NCCU), this includes details of individuals with no fixed abode. First and foremost, NCCU officers will provide appropriate advice and support where required to the police to safeguard any vulnerable individuals. NCCU officers then consider any further action required with regard to the individual's 'insecure' immigration status, including signposting individuals to other Home Office Teams to regularise their stay where appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128297>

### Immigration: Stop and Search

**Apsana Begum (Labour)** [128298] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether personal information gathered during a Stop and Search can then be used for immigration enforcement purposes.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Stop and search is an investigative tool that the police use to prevent and detect crime by allowing the police to search for offensive weapons and drugs. The police are required to take statistical records of stop and searches for accountability and transparency purposes.

Information may be shared between the Police and Immigration Enforcement under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. However, we remain clear that the Police do not use stop and search to identify potential immigration offenders.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128296>

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

### Immigration: Prosecutions

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP)** [128182] To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions there have been under section 25(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 in each of the last 10 years; and how many of those prosecutions related to having control of a vessel on the sea.

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP)** [128183] To ask the Attorney General, whether she has issued guidance, advice and instructions to Crown prosecution lawyers on prosecutions under section 25(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 in the last 18 months; and if she will make a statement.

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP)** [128184] To ask the Attorney General, what representations (a) her Department and (b) the CPS has received from the Home Office on prosecutions under section 25(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 in the last 18 months.

**Reply from Michael Ellis:** The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintains a central record of the number of offences in which a prosecution commenced, including the offences charged by way of the Immigration Act 1971.

During the last 10 years, up to the end of March 2020, the number of offences

charged by way of section 25 of the Immigration Act 1971 is as follows:

	Immigration Act 1971 { 25(1) }	Immigration Act 1971 { 25(2) }	Immigration Act 1971 { 25(A)(1) }	Immigration Act 1971 { 25(B)(1) }
2010-2011	397	4	3	5
2011-2012	390	0	6	1
2012-2013	430	0	13	2
2013-2014	311	0	2	0
2014-2015	382	0	0	1
2015-2016	321	0	13	0
2016-2017	440	0	4	0
2017-2018	330	1	14	0
2018-2019	295	0	8	1
2019-2020	273	0	1	0

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

There is no indication of the number of individual defendants prosecuted for these offences or the final outcome of the prosecution proceeding or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at the time of finalisation. It is often the case that defendants will be prosecuted for more than one offence in the same set of proceedings.

It is not possible to separately report whether any offences involved the use or control of a vessel at sea other than by manually examining case files at disproportionate cost.

The Law Officers have not issued any guidance, advice or instructions to Crown Prosecution Service lawyers on prosecutions under section 25(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 in the last 18 months. However, the CPS has clear and published policy guidance on the prosecution of immigration offences, which reflects the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the CPS and Home Office Immigration Enforcement in 2016. This establishes the agreed approach and public interest factors which prosecutors must consider when reviewing immigration cases. No further recent guidance has been issued to Crown Prosecutors on section 25(1) of the Immigration Act 1971.

Neither the Attorney General's Office nor the CPS have received representations from the Home Office on prosecutions under section 25(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 in the last 18 months. The joint approach between the CPS and Immigration Enforcement is to consider prosecution under section 25(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 for anyone who has been involved in organising and planning the offences.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128182>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128183>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128184>

### **Biometric Residence Permits: Applications**

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [128143] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for a Biometric Residents Permit were outstanding for more than six weeks in the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** Performance against service standards, where service standards apply, are included in the Migration Transparency data which is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data#uk-visas-and-immigration>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128143>

## Immigrants: Finance

**Drew Hendry (SNP) [117293]** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of No Recourse to Public Funds conditions on the number of people sleeping rough since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** The Home Office does not hold data on the number of people rough sleeping in the UK who are subject to no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

The Government remains committed to protecting vulnerable people and has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this pandemic. Many of the wide-ranging COVID-19 measures the Government has put in place, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme have been made available to migrants with NRPF. We have published guidance and support for migrants affected by COVID-19 at

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

A discretionary fund akin to the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, in the form of a £500 discretionary payment, paid by local authorities is available to those with NRPF, provided they meet the criteria set by the local authority for discretionary payments in their area.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, 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.

The Government has provided councils with £6.4 billion to support their communities through this pandemic, which includes their work to support rough sleepers. This includes £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced funding, £1.1 billion from the Infection Control Fund, £300 million to support Test and Trace as well as funding allocated to councils from the new Local Alert Level system and a number of grants to support communities and vulnerable people.

We are spending over £700m on tackling homelessness and rough sleeping this year. This is on top of the unprecedented resources already committed to help councils support their communities through the pandemic, which includes their work to support children. This funding includes over £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced grants, £485m Contain Outbreak Management Fund and additional funding for authorities to support care homes, high streets and the most vulnerable in their communities. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has worked closely with local authorities and the sector to offer vulnerable people safe accommodation and support. That work is ongoing and by September over 29,000 people had been successfully supported, with over 10,000 still in emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move on support.

NRPF is applied to migrants who are expected to maintain and accommodate themselves in the UK, without recourse to public funds. However, individuals whose basis of stay in the UK is based on their family life or human rights can apply to have the NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if there are exceptional circumstances related to financial circumstances, to avoid destitution and rough sleeping.

To avoid destitution and sleeping rough, those without immigration status should regularise their stay or leave the UK. There is support available to do this through the Voluntary Returns Service.

The Rough Sleeping Support Service (RSSS) offers an enhanced service for Local Authorities and registered charities to establish whether a rough sleeper has access to public funds. Part of this service includes the RSSS contacting casework teams



(where there is an open application) to request that the case is prioritised. The Home Office remains committed to working with Local Authorities in their work with non-UK national rough sleepers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-18/117293>

### **Immigrants: Finance**

**Brendan O'Hara (SNP)** [129000] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to take steps to provide emergency support for highly skilled migrants with pending indefinite leave to remain applications and without rights including access to public funding under section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** Highly skilled migrants within the cohort affected by the Judgement in the case of Balajigari (and others) are considered to have 3C leave by virtue of the fact that the original decisions were quashed by the Court of Appeal. Section 3C leave allows an individual to continue on the conditions attached to their last grant of permission to stay and therefore in the case of these individuals they were not permitted to access public funds under Tier 1 (General).

Where an individual applied for indefinite leave to remain when their permission to stay had already expired they would not benefit from Section 3C leave. However, individuals in this position have been issued with Immigration Bail letters confirming their right to work and study.

As such we do not consider access to public funds is necessary for the purpose of these applicants as they are able to undertake employment.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/129000>

*The judgement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/balajigari-othrs-v-sshd-judgment16.4.19-1.pdf>

### **Migrant Workers**

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [127642] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to resolve highly skilled migrants' cases where a (a) minded to refuse letter and (b) right of appeal given in relation indefinite leave to remain applications have not been received.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** The Home Office has two teams exclusively handling these cases and is considering them within the deadlines of consent orders set by the Courts.

There are no current plans to change our processes and individual cases will be dealt with in sequence. Whilst we do so, those within this cohort will continue to have their status in the United Kingdom protected.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-09/127642>

### **Immigration: Overseas Students**

**Mary Kelly Foy (Labour)** [910174] What discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the effect of changes to the immigration system on the UK's ability to attract overseas students.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** The Government welcomes international students and we are committed to increasing their number.

We recently opened the new Student route, which simplifies and improves upon the previous Tier 4 route, and in summer 2021 we will further improve our offer to international students by launching the Graduate route, which will enable students to work or look for work post-study.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/910174>

### **British Nationality: EU Nationals**

**Duncan Baker (Conservative)** [127010] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether people who have not applied for the EU Settlement Scheme and have instead applied for British Citizenship and (a) have or (b) have not received their citizenship by 30 June retain the right to remain.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** People who have not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme but have applied for and are granted British citizenship will have the right of abode in the UK. If they were lawfully resident in the UK under EU law as an EEA citizen at the end of the transition period, they will continue to enjoy relevant rights under the Citizens' Rights Agreements even if they did not obtain EU Settlement Scheme status before they were granted British citizenship.

Those who have not been granted British citizenship and have not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 will not have the right to remain in the UK after that date. If there are reasonable grounds for the person missing the deadline to apply to the scheme, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

A person who has applied for and not yet received British citizenship can ensure they are in the UK lawfully after 30 June 2021 by making a free of charge application to the EU Settlement Scheme by that date.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/127010>

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

### **Immigration: EU Nationals**

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op)** [128713] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 9 December 2020 to Question 125288, what steps she plans to take to determine whether the durable partnership was formed before 31 December 2020.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** The evidence required under the EU Settlement Scheme that the durable partnership was formed and was durable by 31 December 2020 will depend on the circumstances of the case.

The applicant may be required to provide a relevant document as a durable partner which was issued under the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016, or the applicant may be able to provide other evidence of cohabitation, such as bank statements or utility bills in joint names at the same address, residential tenancy or rental agreements or mortgage statements.

Further information for applicants is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-evidence-of-relationship-to-an-eu-citizen>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-11/128713>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-04/125288>

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

### **National Insurance: EEA Nationals**

**Alyn Smith (SNP)** [127650] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department may issue National Insurance numbers for (a) EU (b) EEA or (c) Swiss nationals who already have settled or pre-settled status.

