



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

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

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The Scottish Parliament will be in recess from 9 to 24 October, and the UK Parliament is in recess until 18 October 2021. The next issue of MEMO will be published on 18 October.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Afghan Refugees

Maggie Chapman (Green): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on Afghan refugee relocation and resettlement with reference to the different elements of the new Scots strategy. (S6O-00219)

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture (Angus Robertson): The Scottish Government is committed to playing its part in welcoming and supporting people who are fleeing Afghanistan. We continue

to urge the United Kingdom Government to increase the number of refugees that it will accept and to provide more information and confirmation of a start date for the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

As of 26 September, around 230 people in 61 families had arrived in Scotland across nine local authority areas under the relocation scheme for locally employed staff. In line with the key principle of the new Scots refugee integration strategy, local authorities are working to support their integration from day 1 of their arrival in Scotland. Partnership and collaboration are central to the new Scots approach. The Scottish Government is working with the Home Office, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, local authorities and third sector and community organisations to provide people with the safety and security that they need to rebuild their lives.

Maggie Chapman: We know that one key way to support asylum seekers and refugees to settle and become part of their new country is to give them access to work. We know, as we have already heard in the chamber today, that we need workers in Scotland, as many sectors are under immense staffing pressure. Employers that want to consider refugees for employment in sectors that are crying out for more staff have contacted many of us. What support can we make available for people who are resettled via the Afghan relocation and assistance policy to find employment, and what can we do to provide support for employers, such as care homes in my region, that want to support refugees into employment?

Does the cabinet secretary agree that, as well as refugees, people who are seeking asylum should be given the right to work? Despite the Prime Minister's 2019 promise, the UK Government has refused to review its policy on the matter. ...

Reply from Angus Robertson: I agree entirely with the sensible points that my colleague has made. The new Scots strategy recognises that integration is a long-term and multifaceted process. We work to ensure that people can access the support and services that they need as they settle in Scotland, including those relating to health, education, language, employability and welfare rights.

I will raise the member's specific questions about employment, training and employers that wish to employ Afghans as a priority.

Bill Kidd (SNP): I thank the cabinet secretary for his elaboration on the new Scots integration strategy. With 2.6 million Afghan refugees living in other countries and 3.5 million Afghan refugees internally displaced, will the cabinet secretary join the First Minister and me in reiterating that the UK Government's aim to resettle a total of 20,000 Afghan refugees, including 5,000 the first year, is entirely insufficient?

Reply from Angus Robertson: Yes, I will. Although the announcement of a UK Afghan resettlement scheme is welcome in principle, the commitment to 20,000 in the long term and just 5,000 in the first year is inadequate. We believe that a commitment to a substantial increase in numbers is required if the UK Government is to meet its responsibilities. It is right that the new Afghan resettlement scheme will be in addition to the UK's existing global resettlement commitment.

Foyso Choudhury (Labour): The cabinet secretary will know that hundreds of thousands of Afghans are fleeing from persecution and more than two decades of war. Scotland must play its part in helping to resettle them. What provisions has the Scottish Government made to ensure that councils have the funding to provide the new infrastructure to resettle refugees and help them to make the most of their new lives here?

Reply from Angus Robertson: I commend the Labour Party for its tone and constructive suggestions on this question. The member will know that the funding package is a matter for the Home Office, and we have been pressing the Home Office and the UK Government to ensure that funding is fully in place. We are working on that with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in general and with specific local authorities that are making moves to try to accept the Afghan refugees.