**Reply from Guy Opperman:** The department continues to allocate National Insurance Numbers, however, at present this service is currently limited to specific customer groups.

DWP started testing a partial digital solution, on a small scale, in mid-October, to

support the issuing of National Insurance Numbers, which is still ongoing. This solution enables collection of the applicant's data, but not the online verification of their identity.

For those customer groups, where a face to face identity check is required, we are developing and testing alternative identity verification solutions. We recently included EU/EAA and Swiss nationals, who have been granted settled or pre-settled status as part of their EU Settlement Scheme, into the test, as their identity will have been verified, through this process, by the Home Office.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-09/127650>

*Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Rehman Chishti (Conservative)** [128120] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing regulation of the registration of small vessels to help counter illegal Channel crossings.

**Rehman Chishti (Conservative)** [128121] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with her French counterpart on the regulatory framework on the registration of small vessels and the enforcement of those regulations in the context of preventing small vessels being used in illegal Channel crossings.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Small boats used by migrants to cross the Channel are varied in type, origin and seaworthiness. While there is attraction in any enterprise which offers to reduce the supply of craft for these dangerous, illegally-facilitated and unnecessary crossings, we are not of the view that these proposals would materially affect the threat. This is because many of these vessels are insubstantial; a good number are stolen or otherwise misappropriated from legitimate owners; and the origin of these vessels is not confined to France. Therefore, any adoption of such an increased regulatory posture is viewed as a disproportionate and less effective approach to reducing supply of boats and opportunity for crossings.

We are engaged with the French in minimising supply - and are seeing results, with crossings per calm weather day down by 60% since September 2020, thanks to law enforcement work on both sides of the Channel. We have not discussed the proposal with the French and have no plans to do so at this time but will keep it under review.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128120>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128121>

#### **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP)** [129025] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 10 December 2020 to Question 126060 on Undocumented Migrants: English Channel, how many additional Police Nationale and Gendarmerie land patrols will be deployed as part of the bilateral agreement agreed with France in November 2020.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** In November the UK and France agreed a package of funding to support a range of activity as part of ongoing efforts to address illegal migration. The funding agreed by the Home Secretary and Minister Darmanin will enable an uplift to the number of Gendarmes and Police Nationale deployed daily on French beaches, which will improve capability for monitoring the coastline and surrounding areas and preventing small boats Channel crossings. Due to operational sensitivities, we cannot outline the exact number of personnel deployed

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/129025>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-07/126060>

### **Undocumented Migrants: Children**

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [126975] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has authorised Kent County Council not to provide accommodation to children in its area who arrived by boat.

**Reply from Vicky Ford:** Legislation is clear about the statutory duties placed on local authorities in caring for unaccompanied children and no dispensation has been given to Kent County Council regarding these duties.

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and to accommodate them if they meet the relevant criteria for requiring accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

The government recognises the challenges local authorities face in caring for high numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. That is why we have been working with Kent County Council, to support them to meet their duties to looked after children in their care. The government has also worked with local authorities across the country to secure alternative placements for those arriving on the south coast.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/126975>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Undocumented Migrants: Children**

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [126978] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to ensure that children arriving in Kent via migrant crossings are protected and cared for.

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [126979] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that children who have passed through the Kent Intake Unit are appropriately supported and cared for.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) arriving in Dover are cared for in the Kent Intake Unit (KIU) before being placed in appropriate social services care. Those claiming asylum are only in the KIU whilst their claims are registered.

Children are always prioritised and supported there for as short a period as possible. Once a child is in the care of a local authority, they are provided support and care on the same basis as all other looked-after children.

Where a local authority, such as Kent, is supporting UASC at more than 0.07% of their total child population, they may refer an unaccompanied child to the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The NTS is the mechanism that allows legal responsibility of a UASC to be transferred from one local authority to another, where it is in the child's best interests to do so. We have recently undertaken a consultation with local authorities on an improved model for the NTS. This consultation closed on 30 September and we are carefully considering the responses.

In addition to the money paid to local authorities through the local government finance settlement, the Home Office provides funding to local authorities looking after UASC and former UASC care leavers. Increases to these contributions for 2020-21 were announced on 8 June.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/126978>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/126979>



*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Immigration: Afghanistan**

**Zarah Sultana (Labour)** [129122] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made on the length of time it will take for family members of people settled in the UK under the Afghan Ex Gratia scheme to be relocated to the UK.

**Zarah Sultana (Labour)** [129123] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of the 66 spousal applications and 58 child applications being processed for family members of people settled in the UK under the Afghan Ex Gratia scheme have had a decision made on their case.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** The process of identifying family members suitable for relocation is a complicated one which requires employing departments of HM Government to identify family members, in addition to the verification of documents under challenging circumstances in Afghanistan.

The process of relocation has inevitably been impacted by COVID-19. Once a decision is made on whether family members qualify for relocation, those approved will be brought to the UK when suitable accommodation has been sourced and support arrangements for arrival are in place.

The Home Office does not publish data on the volume of applications it receives - and approves - under the scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/129122>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/129123>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Asylum**

**Peter Kyle (Labour)** [126926] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the backlog of 46,000 asylum cases where people have been waiting more than six months for an initial decision on their asylum application.

**Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru)** [128219] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason an increasing number of asylum applicants are waiting longer for their claims to be processed; and what steps she is taking to reduce the waiting time for applicants.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** We are fixing a broken asylum system and creating a new one which will be fairer and firmer and compassionate towards those who need our help. There are a number of factors that contribute to the length of time to process and asylum claim but we are determined to clear the backlog to help speed up decisions and prevent people becoming stuck in the system for long periods of time. We are working to streamline cases and have already made significant progress in prioritising cases with acute vulnerability, those in receipt of the greatest level of support including, UASCs, and those that require a reconsideration.

Asylum Operations has developed a recovery plan focused on returning interviews and decisions back to pre-COVID-19 levels as soon as possible. We are also seeking to secure temporary resources to assist from within the Home Office and other government departments, along with other potential options.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/126926>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128219>

### **Asylum: Applications**

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [128142] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many work-in-progress asylum applications there are as of 10 December 2020.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the asylum applications awaiting decision are published in table [Asy\\_D03](#) of the [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#). Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the asylum applications awaiting a decision as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and includes data for main applicants and dependents. 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 asylum and resettlement.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128142>

### Asylum

**Alex Davies-Jones (Labour)** [127697] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum decision maker posts are currently vacant.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Asylum Operations has over recent years made good progress on increasing the number of decision makers and support staff. There are recruitment strategies in place to maintain staffing at the required levels to allow us to manage asylum intake and reduce the overall time to make initial asylum decisions. These include rolling recruitment campaigns, a staff retention strategy to ensure it retains its highly skilled asylum decision makers, and the further expansion of digital processes to increase case working flexibility. Recruitment has however been impacted by COVID-19, we are working to return staffing numbers back to pre-pandemic levels as soon as possible and with campaigns due to go live imminently.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-09/127697>

*The following four questions all received the same answer*

### Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [128144] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding she has allocated for a temporary asylum accommodation centre in Barton Stacey.

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [128145] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for how long she plans to use the proposed temporary asylum accommodation centre in Barton Stacey.

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [128146] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what lessons her Department has learned from the use of Napier and Penally barracks as temporary asylum accommodation centres.

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [128147] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what health care services will be provided on site at future temporary asylum accommodation centres established by her Department.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** The current global pandemic has presented us with significant challenges when it comes to the provision of asylum accommodation. During these unprecedented times the Home Office has acted quickly to source contingency accommodation to create additional capacity to ensure that our obligations can be met in full.

The length of time such sites remain in use is dependent on future demand for asylum accommodation, however we are clear contingency accommodation will only be used for as long as absolutely necessary.

The Napier Barracks and Penally training camp sites have been in operation for almost three months. They are fit for purpose, safe and equipped in line with existing contractual requirements for asylum accommodation. We continue to work

closely with our provider and partners to identify opportunities for improvement, as we do across our entire accommodation estate.

We work with local stakeholders, including the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group and health boards, to ensure access to healthcare services for service users in asylum support accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128144>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128145>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128146>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128147>

### **Asylum: Military Bases**

**Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru)** [128703] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of self-harm have occurred at (a) Penally training camp and (b) Napier barracks since September 2020.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Those accommodated at Penally training camp and Napier barracks have access to medical professionals and mental health support. Our providers are trained to identify vulnerabilities and where safeguarding issues are identified the first responder will make an assessment to the level of risk and the next appropriate response to provide support.

Regular welfare checks are conducted on all service users, including behavioural monitoring of those who show signs of vulnerability and are not engaging with fellow service users and staff.

We work closely with our accommodation providers to ensure that all service users are aware of, and have access to, Migrant Help's helpline. This is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, if they need help, advice or guidance, including signposting to wider mental and medical health services.

The Home Office do not publish a breakdown of self-harm incidents relating to service users.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-11/128703>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Asylum: Folkestone and Penally**

**Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru)** [128220] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants have been transferred out of (a) Penally training camp and (b) Napier barracks, since September 2020.

**Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru)** [128221] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the official categorisation is of the temporary accommodation sites for asylum seekers at (a) Penally training camp in Pembrokeshire and (b) Napier barracks in Kent.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide support including accommodation to destitute asylum seekers whilst their claims are being considered.

In recent months, the asylum system has faced significant pressures and it has become necessary to source, and use, additional temporary accommodation, such as hotels, to ensure the Home Office can continue to meet its statutory obligations towards destitute asylum seekers.

Following an urgent scoping exercise, we identified further suitable and available accommodation and put it to use quickly. This now includes the use of two MOD sites in Kent and Pembrokeshire. The sites are being run by Clearsprings Ready Homes, one of the Home Office's Accommodation Providers under our Asylum

Accommodation and Support contracts.

The number of asylum applicants transferred out of Napier barracks and Penally training camp are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

However, the latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area, which includes those in hotel and wider government facilities. These statistics can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128220>  
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128221>

### **Asylum: Employment**

**Neil Coyle (Labour)** [127570] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the oral Answer of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of 18 November 2020, Official Report, column 198WH, on the Government's reasons for restricting permission to work for asylum seekers, whether her Department has made an assessment of a pull factor that would arise from changing the labour market rules for asylum seekers.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** It is important to distinguish between those who need protection and those seeking to work here, who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. Our wider policy could be undermined if migrants bypassed work visa Rules by lodging unfounded asylum claims here.

Unrestricted access to employment could act as an incentive for more migrants to choose to come here illegally, rather than claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. Although pull factors are complex, we cannot ignore that access to the labour market is among the reasons that so many people currently undertake the extremely hazardous journey across the channel in small boats. When so many lives are put in danger in this way, we cannot have a policy that raises those risks, whatever the number affected.

A review of asylum seeker right to work policy is ongoing, and we are considering the evidence put forward on the issue. The findings of the review will be announced once the work has been completed.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-09/127570>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-11-18/debates/CB0F67B7-7272-42BC-ACE1-5F81E634EFC2/AsylumSeekersAndPermissionToWork#contribution-06236CA6-E9DC-40A3-8290-9F19838CAA77>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Asylum: Housing**

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [126976] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been moved out of children's services into Home Office National Asylum Support Service accommodation while they are in the process of having an age assessment completed.

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [126977] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has undertaken an impact assessment on the decision to move the responsibility for age assessments to her Department and away from children's services.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Where there is doubt about an individual's age and there is no clear and credible documentary evidence, a local authority will undertake a Merton compliant age assessment to establish their eligibility for children's



services. It remains Home Office policy to give prominence to a Merton compliant assessment undertaken by a local authority, when making a decision on age for immigration purposes. Whilst the outcome of this assessment is pending, the local authority will continue to treat the individual as a child, and they will not be transferred to Home Office asylum support accommodation.

The Home Office has not taken away responsibility for Merton compliant age assessments from local authorities. However, the department has temporarily contracted a small team of qualified social workers to support the delivery of Kent Intake Unit's (KIU) functions in respect of children and those claiming to be under 18 years old. In addition to providing support on safeguarding activities, part of the work of these social workers is to conduct shortened initial assessments on age.

We are fixing our broken asylum system to make it firm and fair. We will seek to stop abuse of the system while ensuring it is compassionate towards those who need our help, welcoming people through safe and legal routes.

As part of this work we are exploring with local authorities how we can improve the age assessment process.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/126976>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/126977>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Asylum: Health Professions**

**Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru)** [128217] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how medical practitioners with an outstanding asylum claim of 12 months or more have not been allowed to work in their profession in 2020.

**Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru)** [128218] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that medical practitioners seeking asylum whose claim is outstanding for 12 months or longer can work in their profession in the UK.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Medical practitioners with an asylum claim who have been waiting 12 months or more for a decision on that claim can already apply to work in the many important medical practitioner roles included on the Shortage Occupation List.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128217>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128218>

#### **Asylum: Coronavirus**

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP)** [128187] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that asylum seekers can access covid-19 (a) home tests, (b) testing centres and (c) mobile testing facilities; and if she will make a statement.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** Like everyone else in the UK, asylum seekers are being asked to abide by the relevant Government guidance and adhere to national and local measures to help fight coronavirus.

Asylum seekers can access coronavirus testing services in the same way as the wider UK population. Our contracted accommodation and advice providers can offer support and signposting to local health and mobile testing services, and to the Government's official website where orders for home tests can be placed if appropriate.

We remain in continued dialogue with national and local health leads in relation to rapid testing.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128187>

### **Deportation: Sleeping Rough**

**Margaret Ferrier (Independent)** [910183] What estimate she has made of the number of non-UK nationals who are at risk of deportation under the updated Immigration Rules as a result of rough sleeping.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** The rough sleeping Immigration Rules, which allow for permission to stay in the UK to be refused or cancelled, will be used sparingly and only where a foreign national repeatedly engages in anti-social behaviour and refuses offers of support.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/910183>

### **Deportation: Jamaica**

**Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat)** [122890] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will (a) cancel the deportation flight to Jamaica scheduled for 2 December 2020 and (b) halt any further such flights from the UK.

**Reply from Priti Patel:** a) No b) No

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-30/122890>

## **UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers**

### **Immigration Rules: Supported Accommodation**

*The Minister's first answer to the same question in the House of Commons was repeated in the House of Lords – this can be read in the “UK Parliament House of Commons Oral Answers” section above.*

**Lord Rosser (Labour):** ... the Government said that they will bring forward a Bill “to fix the immigration and asylum system once and for all.”

What will an immigration and asylum system that has been fixed “once and for all” by this Government look like, and how will it differ fundamentally from the present system? Secondly, are there at least minimum standards that must be, and are, met at all times for the accommodation in which a total of 60,000 asylum seekers—some three-quarters of the size of our prison population—are housed? If so, do those minimum standards include at all times for all those housed the provision of electricity, heating, hot water and mains running water?

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

I thank the noble Lord for his question, which pertinently asked what a firm but fair asylum system would look like. The whole premise of my right honourable friend the Home Secretary's ambition for the future immigration system is to give refuge to those who need it—some of the most vulnerable people in the world—and to seriously clamp down on some of the criminals who facilitate some of the dangerous crossings across our waters. The accommodation will meet minimum standards: there is no question of a diminution in standards for anybody who finds themselves in our accommodation.

**Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, the Home Office relies on the UNHCR in connection with its resettlement programme. The Minister will know that the UNHCR is concerned about asylum seekers being left in limbo, so why did the Home Office not consult the UNHCR and others about the changes and issues such as exactly how people will be assisted to access support?

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The changes to the Immigration Rules are small and technical, and some of them are clearly almost an extension of Dublin in terms of the safe country rules. On asylum seekers being left “in limbo”, if by “limbo” the noble Baroness means destitute or in any way left to fend for themselves, I say that no one will be left destitute: everyone will be treated with

dignity and respect.

**Lord Randall of Uxbridge (Conservative):** My Lords, surely one way of reducing the need for supported accommodation is to enable asylum seekers to support themselves? Can my noble friend give any indication of when the review into the potential reduction of time before paid work is allowed will report?

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I am afraid that I cannot give my noble friend an answer to that at this point in time—I do not think there is an update on that, but I will go back and see if there is one, and, if there is, I will send him the response.

**Lord Ramsbotham (Crossbench):** My Lords, I usually associate Red Cross food parcels with our prisoners of war in World War II; however, I once witnessed them being handed out to destitute asylum seekers in Manchester. Can the Minister please assure the House that no asylum seeker supported under the changed rules faces similar destitution?

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I can categorically assure the noble Lord that no asylum seeker will be left to face destitution.

**To continue reading this lengthy question and answer session see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-12-17/debates/7FE83FAB-27DE-4589-8A81-7B70F2103FDF/ImmigrationRulesSupportedAccommodation>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

### Immigration

**The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL11100]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission Public Sector Equality Duty assessment of hostile environment policies, published on 25 November; and what steps they are taking in response to the finding that they did not comply with section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 “in understanding the impact on the Windrush generation and their descendants when developing, implementing and monitoring the hostile environment policy agenda”.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Equality and Human Rights Commission’s report highlights a number of important areas for improvement by the Home Office.

I am committed to working closely with the EHRC to develop an action plan, intended to address the issues raised in their report, by the end of January 2021. This action plan will build on the work we are already doing in response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review to ensure our policymaking is more inclusive and robust, and that the Public Sector Equality Duty is front and centre of all our work.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/hl11100>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/public-sector-equality-duty-assessment-of-hostile-environment-policies.pdf>

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

### Immigrants: Domestic Abuse

**The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL11067]** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend (1) to extend the duration, and (2) to increase the budget, of the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme pilot, in the event that demand outstrips the existing level of support provided.

**The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL11068]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that sharing the immigration status of a migrant

victim of domestic abuse with the Home Office may have on (1) a victim's ability to report any such abuse; and (2) the effectiveness of the Support for Migrant Victims scheme.

**The Lord Bishop of Durham** [HL11069] To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Safeguarding) on 4 September (HC77656), to what extent they consulted non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the design and delivery of the Support for Migrant Victims scheme; which NGOs they engaged with; and whether they intend to engage with NGOs during the evaluation of the pilot.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We very much welcome, and are now reviewing, feedback from the sector on the draft prospectus for the Support for Migrant Victims scheme, including the duration of the pilot. We will consider all options, including future sustainability, should demand for the scheme outstrip the budget already allocated.