I am happy to work on behalf of the member and his party in pressing the UK Government to deliver on its commitments, and I urge him to amplify the calls that he has made in Parliament today.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13334&i=120996#ScotParlOR>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) [S6M-01367] Incredible Interfaith Community Efforts to Support Afghan Refugees Arriving in Scotland – That the Parliament commends the fantastic interfaith efforts in the Greater Glasgow area for securing thousands of donations to support the men, women and children who are arriving in Scotland from Afghanistan; notes that the initiative, led by Sammy and Vicci Stein, has resulted in huge amounts of items such as baby products, toys, clothes and household goods being donated; welcomes that the appeal from the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council developed into an interfaith campaign, with members of the Muslim community playing a pivotal role in securing additional facilities to help store the large amounts of items that have been donated; understands that within just a number of days, almost every available storage space at the Maccabi Centre, Jewish Care Scotland and Cosgrave Care buildings, at May Terrace, in Giffnock, were filled with donations; acknowledges that the two schools belonging to the world's first Jewish-Catholic joint campus of Calderwood Lodge and St Clare's primaries, in Newton Mearns, made a vital contribution to the appeal through the provision of toiletries and women's sanitary products; understands that the donations will first be made available to a number of Afghan refugee charities, but because of the massive generosity from those who donated to this incredible initiative, there is a surplus of items and these will be given to other worthwhile causes, and recognises the fantastic leadership of Sammy and Vicci Stein, the incredible work undertaken by members of different faiths, including the Muslim and Jewish communities, and every person and organisation, including Calderwood Lodge and St Clare's primary schools, for taking the time to offer donations that will support Afghan families to be resettled in Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-01367>

UK Parliament Debates

Nationality and Borders Bill: LGBTQ+ People

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-22/debates/F5A35B96-97D8-441B-B8F8-E6B906CE0C6E/NationalityAndBordersBillLGBTQPeople>

LGBTQ+ Afghan Refugees

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-21/debates/FC5458A6-81E5-4D7C-A933-D3197E56A803/LGBTQAfghanRefugees>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Operation Warm Welcome

Jamie Wallace (Conservative): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to support Operation Warm Welcome. (903495)

The Minister for Defence, People and Veterans (Leo Docherty): The whole Government are committed to ensuring that those Afghan nationals evacuated under Op Pitting are properly supported in the UK. Defence is supporting the cross-Government effort, Op Warm Welcome, and we are extending a hand of friendship in the spirit of compassion, comradeship and community. ...

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op): For those eligible for the Afghan relocations and assistance policy scheme, arriving in the UK under Operation Warm Welcome has left friends and colleagues of our armed forces stranded in hotels without contact, support and help at the very time they need it. In the light of the outstanding skills of our armed forces, will the Minister talk to the Home Secretary about how his Department can lead on Operation Warm Welcome for those arriving under the ARAP scheme, so the right connections are made with those who served alongside these brave men and women to build vital bridges at each stage of the resettlement journey?

Reply from Leo Docherty: We are extending that warm hand of welcome. Of course, there is the requirement for some people to be in quarantine, but I can assure the hon. Member that a very thorough effort is being put in place to ensure that that hand of friendship is extended to all who have arrived.

James Gray (Conservative): ... I very much hope we are giving just as warm a welcome to all the refugees coming back from Afghanistan. There are 100 in my constituency. How can we find a way to give them a warmer welcome? Could local communities, for example, find ways of welcoming them to barbecues or other ways to make them feel at home?

Reply from Leo Docherty: ... Of course, there will be a very significant role for the wider community and the third sector to play in welcoming our Afghan friends. I recently visited an Afghan cricket team that had been put together by a local pastor. The whole community is quite demonstrably coming together.

Margaret Ferrier (Independent): The Scottish Refugee Council recently called for the UK Government to extend Operation Warm Welcome to Afghans who are still stuck in the asylum process waiting on decisions or who have previously been declined protection. Can the Minister confirm what discussions he has had with colleagues across Government on extending the programme in such a way?

Reply from Leo Docherty: I will, of course, pass that question on to the Home Office, but my expectation is that Operation Warm Welcome will run for as long as is necessary.

To read the full question and answer session see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-20/debates/5124F617-C9D7-4DF8-B850-21E14B63B0D6/OperationWarmWelcome>

Information about Operation Warm Welcome, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operation-warm-welcome-underway-to-support-afghan-arrivals-in-the-uk>

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy

Clive Efford (Labour): How many people have been assessed as being eligible for support under the Afghan relocations and assistance policy since 28 August 2021. (903502)

Reply from the Minister for the Armed Forces (James Heappey): Since 28 August, 7,900 applications have been made to the ARAP scheme, of which 900 appear eligible from the MOD's perspective. Obviously, there are Home Office checks that need to follow, and 50 applicants have thus far completed their Home

Office checks and are being advised on how to proceed.