As well as providing support to migrant victims of domestic abuse, one of the key objectives of the scheme is to gather more information on the scale of the problem, and on which types of migrants it most significantly affects. Therefore, while we recognise that information being shared with the Home Office may deter some victims from seeking support, it will not be possible to measure the effectiveness of the scheme, or develop long term policy solutions, if there is no such exchange of information.

We are, however, reconsidering the proposals to provide as much reassurance as possible that information will be shared securely and will not routinely be shared with other parts of the Home Office. In developing the scheme we engaged with 24 specialist organisations and groups.

These were: Amnesty International, The Angelou Centre, Asiana Women's Project, BAWSO Wales, End Violence Against Women Campaign, The Equality and Human Rights Commission, Imkaan, Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation, Latin American Women's Rights Service, Liberty, London Black Women's Project, Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation, Migrants' Rights Network, Project 17, Refuge, Refugee Women, Rights of Women, Safety 4 Sisters Manchester, Sisters for Change, Southall Black Sisters, Step Up Migrant Women Coalition, Welsh Women's Aid, Women for Refugee Women and Women's Aid. The second phase of the review consisted of a series of focus groups and meetings with organisations that specialise in providing support to migrant victims of domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds.

Since then, we have held an engagement webinar with the sector on 22 October and are reviewing the feedback from sector organisations. At the webinar we consulted with Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, Latin American Women's Rights Organisation, End Violence Against Women, Southall Black Sisters, Imkaan, Karma Nirvana, Hestia, Women's Aid Scotland, The Angelou Centre, Women's Aid, Catch 22, We Care Housing and Support, Victim Support and SafeLives. We are currently giving thought to the evaluation process, and will look to share findings with the wider sector soon.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/hl11067>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/hl11068>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/hl11069>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-07-21/77656>

### **Immigration: EU Nationals**

**Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat)** [HL10866] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to vary the provisions of the EU Settled Status Scheme to enable students who are (1) registered for courses in the UK to apply for pre-settled status, and (2) unable to provide proof of residence in the UK before 31 December 2020 because of public health restrictions.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 remains the point by which EU citizens need to be resident in the UK to be eligible in their own right for the EU Settlement Scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-30/hl10866>

*Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

### **Immigration: EU Countries**

**Lord Greaves (Liberal Democrat)** [HL11023] To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of EU citizens who are resident in the UK; and how many of those have not yet made an application for settled status.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The latest published information on EU Settlement Scheme applications received can be found on the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics' web page available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>

The total number of applications received up to 31 October 2020 was 4.26 million (4,260,400).

The published figures refer specifically to applications made to the EU Settlement Scheme and cannot be directly compared with estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the resident population of EU/EEA nationals in the UK. The published EUSS figures include non-EEA family members, Irish nationals, and eligible EEA citizens not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in estimates of the resident EU population. Furthermore, the population estimates do not take account of people's migration intentions and will include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-02/hl11023>

*Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

### **Immigration: EU Countries**

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL10995] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow first year university students from the EU, who have not yet moved to the UK, to qualify for EU pre-settled status.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 remains the point by which EU citizens need to be resident in the UK to be eligible in their own right for the EU Settlement Scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-01/hl10995>

*Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

### **Deportation: Aviation**

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat)** [HL10910] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish (1) the reasons behind the deportation of



each individual due to be onboard the deportation flight scheduled for 2 December, and (2) details of whether any of these people have appealed their deportation.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** One of this Government's key objectives is to protect the public by removing foreign national offenders who commit criminal offences and have no right to remain in the UK. Since January 2019, 6,450 foreign criminals have been deported.

We are unable to comment on individual cases and therefore cannot provide you with the reasons for deportation of those due to be on board this flight or the details of any appeals made. However, those due to be removed on the flight include people convicted of murder, rape, manslaughter, violent crime, firearms offences, burglary and the appalling scourge of dealing Class-A drugs. These are serious offences which have a very real and lasting impact on the victims and the communities in which we all live.

Those being deported are provided with the opportunity to raise reasons why they should not be deported, prior to deportation. All issues raised will be fully considered and decided before deportation. The UK only ever returns those who the Home Office and, where applicable, the courts are satisfied do not need our protection and have no legal basis to remain in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-30/hl10910>

#### **Deportation: Jamaica**

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat)** [HL11096] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were deported to Jamaica from the UK on 2 December; how many people who were due to be deported on that same flight were not; and why any such people were not deported.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The charter flight to Jamaica departed the UK on 2 December 2020 carrying 13 foreign national offenders (FNOs) convicted of serious offences including murder, attempted rape, aggravated burglary and supplying Class A drugs. They were sentenced to a combined total of over 100 years, which included one life sentence.

There were 23 FNOs who were sentenced to a combined total of 156 years plus one life sentence who were not deported on the charter, including a murderer and rapists.

We are unable to comment on individual cases and therefore cannot provide the detailed reasons why those removed from the flight were not deported; however, the majority were due to last minute legal challenges. We are progressing these cases as a priority.

This Government takes seriously its obligation under the UK Borders Act 2007 to deport any FNO who has served a custodial sentence of at least 12 months; and we will continue to seek to remove dangerous criminals and protect our communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/hl11096>

#### **Deportation: Jamaica**

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat)** [HL11095] To ask Her Majesty's Government which organisations in Jamaica co-operated with UK authorities to provide support to those deported to Jamaica from the UK on 2 December.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Extensive cooperation was provided to HMG's returns charter flight by the Jamaican government and its agencies. Representatives from the Jamaican Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Passport and Immigration Agency and the Jamaican Constabulary Force facilitated arrangements for receiving travellers, conducting COVID19 tests and transfers to pre-arranged hotel accommodation to quarantine, pending test results.

Following quarantine people will be placed into the care of friends or family, with additional support offered by charities Open Arms and the National Organisation for Deported Migrants (NODM). These charities offer on-arrival assistance, including transport to new places of residence, guidance on reintegration to Jamaican society and access to the Open Arms Development Centre, which can provide accommodation and vocational training.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/hl11095>

### **Osime Brown**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL10878] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Change.org petition Stop The Deportation Of Vulnerable Autistic Man Osime Brown!, started on 17 March; and what steps they are taking to improve Osime Brown's (1) mental, and (2) physical, health while he remains in prison.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We only ever return foreign national offenders who we and, where applicable, the courts are satisfied do not need our protection and have no legal basis to remain in the UK. No action would be taken to deport an individual while there are outstanding legal barriers that would prevent their removal from the UK and until all outstanding representations have been considered. Mr Brown is no longer serving a custodial sentence and has been released on Immigration Bail to be managed in the community.

It would be inappropriate to comment further on his case while legal proceedings are ongoing.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-30/hl10878>

## **UK Parliament Early Day Motion**

**Alison Thewliss (SNP)** [1291] **The work of Refuweege** – That this house recognises the fantastic work of Selina Hales and her team at Refuweege who have been warmly welcoming refugees to Glasgow since 2015 and have been a vital source of help during the covid-19 pandemic; notes the importance of their service in ensuring that new arrivals can access the food, clothing, toiletries and other essentials they need for a better start in their new home; appreciates that the team have adapted quickly to the recent rise in demand and are currently providing around 150 emergency support packages per week through a growing network of volunteers; recognises that they also bring communities together through other projects such as their recent Claiming Back the Narrative photography series and festive crafting events; thanks the team for courageously campaigning for change and raising awareness of the barriers that forcibly displaced people face when accessing support and opportunities; and finally thanks the organisation for ensuring that Glasgow continues to be a welcoming place to all those people who choose to make it their home.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/57885>

## **Press Releases**

### **Stay in Scotland**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/stay-in-scotland-1/>

### **Windrush compensation scheme overhauled**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/windrush-compensation-scheme-overhauled>

**Immediate action needed by government and police to ensure vulnerable migrant victims of crime can confidently report to police**

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/news/news-feed/action-needed-by-government-and-police-to-ensure-vulnerable-migrant-victims-of-crime-can-confidently-report-to-police/>

**Like all of us, migrants need safety and stability after this year of crisis, OSCE human rights office says**

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/474030>

## New Publications

**First Minister's letter to EU citizens in Scotland: December 2020**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-ministers-letter-to-eu-citizens-in-scotland-december-2020/>

**Windrush Compensation Scheme Rules**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/945096/Windrush\\_Compensation\\_Scheme\\_FR\\_1612.pdf.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945096/Windrush_Compensation_Scheme_FR_1612.pdf.pdf)

**Healthcare for EU citizens living in or moving to the UK from 1 January 2021**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-eu-citizens-living-in-or-moving-to-the-uk-from-1-january-2021>

**Court of Appeal judgement concerning access to means-tested benefits by EU citizens with settled status**

<https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/resource/Fratila%20v%20SSWP%20%28final%29%2018.12.2020.pdf>

**Supreme Court Appeal Judgement concerning protection from deportation of a 'Zambrano carer'**

**Press release**

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2019-0010-press-summary.pdf>

**Judgement**

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2019-0010-judgment.pdf>

**High Court judgement concerning the provision of housing for asylum seekers**

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2020/3416.pdf>

**High Court judgement concerning the rights of asylum seekers and victims of trafficking to work in the UK**

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2020/3487.pdf>

**Safe to share? Report on Liberty and Southall Black Sisters' super-complaint on policing and immigration status**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/945314/safe-to-share-liberty-southall-black-sisters-super-complaint-policing-immigration-status.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945314/safe-to-share-liberty-southall-black-sisters-super-complaint-policing-immigration-status.pdf)