Clive Efford: I thank the Minister for that answer, but I have cases of people who worked for the Afghan supreme court, the Afghan Government or the Afghan armed forces. Clearly, they assisted in our operations in Afghanistan. Surely the Minister accepts that these people are at severe risk and should qualify under category 1 of ARAP, yet they have been refused. In the figures he has just cited, how many people who clearly qualify for ARAP have been turned down?

Reply from James Heapey: I have just given the numbers for those who have applied since 28 August. I completely accept that there will be interpretation but, having looked at a number of cases that we have been invited to review at ministerial level, I am satisfied that the right judgments are being made. I know that is a disappointment to many hon. Members who are working hard to support people in Afghanistan whom they consider to be at risk but, under the ARAP scheme, it is not possible for us to bring out everybody who has had a connection with UK armed forces. That is why the terms were set as tightly as they were. If the hon. Gentleman would like me to look at any particular cases, I look forward to having that in writing and I will do what I can.

Stephen Morgan (Labour): There is increasing confusion about the Government's administration of the ARAP scheme. In response to a written question, the Minister said that 1,194 locally employed staff had been relocated by the end of August, yet in a further answer he suggested that only 850 applications had been processed in the same timeframe. This means that at least 344 people are unaccounted for. The Prime Minister says the figure is 311. Will the Minister, therefore, tell the House here and now how many applications were received between April and August, how many were accepted and how many have been left behind?

Reply from James Heapey: ... Some 15,000 people were brought out in the airlift, as I think he knows. The discrepancy he thinks he has found in the numbers he quotes relates to the fact that 311 people had been called forward—they had successfully applied and been cleared by UK Visas and Immigration for travel—but we were unable to get them on to a plane. That is different from the number of people who had applications in process at the time but had not been called forward for travel.

I know from all my engagements with colleagues on both sides of the House that they will understand that those two and a half weeks in Kabul were somewhat hectic. It will take some time for the dust to settle on exactly who is out and who we have yet to bring out, but we are still working very hard to do so. The security situation is dynamic and our partnerships in the region are being developed, but we have every confidence that we will be able to help those who need help.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-20/debates/0F5D2AD5-227B-4A1A-BD37-CC7DDF9B511C/AfghanRelocationsAndAssistancePolicy>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Anum Qaisar-Javed (SNP) [50180] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Safeguarding and Afghan Resettlement of 13 September 2021, Official Report, Column 700, what support his Department plans to provide to help Afghan nationals preserve their (a) language and (b) culture when they are resettled in the UK.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: Under Operation Warm Welcome, we are taking a cross-government approach to ensuring Afghans arriving in the UK are able to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate with their local communities.

They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. A package of support to acclimatise to the UK, learn English, and find work, will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

As part of this, we are creating a portal where people, organisations and businesses can register offers of support. This could include volunteering, offers of employment or to provide professional skills *pro bono*, including helping those arriving deal with trauma, or offering donations of mobile phones, mobile credit or data, laptops, access to training, clothes and toys. This will complement the [Afghanistan housing portal](#) which has been set up to collect offers of additional housing support.

We will also be extending the Community Sponsorship Scheme (CSS) so that friends and neighbours, charities and faith groups can come together to support a family through the ACRS. We will make it easier and quicker for community groups to become sponsors so that more people can play a direct role in the warm welcome we will extend to these new members of our communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/50180>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/50180>

Information about Operation Warm Welcome, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operation-warm-welcome-underway-to-support-afghan-arrivals-in-the-uk>

Information about the ACRS (Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme), referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Sarah Owen (Labour) [51870] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will increase the number of Afghan refugees the UK will accept from the current 5,000.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Government has committed to welcoming around 5,000 people in the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, and up to 20,000 in total. This is one of the most ambitious resettlement schemes in our country's history.

It is important that we resettle people safely and provide appropriate support including with healthcare, education, jobs and housing. When considering the number of people we resettle, it is right that we take into account the capacity of local communities to provide this support. We would urge the Honourable Members to encourage Local Authorities to come forward with offers of support.