**Updated Handbook on European law relating to asylum, borders and immigration**

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2020-handbook-law-asylum-migration-borders-2020-ed\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-handbook-law-asylum-migration-borders-2020-ed_en.pdf)

## News

**Immigration shake-up leaves employers with skills challenges in new year**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/12/20/immigration-shake-up-leaves-employers-skills-challenges-new/>

**All Windrush victims to get at least £10,000**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55300494>

**EU citizens urged by Nicola Sturgeon to apply through scheme to stay in Scotland**

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/eu-citizens-urged-nicola-sturgeon-apply-through-scheme-stay-scotland-3072212>

**EU nationals in UK can claim means-tested benefits, court rules**

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/18/eu-nationals-in-uk-can-claim-means-tested-benefits-court-rules>

**Police should not share information on illegal migrants if they are victims of crime, report recommends**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/17/police-should-not-share-information-illegal-migrants-victims/>

**Police told not to share immigration data of domestic abuse victims**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/17/police-told-not-to-share-immigration-data-of-domestic-abuse-victims>

**Migrant domestic abuse victims' data must not be shared between police and Home Office, report warns**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-domestic-abuse-home-office-police-b1775202.html>

**Home Office to deploy 'stealth squad' of speedboats and jet skis to catch Channel migrants**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/17/home-office-deploy-stealth-squad-speedboats-jet-skis-catch-channel/>

**Channel migrants offered special Christmas cut-price crossings of £300 per person**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/18/channel-migrants-offered-special-christmas-cut-price-crossings/>

**'If a smuggler says do it, you do': refugees on trying to rescue their friends from the Channel**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/19/if-a-smuggler-says-do-it-you-do-refugees-on-trying-to-rescue-their-friends-from-the-channel>

**End of year message from Sabir Zazai: "We are here. And we hear you"**

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/end-of-year-message-from-sabir-zazai-we-are-here-and-we-hear-you/>

**Home Office wrong to stop asylum seekers working in UK, court rules**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/18/trafficked-woman-has-right-to-work-as-cleaner-in-uk-rules-judge>

**Home Office unlawfully preventing asylum seekers from working, High Court rules**  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-asylum-seekers-work-high-court-b1776092.html>

**Home Office leaving stateless people facing detention and destitution, warns UN**  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-stateless-detention-unhcr-b1774355.html>

**Home Office unlawfully leaving destitute and disabled asylum-seekers homeless, High Court rules**  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-home-office-homeless-disabled-b1773391.html>

**Shocking death toll of asylum seekers in Home Office accommodation**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/15/revealed-shocking-death-toll-of-asylum-seekers-in-home-office-accommodation>

**Home Office criticised over plan to house asylum seekers at Yarl's Wood**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/16/home-office-criticised-over-plan-to-house-asylum-seekers-at-yarls-wood>

**15-year-old Hong Kong democracy activist becomes youngest to seek asylum in UK**  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/14/15-year-old-hong-kong-democracy-activist-becomes-youngest-seek/>

**Girl, 15, is youngest Hong Kong resident to seek UK asylum from Beijing crackdown**  
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/girl-15-is-youngest-hong-kong-resident-to-seek-uk-asylum-from-beijing-crackdown-tblkvlwx0>

**After Windrush, Britain is still deporting people to countries they barely know**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/15/britain-deport-young-black-men-justice-osime-brown>

TOP

## Equality

### Scottish Parliament Written Answer

#### **Black and African people: Exclusion**

**S5W-33800 Monica Lennon (Labour)** To ask the Scottish Government what funding it made available in 2019-20 to organisations that support Black and African people in Scotland, particularly those supporting women and families affected by long-term health conditions and who are socially, economically and digitally excluded.

**Reply from Christina McKelvie:** The Scottish Government is committed to creating a fairer Scotland for all. In 2019-20 we allocated over £2.6m to organisations working to advance race equality.

This funding has supported our minority ethnic communities to access vital services such as employment support, health and wellbeing services, digital resources as well as to tackle social isolation. Our aims of becoming a digitally connected nation for all, ensuring that everyone living with a long term health condition are able to access the best possible care and support and our ambition for an economy that



works for all of Scotland's people, takes into account the particular challenges faced by minority ethnic communities. This includes Black and African people, as well as those from other minority ethnic groups.

A particular challenge we are committed to tackling in Scotland is FGM. In 2019 - 20 we provided minority ethnic organisations over £600,000 to help us eradicate this practice, provide vital services to anyone affected and to promote the services and support available for vulnerable women at risk of this heinous crime. Organisations funded include the Kenyan Women Association in Scotland, Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre and Saheliya.

We have also provided specific funding of £20k to the African Council, to take forward work to address the lack of representation and participation of Africans in public life in Scotland, and to promote active citizenship and social cohesion.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-33800>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

### Prison and Probation Service: Ethnic Groups

**Lyn Brown (Labour)** [125974] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 4 December 2020 to Question 121217 on Prison and Probation Service: Labour Turnover, what assessment he has made of which factors contribute towards the (a) lower promotion rate among Black staff and (b) higher leaving rates among Asian and other ethnic minority staff.

**Reply from Lucy Frazer:** We are working on building a broad talent base within HMPPS, where we attract and retain high-quality, passionate people from diverse backgrounds.

While the data from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) annual staff equalities report 2019/2020 shows that the leaving rate for BAME staff is higher than that of White staff, the gap has closed for promotion rates for the same groups. This is in part due to initiatives such as diverse interview panels and mentoring.

HMPPS recognises that further work is needed to improve the data and understand the contributing factors to staff leaving the agency or not progressing. The Race Action Programme will utilise data to identify areas for improvement and where data meets the statistical thresholds, staff previously grouped as Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) to aid consistency with other government departments, will be disaggregated to provide greater insight.

HM Prison and Probation Service annual staff equalities report 2019/2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-annual-staff-equalities-report-2019-to-2020>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-07/125974>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-26/121217>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

### Higher Education: Travellers

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL10998] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to remove barriers to higher education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

**Reply from Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** The Office for Students (OfS), the

regulator for higher education (HE) in England, identifies people from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller backgrounds as people who are likely to experience issues in accessing, and successfully participating, in HE. As such, they asked HE providers to consider the needs of this group in their Access and Participation Plans for 2021-2024/25. These plans are designed to support all students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups to enter and succeed in HE, and all HE providers charging higher level tuition fees must have a plan agreed by the OfS.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-01/hl10998>

### **Stop and Search: Ethnic Groups**

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat)** [HL11094] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Global City Policing Stop and Search in London: July to September 2020, published in November, and in particular its finding that in London black men between 18 and 24 years old are on average 19 times more likely than the general population to be stopped and searched by the police; what assessment they have made of the efficacy of stop and search (1) target areas, and (2) policy; and what plans they have to review the use of stop and search.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office welcomes any analysis of the effectiveness of police tactics.

The police tell us that stop and search is a vital tool which helps them tackle serious violence and protect communities. We remain clear that no one should be stopped based on protected characteristics, including race and age. Safeguards exist to ensure this, including Code A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which sets out the statutory requirements for conducting a search, the use of body worn video to increase accountability, and HMICFRS inspections where force level disparities are examined. The Home Office also publishes extensive data on police powers, including the use of stop and search, which allows Police and Crime Commissioners and others to hold forces to account. The latest publication is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2020>

The causes of disparities in stop and search are complex. This Government has committed to tackling racial disparities and broader structural inequalities as part of the Prime Minister's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

All operational decisions on how stop and search is carried out in London are a matter for the Metropolitan Police Service and City of London Police.

[Police Powers and Procedures Eng Wales 2020](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/hl11094>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10115766/1/2020-Q3.pdf>

## **Press Releases**

**'Fight For Fairness' speech to set out government's new approach to equality**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fight-for-fairness-speech-to-set-out-governments-new-approach-to-equality>

**Fight For Fairness**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fight-for-fairness>

## New Publications

**Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: letter to the Minister for Equalities**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities-letter-to-the-minister-for-equalities/letter-to-minister-for-equalities-26-november-2020>

**Ethnicity and Poverty in Scotland 2020**  
[https://864a82af-f028-4baf-a094-46facc9205ca.filesusr.com/ugd/b0353f\\_0db6596cc9ee46ab9aa13b97699aae79.pdf](https://864a82af-f028-4baf-a094-46facc9205ca.filesusr.com/ugd/b0353f_0db6596cc9ee46ab9aa13b97699aae79.pdf)

**Making Progress? Employment and retention of BAME teachers in England**  
[https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10117331/1/IOE\\_Report\\_BAME\\_Teachers.pdf](https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10117331/1/IOE_Report_BAME_Teachers.pdf)

## News

**Racial disparities report pushed back to Spring 2021**  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55337562>

**Employers back requirement for large firms to disclose ethnicity pay gaps**  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55364466>

**Coronavirus: Health checks recommended for ethnic minorities from age 25**  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55306761>

**Black applicants significantly more likely to fail RAF selection tests than white counterparts**  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/15/black-applicants-significantly-likely-fail-raf-selection-tests/>

**Almost half of English schools have no BAME teachers, study finds**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/dec/14/almost-half-of-english-schools-have-no-bame-teachers-study-finds>

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## Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

### Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

#### **Racist Incidents (Police Resourcing)**

**Sarah Boyack (Labour):** Is the First Minister concerned about the appalling racist attack in Edinburgh last Friday and will she say what work is being done to ensure that the police are resourced to address racist incidents during the pandemic? My constituents are now extremely concerned about their personal safety.

**Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** I condemn in the strongest possible terms any racist abuse or attack, including the one in Edinburgh. I know how seriously the police take crimes of a racist nature. Obviously, how they deal with individual incidents is an operational matter for the police. We have a responsibility, which we discharge, to make sure that the police are properly resourced and there are more police officers on our streets now, as a result of the

actions that this Government has taken. It is really important that all of us stand firm, shoulder to shoulder, in complete solidarity against any racist abuse, crimes or attacks. That is not who we are and we should never, ever, show any tolerance whatsoever for it.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13023&i=117779#ScotParlOR>

## UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

### Unconscious Bias Training

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Julia Lopez):** [HCWS652] This Government are committed to levelling up opportunity for everyone, no matter what their background. We are also determined to eliminate discrimination in the workplace. To meet those ambitions, we must ensure that policy and advice on equality is evidence-based, and is delivered in a way that means we can respond quickly to new insights.

Earlier this year, the Government Equalities Office commissioned the behavioural insights team for a summary of the evidence on unconscious bias and diversity training. Titled “Unconscious bias and diversity training—what the evidence says”, the report highlights that “there is currently no evidence that this training changes behaviour in the long term or improves workplace equality in terms of representation of women, ethnic minorities or other minority groups”.

It also states that there is emerging evidence of unintended negative consequences.

The report is published alongside this response, and will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses, today. In light of its findings, Ministers have concluded that unconscious bias training does not achieve its intended aims. It will therefore be phased out in the civil service. We encourage other public sector employers to do likewise.

#### *Background*

Unconscious bias training typically aims to raise awareness of the potential biases and cognitive shortcuts that may negatively affect decision-making and behaviour in the workplace. The intent is usually to reduce both explicit and implicit bias towards members of particular groups that share characteristics protected under law and change behaviour. Although unconscious bias training takes a variety of forms, it is normally delivered as a discrete individual or group session that aims to set out the theory behind implicit bias, provide exercises that demonstrate how such biases might potentially affect behaviour, and suggest strategies to participants for avoiding that behaviour in future.

Such training sessions have been introduced by a range of organisations as part of a well-intentioned effort to build fairer and more inclusive workplaces. They have often formed part of a wider employer toolkit aimed at tackling discrimination and building inclusion.

However, in recent years a significant debate has emerged over their effectiveness and quality. Despite a growing diversity training industry and increased adoption of unconscious bias training programmes, a strong body of evidence has emerged that shows that such training has no sustained impact on behaviour and may even be counter-productive.

#### *Lack of evidence to support positive change*

To be successful in tackling discrimination, unconscious bias training should change behaviour. However, evidence suggests that attitudes and behaviours are each driven by different psychological systems, so a single intervention is unlikely to impact effectively on both. A systematic review of unconscious bias training examining 492 studies (involving more than 87,000 participants), found changes to unconscious bias measures were not associated with changes in behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Formal assessments of bias (e.g. the implicit association test) have also been criticised for failing to generate replicable results even when the same individuals have been re-tested.<sup>2</sup>

Further evidence also suggests that unconscious bias training may even have detrimental

effects. The Equality and Human Rights Commission found that evidence for its ability effectively to change behaviour is limited and “there is potential for back-firing effects when UBT participants are exposed to information that suggests stereotypes and biases are unchangeable”.

Instructions to suppress stereotypes may not only activate and reinforce unhelpful stereotypes, they may provoke negative reactions and actually make people exacerbate their biases.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, there is no recognised way of assuring the quality of unconscious bias training and multiple interventions of variable content may be given that label. This has serious implications for organisations, who risk putting funding into poor quality and ineffective training.

#### *Government conclusion*

The civil service is committed to being an open and inclusive employer. Civil servants work on a range of complex policies every day; working inclusively means that they will make better decisions, solve problems more effectively and ultimately deliver better services to citizens. An individual’s background must never be a limiting factor in the workplace. Our aspiration is clear: a civil service open to all, with individuals from a variety of backgrounds adding breadth and depth to our understanding of contemporary British society, providing greater challenge to received wisdom and fresh perspectives to the challenges we face as a nation—united by a commitment to the fundamental values of public life and service.

Efforts to ensure the civil service is representative of the whole population it serves, and that its workplaces are free from discrimination, must be based on clear evidence of what works, must uphold the merit principle for recruitment and promotion, and must represent value for taxpayers’ money. This approach is the reason, for example, that the civil service uses clear, standardised assessment techniques for recruitment and tests the fairness of any such tools with diverse user groups before deploying them.

Given the evidence, now captured in the report accompanying this statement, an internal review decided in January 2020 that unconscious bias training would be phased out in Departments. In addition, while there is clearly a role for training to support a more inclusive workplace and civil service, evidence also suggests that even the broader category of “diversity training” as a standalone exercise can undermine such efforts if it appears to be a “tick box exercise”. The civil service will therefore integrate principles for inclusion and diversity into mainstream core training and leadership modules in a manner which facilitates positive behaviour change. This new strategy will be published in the new year, and will reassert our commitment to being an inclusive employer with a stronger focus on engaging measurable action.

The Government expect other parts of the public sector, including local government, the police, and the NHS, to review their approaches in light of the evidence and the developments in the civil service. We will continue to build the evidence on what works to make our workplaces fairer, and unite and level up across our country, with the reformed equality hub playing a key role.

<sup>1</sup> Forscher, P. S. \*, Lai, C. K. \*, Axt, J. R., Ebersole, C. R., Herman, M., Devine, P. G., and Nosek, B.A. (2019). A meta-analysis of procedures to change implicit measures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 117, 522-559.

<sup>2</sup> Gawronski, Bertram and Morrison, Mike and Phills, Curtis and Galdi, Silvia. (2017). Temporal Stability of Implicit and Explicit Measures: A Longitudinal Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. 43. 300-312. 10.1177/0146167216684131.

<sup>3</sup> Dobbin and Kalev (2018), “Why Doesn’t Diversity Training Work? The Challenge for Industry and Academia”, 10(2), 48-55; Dobbin and Kalev (2016) Why Diversity Programs Fail, *Harvard Business Review* 94, (7); Michelle M Duguid, Melissa C Thomas-Hunt, “Condoning stereotyping? How awareness of stereotyping prevalence impacts expression of stereotypes”, March 2015,

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25314368/>;

Frederick L Oswald, Gregory Mitchell, Hart Blanton, James Jaccard, Philip E Tetlock, “Predicting ethnic and racial discrimination: a meta-analysis of IAT criterion studies”, 17 June 2013,



<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23773046/>

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-15/debates/20121549000010/UnconsciousBiasTraining>

The report “Unconscious bias and diversity training – what the evidence says”, referred to above can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/944431/20-12-14\\_UBT\\_BIT\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/944431/20-12-14_UBT_BIT_report.pdf)

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

### Hate Crime: Internet

**Ruth Jones (Labour)** [910175] What recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on tackling online hate speech and extremism.

**Reply from Victoria Atkins:** The Government’s responsibility is to protect all people equally and we are challenging extremism in all its forms.

We are committed to vigorously countering extremist ideology – making sure every part of government is taking action.

This includes recent ongoing work on the implementation of the Online Harms framework to tackle hateful content.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/910175>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

### Racial Discrimination

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL11054] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings from Race on the Agenda's survey, featured in Channel 5's Everyday Racism programme on 25 November, on experiences of racism and, in particular, that 95 per cent of respondents identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic have faced racism or racial prejudice.

**Reply from Baroness Berridge:** This Government is committed to tackling racism and racial prejudice in all its forms. That is why the Prime Minister appointed the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in July, to examine all aspects of continuing racial and ethnic disparities in Britain. The Commission aims to set out a new, positive agenda for change - balancing the needs of individuals, communities and society, maximising opportunities and ensuring fairness for all. It aims to report by the end of the year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-02/hl11054>

The programme referred to above can be watched at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8GPYIV8wc8>

## Press Release

**Response to Hate Crime Bill report**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/response-to-hate-crime-bill-report/>

## New Publications

**Action Plan: Driving out antisemitism from the Labour Party: Response to the EHRC Report 'Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party'**

<https://labourlist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Labour-Party-EHRC-Action-Plan.pdf>

**Campus Antisemitism in Britain 2018–2020**

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/b/2/Antisemitism%20on%20University%20Campuses.pdf>

## News

**MSPs give initial backing to new Scots hate crime laws**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-55321261>

**SNP hate crime legislation clears first Holyrood vote**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18946642.snp-hate-crime-legislation-clears-first-holyrood-vote/>

**Scottish Hate Crime Bill gets MSPs backing, but with demands for more changes**

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-hate-crime-bill-gets-msps-backing-demands-more-changes-3069497>

**Hate Crime Bill: Humza Yousaf pledges further changes**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18943378.hate-crime-bill-humza-yousaf-pledges-changes/>

**Sweeping changes to controversial Hate Crime Bill to protect freedom of expression**

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/sweeping-changes-controversial-hate-crime-bill-protect-freedom-expression-3067362>

**Hate crime bill 'still threat to freedom' despite climbdown**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18943759.hate-crime-bill-still-threat-freedom-despite-climbdown/>