A policy statement covering further details of the Scheme is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51870>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas (Green) [49987] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by what mechanism she estimates the number of people who have crossed borders to third countries from Afghanistan who will qualify for the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme; and on what basis the cap of 5,000 was decided for help under that scheme.

Caroline Lucas (Green) [49988] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the resources needed to bring forward the Government's 20,000 resettlement commitment over 5 years under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme to 1 year; if she will make it her policy to increase the UK's current resettlement commitment; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Government has committed to welcoming around 5,000 people in the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, and up to 20,000 in total. This is one of the most ambitious resettlement schemes in our country's history. Dedicated officials have worked day and night to support this unprecedented response.

It is important that we resettle people safely and provide appropriate support including with healthcare, education, jobs and housing. When considering the number of people we resettle, it is right that we take into account the capacity of local communities to provide this support, and that we do not take more people than we can accommodate.

On 13 September, I made a statement to the House of Commons providing details of the scheme. A policy statement is now published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement>

I would urge all Rt Honourable and Honourable Members to encourage their Local Authorities to come forward and support the efforts to resettle Afghans.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/49987>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/49988>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-13/debates/D8892FE7-5BFE-431C-8CBE-F64B45D19995/AfghanistanPolicy>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51828] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when Afghan nationals and their family members who arrived in the UK as part of Operation Pitting will receive notification of their indefinite leave to remain.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51830] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of the Afghan nationals evacuated as part of Operation Pitting will be settled under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is not yet open. We are working through how many of those who were unable to board flights will be offered a place under the ACRS. More details, as soon as they are available, will be published on the GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Between 15 and 29 August, the Department evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. That includes over 8,000 British nationals, along with their dependants; and 5,000 Afghans who loyally served the UK, along with their dependants; and around 500 special cases of particularly vulnerable Afghans, including Chevening scholars, journalists, human rights defenders, campaigners for women's rights, judges and many others.

As the Government has announced, Afghans who have arrived under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme will be given indefinite leave to remain and others who arrived and are moving onto the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will also be given ILR; we are working through individuals on a case by case basis.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51828>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51830>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Immigration: Afghanistan

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [45297] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of Afghan nationals who will be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: Since April 2021, we have relocated around 7,000 under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, and 1,400 former staff and families were relocated between 2013 and March 2021 under the previous scheme for Afghan interpreters. The ARAP scheme will remain open to those eligible, and in addition we are committed to resettling up to 20,000 under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme in the coming years.

Those arriving under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy or Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will receive fee-free indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Those who have already relocated to the UK under Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy or the previous scheme for Afghan Locally Employed Staff and were granted limited leave are able to apply free of charge and at any point within the period of their temporary leave to convert it to indefinite leave to remain.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-08/45297>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas (Green) [49986] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals arrived in the UK as a consequence of Operation Pitting; and what assessment has been made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of those people eligible for indefinite leave to remain under (i) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and (ii) Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Between 15 and 29 August, the Department evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. That includes around 5,000 Afghans who loyally served the UK, along with their dependants; and around about 500 special cases of particularly vulnerable Afghans, including Chevening scholars, journalists, human rights defenders, campaigners for women's rights, judges and many others. As the Government has announced, Afghans who have arrived under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme will be given indefinite leave to remain and others who arrived and are moving onto the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will also be given ILR; we are working through individuals on a case by case basis, as some will have entered via other categories.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/49986>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Immigration: Afghanistan

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51838] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what process her Department is using to upgrade the immigration status of Afghans who arrived in the UK and were granted six months leave to enter outside the rules but who are now eligible for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51839] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department expects Afghan nationals who were in the UK before 2 September 2021 with limited leave under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, including through the Afghan Locally Employed Staff Scheme, to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain; and how that process is being managed.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: Details of the type of leave to be granted to those arriving from Afghanistan, and how they will be supported in obtaining that leave, can be found in the Afghanistan Resettlement and Immigration policy statement.

The Home Office has established a dedicated caseworking team, which is working jointly with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Ministry of Defence. This team will contact all those who recently arrived to discuss their leave arrangements and ensure they get the right form of leave.

Those who are here with limited leave under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy can apply to convert this to indefinite leave to remain at any time before their limited leave expires.