**Why is Scotland's Hate Crime Bill so controversial?**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-53580326>

**Keir Starmer under fire for failing to challenge radio caller's racism**

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/dec/14/keir-starmer-under-fire-failing-challenge-radio-caller-racism>

**Labour to appoint Jewish board to help draw up antisemitism complaint process**

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/dec/17/labour-appoint-jewish-board-antisemitism-complaint-process>

**'Unconscious bias training' to be scrapped by ministers**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/education-55309923>

**Unconscious bias training to be scrapped after review finds it has little effect**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/12/14/exclusive-unconscious-bias-training-scrapped-review-finds-has/>

**UK ministers criticised for failing to find alternative to unconscious bias training**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/dec/15/uk-ministers-criticised-for-failing-to-find-alternative-to-unconscious-bias-training>

**Police five times more likely to use force against black people than white people in England and Wales**  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-force-black-rate-uk-blm-b1775676.html>

**Met Police officer sues over 'sexual and racist' texts**  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-55364729>

**Met Police officer abused power and used racist language, report finds**  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-55355301>

**Met Police officer denies membership of neo-Nazi terrorist group**  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/neo-nazi-police-officer-met-b1773779.html>

**Racism and harassment in the NHS has got worse, with women increasingly facing abuse by their colleagues, survey shows**  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/16/racism-harassment-nhs-has-got-worse-women-increasingly-facing/>

**Immanuel Kant's 'racism' will be taught alongside his philosophy after demand from students**  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/19/immanuel-kants-racism-will-taught-alongside-philosophy-demand/>

**Jewish student says he was interrogated after complaining about Warwick lecturer**  
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/i-was-interrogated-after-complaining-says-jewish-student-fpcgk2rr9>

**Teenager denies 'racist' attack over virus he saw as fake**  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/15/teenager-denies-racist-attack-virus-saw-fake/>

**Azeem Rafiq files legal claim against Yorkshire over alleged racism**  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cricket/2020/12/15/azeem-rafiq-files-legal-claim-against-yorkshire-alleged-racism/>

**Azeem Rafiq files race discrimination and harassment claim against Yorkshire**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/dec/15/azeem-rafiq-files-race-discrimination-and-harassment-claim-against-yorkshire-cricket-club>

**Does English cricket have a race problem?**  
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/does-english-cricket-have-a-race-problem-z2ghsjqfl>

**British Horseracing Authority apologise for racist horse name**  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/racing/british-horseracing-authority-racist-horse-name-b1772973.html>

**Housing association pays tenant £31,000 over neighbours' racism**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/19/housing-association-pays-tenant-31000-over-neighbours-racism>

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## Other Scottish Parliament and Government

### New Publication

**Recorded Crime in Scotland: November 2020**

<https://tinyurl.com/ybtntn5x>

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## Other UK Parliament and Government

### UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Off-payroll Working: Ethnic Groups**

**Patrick Grady (SNP)** [129044] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what equality impact assessments his Department has carried out on the effect of the IR35 off-payroll working rules on the BAME community.

**Reply from Jesse Norman:** As set out in the Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) published in July 2019, the reform of the off-payroll working rules is not anticipated to have a specific impact on groups sharing protected characteristics. The TIIN can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/129044>

*The following five questions all received the same answer*

#### **Religion: Education**

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [128850] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 16 April 2018 to Question 134699 on Religion: Education, whether his Department has a copy of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education for each local education authority in England.

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [128851] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 16 April 2018 to Question 134699 on Religion: Education, what requirement is in place for local authorities to ensure that any resident can read the locally agreed syllabus for religious education; and if he will make a statement.

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [128852] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 16 April 2018 to Question 134699 on Religion: Education, whether his Department has a record for each local education authority of (a) the date on which its religious education syllabus was last reviewed and (b) when the current syllabus was brought into effect.

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [128853] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's 2012 guidance on Religious education (RE) and collective worship in academies and free schools, what information his Department holds on (a) the religious education syllabus operating in each academy school and (b) whether that syllabus is the agreed syllabus for its locality.

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [128854] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 16 April 2018 to Question 134699 on Religion: Education, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) adequacy of the different syllabuses for religious education in place in England and (b) extent to which those syllabuses take account of the teaching and practices of the principal religions represented in Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

**Reply from Nick Gibb:** Local authorities are responsible for convening an Agreed

Syllabus Conference every five years, and for providing an agreed syllabus which specified maintained schools must comply with. This must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are Christian, in the main, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. The Department does not hold a copy of each local authority area's agreed syllabus for religious education (RE) when it came into effect or was last reviewed. There is also no requirement for local authority areas to provide my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education with this information.

The Department would encourage any local authority to publish their locally agreed syllabus or a summary of its main provisions, although they are not required by legislation to do so. Both maintained schools and academies should, however, publish on their websites the curriculum of every subject taught in each academic year, including RE. Local residents can find details of the RE curriculum provided by state-funded schools in their area, whether in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus or otherwise. The Government guidance for the provision of RE in local authority maintained schools is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010>

Academies and free schools are not required to comply with a locally agreed syllabus, though they may choose to adopt it. The funding agreement for each academy and free school does, however, require these schools to teach RE. The Department does not hold information on the number of academies and free schools that have adopted a locally agreed syllabus, or the specific details of their RE curriculum. Similarly, the Department does not quality assure a school's individual RE curriculum to assess their adequacy, or the extent to which they take account of the teaching and practices of the principal religions represented in Great Britain.

If the Department is informed that an agreed syllabus or an academy's RE syllabus may be in breach of statutory requirements or their funding agreement, this will be investigated. Where needed, the Department will remind schools of their duty on this matter and advise on how this can be met.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/128850>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/128851>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/128852>

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<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/128853>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-14/128854>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134699>

*The 2012 guidance referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools/religious-education-re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools>



## New Publication

### Statistics on so called 'honour-based' abuse offences recorded by the police

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistics-on-so-called-honour-based-abuse-offences-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020/statistics-on-so-called-honour-based-abuse-offences-recorded-by-the-police>

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## 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/coronavirus>

#### Protect-Scot contact tracing app

<https://protect.scot/how-it-works>

#### 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/>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

### Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

**Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op)** [128081] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2020 to Question 81551 on Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups, if his Department will make an assessment of the effect of unconscious bias on the treatment of BAME covid-19 patients.

**Reply from Jo Churchill:** Through Public Health England's Beyond the Data review, stakeholders said that some black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities felt that they receive different treatment when compared with white patients and that this has further exacerbated fear within BAME communities and reluctance to seek medical care.

We are concerned that COVID-19 has had a disproportionate effect on people from BAME backgrounds. The Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) has been tasked to lead the Government's work tackling this issue. With the support of the Race Disparity Unit, the Minister is also reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by relevant Government departments and their agencies to directly lessen disparities in infection and death rates of COVID-19.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128081>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-08-28/81551>

### **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op)** [128629] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department made of the effect of cultural sensitivities on the implementation of covid-19 restrictions on days of (a) cultural or (b) religious celebrations.

**Reply from Nadine Dorries:** The Government considers impacts on different groups of protected characteristics, including religious observance when making decisions on COVID-19 restrictions. The analysis and evidence is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-health-economic-and-social-effects-of-covid-19-and-the-tiered-approach>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-11/128629>

### **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Christopher Chope (Conservative)** [110731] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office what reason the use of (a) religious and (b) sporting premises in England certified by Public Health England as covid-safe are now assessed as a risk to public health; and if he will make a statement.

**Reply from Penny Mordaunt:** The UK Government's approach to Tiers in England draws on the lessons learned from the range of interventions put in place across the four nations of the UK to date. There is clear evidence that shows the best way to control the virus is to limit opportunities for it to spread between individuals from different households. Although COVID-secure measures can be put in place to help mitigate the risk of transmission in different settings, they are unlikely to eliminate that risk completely. The restrictions on religious, and sports and leisure settings imposed in November were designed to further limit the risk of transmission. Details of rules set by devolved administrations are available on relevant web pages.

The UK Government recognises the significant sacrifices that people of all faiths have made this year; restrictions have been in place over a number of religious celebrations and observances. Communal worship is possible for all faiths in all three tiers in England and faith leaders will continue to play a key role, consulting on how to make religious practice as safe as possible. Relevant guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december>

Gyms, sports facilities and leisure centres are open in all tiers in England. There is specific guidance for each tier. Further information may be found in the 'sport and physical activity' sections of each guidance publication, which are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-03/110731>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

### Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL8431] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by the Chair of the Council of the British Medical Association that further action is needed to protect BAME communities in the event of a rise in COVID-19 cases.

**Reply from Lord Bethell:** On 22 October, the Minister for Equalities, (Kemi Badenoch MP) published Quarterly report on progress to address COVID-19 health inequalities to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on progress to tackle COVID-19 disparities experienced by individuals from an ethnic minority background. The report made 13 recommendations. This includes reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by relevant Government departments to directly lessen disparities in infection and death rates of COVID-19. As well as taking action to modify existing policy and policy in development, to address these disparities. All of which the Prime Minister has accepted. A copy of the report is attached.

Across the NHS Test and Trace service there is ongoing work to better understand the needs of the most vulnerable. We are working with local and national organisations and directly with highest risk communities to increase understanding of the barriers to the service, and changes that need to be made to increase access and reduce inequalities.

[Quarterly report health inequalities](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-23/hl8431>

### Religion: Coronavirus

**Lord Hay of Ballyore (DUP)** [HL11128] To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they have provided to religious groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Reply from Lord Greenhalgh:** Government recognises the huge contributions places of worship and faith groups have provided to the response effort in supporting communities during the pandemic.

We are only too aware of the financial impact the pandemic has caused to our places of worship and faith groups.

In England, charity registered faith groups and places of worship have been able to access the range of government-backed financial support measures available during the pandemic. These include the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Response Funds and the Local Authority Discretionary Grants.

We regularly engage with faith groups through our Places of Worship Taskforce and faith roundtables and will continue to work with them to further understand how Government can further support their response to the pressures they face during this time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-07/hl11128>

## Scottish Government Press Releases

**New guidance issued for the festive period**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/new-guidance-issued-for-the-festive-period/>

**Impact of COVID-19**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/impact-of-covid-19/>

## Scottish Government Publications

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): daily data for Scotland**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/>

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): trends in daily data**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-trends-in-daily-data/>

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): Christmas and the festive period**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-festive-period/>

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's speech - 19 December**

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

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: Health Secretary's speech - Friday 18 December 2020**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-health-secretarys-speech-friday-18-december-2020/>

**Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19**

[https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/NPF\\_Impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_December2020.pdf](https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/NPF_Impact_of_COVID-19_December2020.pdf)

## UK Government Press Releases

**Prime Minister announces Tier 4: 'Stay At Home' Alert Level in response to new COVID variant**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-tier-4-stay-at-home-alert-level-in-response-to-new-covid-variant>

**Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 19 December 2020**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-19-december-2020>

**Sharp rise in coronavirus numbers and a new variant**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/sharp-rise-in-coronavirus-numbers-and-a-new-variant>

## UK Government Publications

**Guidance for the Christmas period [England only]**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-the-christmas-period>

**Guidance: Making a Christmas bubble with friends and family [England only]**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

**Coronavirus and the social impacts on different ethnic groups in the UK: 2020**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsondifferentethnicgroupsintheuk/2020/pdf>

## News

**BAME groups hit by Covid 'triple whammy', official UK study finds**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/14/bame-groups-hit-by-covid-triple-whammy-official-uk-study-finds>

**Finally, we have the data to prove what anti-racist campaigners have been saying for months**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/covid-pandemic-racism-bame-work-b1774901.html>

**WhatsApp rumours fear over BAME Covid vaccine take up**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/education-55332321>

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## New Publication

**Time Well Spent: Diversity and Volunteering**

<https://publications.ncvo.org.uk/time-well-spent-diversity-and-volunteering/>

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## Other News

**COVID-19 continues to affect charities and those they support**

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/covid-19-continues-to-affect-charities-and-those-they-support/>

**Does your governing document allow virtual meetings?**

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/does-your-governing-document-allow-virtual-meetings/>

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## Bills in Progress

\*\* new or updated this week

### Scottish Parliament

**Children (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/children-scotland-bill>

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

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

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

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

Scottish Government response to the Justice Committee Stage 1 Report

[https://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_JusticeCommittee/Inquiries/20201214\\_Hate\\_Crime\\_Bill\\_SGResponse.pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/S5_JusticeCommittee/Inquiries/20201214_Hate_Crime_Bill_SGResponse.pdf)



Stage 1 Debate

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13017&i=117710#ScotParlOR>

Financial Resolution

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13017&i=117711#ScotParlOR>

## **\*\* Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/scottish-general-election-coronavirus-bill>

Proposed amendments

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/scottish-general-election-coronavirus-bill/stage-2/marshalled-list-for-stage-2-scottish-general-election-coronavirus-bill.pdf>

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

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

## **UK Parliament**

### **Asylum Seekers (Accommodation Eviction Procedures) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2699>

### **Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2638>

### **Asylum Support (Prescribed Period) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2535>

### **European Citizens' Rights Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2704>

### **Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2660>

### **Immigration Control (Gross Human Rights Abuses) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2574>

### **Immigration (Health and Social Care Staff)**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2770>

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

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

### **Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2538>

### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (Legal Advice and Appeals) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2611>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated this week

**\*\* closes this week!**

**Hate crime laws [in England and Wales]** (closing date 24 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

**\*\* closes next week!!**

**What can teachers do to build an inclusive school curriculum that tackles racism in Scotland? (for people aged 12 to 25)** (closing date 3 January 2021)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CLSD3QZ>

**\*\* closes in 3 weeks!**

**Future Arrangements for Early Medical Abortion at Home** (closing date 5 January 2021)

<https://consult.gov.scot/population-health/early-medical-abortion-at-home/>

**\*\* closes in 3 weeks!**

**Tackling modern slavery [in Northern Ireland]** (closing date 7 January 2021)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-tackling-modern-slavery>

**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/>

**Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19**

(closing date not stated)

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

**Experiences of people with refugee status who are renting private property in Scotland**

(closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YDR67MN>

**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>

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## Job Opportunities

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

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

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## 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>

### **Winter Social Wellbeing Fund (Glasgow)**

*Closing date 29 January 2021*

Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership funding for organisations in Glasgow City to support people who may be isolated over the winter months. Priority will be given to organisations working with individuals most at risk of social isolation and loneliness as well as those most impacted by coronavirus. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y22jeads>

### **Places of Worship Fund**

*Running until mid January 2021*

Interfaith Scotland grants of up to £500 for places of worship that are struggling to meet the safety requirements of re-opening their buildings and safely holding services within Government Guidelines. With discretion the funds can also be used to assist in keeping open places that have managed their initial outlay with regard to safely reopening their place of worship but are now struggling to keep up the measures required to stay open.

This fund will help places of worship to:

- **Re-open** safely, including deep clean premises, provide appropriate signage and ensure that all volunteers and staff have appropriate training and PPE.
- **Keep open** places of worship that are struggling with the on-going health and safety costs during the pandemic
- **Remain connected** with those still too vulnerable to come to a place of worship – this may be through regular mail outs, telephone calls or the provision of mobile devices to allow those without digital access to keep in touch
- **Advancing Equality and Tackling Loneliness** Supporting faith communities to open the doors of their places of worship in a safe and inclusive manner will enable thousands of lonely and isolated people across Scotland to re-connect with their wider community.

The funding will be available for faith communities and community groups that utilise places of worship only, and will be offered to faith communities that are members and associate members of Interfaith Scotland in the first instance. For full details and an application form contact Frances Hume [frances@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:frances@interfaithscotland.org)

### **Resilient & Inclusive Communities Fund**

*Running until March 2021*

BEMIS grants of up to £3,000, in partnership with Foundation Scotland, for eligible local community groups and organisations supporting disadvantaged and excluded communities (suffering with domestic abuse; mental health; access to food, shelter and amenities; poverty, access to services/care). For information see <https://bemis.org.uk/ricfund/>

### **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/emnrrn/transition-fund/>

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## Events, Conferences, and Training

\*\* new or updated this week

### **Emerging Futures: Conversation**

6 January 2021 (online, 10.00–11.30)

7 January 2021 (online, 10.00–11.30)

7 January 2021 (online, 12.30–2.00)

8 January 2021 (online, 10.00–11.30)

11 January 2021 (online, 12.30–2.00)

13 January 2021 (online, 10.00–11.30)

14 January 2021 (online, 10.00–11.30)

14 January 2021 (online, 12.30–2.00)

15 January 2021 (online, 10.00–11.30)

15 January 2021 (online, 12.30–2.00)

Amina workshops for women to meet other women and be guided through some simple exercises to help share the highs and lows of 2020. Life in the time of a Pandemic is a creative collaborative project, designed to elevate the voices and experiences of Muslim and BME women in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y6fsh994>

### **Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals**

13 January 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

3 March 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Positive Action in Housing course to provide information about fundamental issues of housing, homelessness and welfare entitlements of EEA nationals and look at how service users might prepare themselves to avoid the threats of Brexit. For information contact [training@positiveactionh.org](mailto:training@positiveactionh.org) or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/training/>

### **Interpreting Culture**

19 and 20 January 2021 (two day course) (online, 10.30–12.30)

Positive Action in Housing course to examine where culture comes from and look at examples of its extraordinary diversity, and focus on interactions with people from other cultures to improve understanding, confidence and trust. For information contact [training@positiveactionh.org](mailto:training@positiveactionh.org) or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/training/>

20 January 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

10 March 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Positive Action in Housing course to explore how the asylum system works from the perspective of a claimant and the process involved in making a claim for asylum. The course will also explore the barriers faced by both refugees and asylum seekers building a new life in Scotland and their respective entitlement to services. For information contact [training@positiveactionh.org](mailto:training@positiveactionh.org) or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/training/>

## **No Recourse to Public Funds**

3 February 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

17 March 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Positive Action in Housing course to help frontline workers identify a tenant's current status, clarify what this means in terms of access to public funds and plan effective support where difficulties arise. For information contact [training@positiveactionh.org](mailto:training@positiveactionh.org) or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/training/>

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## **Useful Links**

**Scottish Parliament** <http://www.parliament.scot/>

**Scottish Government** <https://www.gov.scot/>

**UK Parliament** <http://www.parliament.uk/>

**GovUK (links to UK Government Departments)** <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>

**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/>



**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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