The policy statement can be viewed here:

[Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51838>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51839>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [49148] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Afghan nationals evacuated during Operation Pitting will be resettled in the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme; and whether they will form part of the 5,000 target set for the first year of that scheme.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: Operation PITTING was the largest UK military evacuation since the Second World War. Between 15 and 29 August, the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan, including British nationals, Afghans who have served the UK and those who are particularly vulnerable.

Under the ACRS, the Government has committed to welcome around 5,000 people in the first year, and the first of those will be vulnerable and at-risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme. People who were notified by the UK Government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently come to the UK.

Further details on the scheme are published on the ACRS webpage:

[Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49148>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Chris Bryant (Labour) [49044] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what fees applicants to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will be charged.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: There will be no fees charged to those brought to the UK through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

On 13 September further details on the Scheme were published in a policy statement, including in relation to eligibility and referral. This statement can be

found at: [Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49044).
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49044>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Chi Onwurah (Labour) [50013] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will set out the eligibility criteria for resettlement under the (a) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and (b) Afghan citizens resettlement programme; when the Afghan citizens resettlement programme will open to applicants; and for what reason that programme is not yet open to applicants.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: On Monday 13 September, I announced the details of the Government's response to the situation in Afghanistan, and the effort to support Afghans resettling to the UK, in a statement to Parliament. Further information on the eligibility criteria for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk, available at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement

This statement confirms that there will not be a formal application process for the ACRS. Instead, eligible people will be prioritised and referred to the UK. Some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists, will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS.

We are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/50013>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Chris Bryant (Labour) [49043] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether Afghan nationals who have had an application to the Afghans Relocation and Assistance Policy scheme declined will automatically be considered for resettlement under the Afghan citizen's resettlement scheme.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: There are no plans to automatically consider Afghan nationals who have not been successful in applying to come to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy for resettlement through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49043>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Owen Thompson (SNP) [52551] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to simplify the process of family reunion across national boundaries for Afghan refugees.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Government's family reunion policy allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. For Afghan refugees in the UK, we already have rules in place for their close family members to apply to join them in the UK and these can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/settlement-refugee-or-humanitarian-protection/family-reunion>

The UK is working with international partners to secure safe routes out of Afghanistan as soon as they become available. However, while the security situation remains extremely volatile, we recommend people still in Afghanistan do not make applications and pay application fees at this time as they will not be considered until biometrics are provided. The British Embassy in Kabul has currently suspended in-country operations and all UK diplomatic and consular staff have been temporarily withdrawn.

Those Afghans who are outside of Afghanistan and able to get to a Visa Application Centre to provide their biometrics can make an application in the usual way.

A policy statement on Afghanistan resettlement has been published on gov.uk

www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-21/52551>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [49209] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support she is giving to children resettled in the UK under the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme who originate from Afghanistan and who have family in Afghanistan who are part of a religious minority.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [49210] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the family of young people who are in the UK under the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme can join their children under (a) the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme or (b) another route to allow a family to be united.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The vast majority of children resettled under the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) were done so as part of a family group. The scheme ended in 2021. The Government's refugee family reunion policy allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join the adult sponsor here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. This includes those who are part of a religious minority.

All those brought to the UK under Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and be able to apply for public funds. To ensure they will be supported properly, changes will be made to legislation so that, if necessary, people arriving under ARAP and ACRS do not need to meet the habitual residence test.

They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. A package of support to acclimatise to the UK, learn English, and find work, will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49209>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49210>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [48296] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to procure more resettlement hotels to move refugees on from quarantine hotel facilities.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The ambition to provide protection to thousands of people fleeing Afghanistan and the complex picture on the ground means there will be significant challenges delivering the scheme, but the Government is working at speed to address these obstacles.

Afghanistan is on the Government's red list, so all arrivals must quarantine for 10 days in a managed quarantine facility and take two PCR tests which can be sequenced. These rules apply to all those who have been, and continue to be arrive through, the ARAP scheme who must quarantine and anyone with rights of residence in the UK who is not exempt.

We are working closely with local authorities across the UK to match families into accommodation offered by those local authorities, who will also provide integration support, funded by the Home Office.

The cross-Government efforts to ensure that people are brought from Afghanistan to the UK as quickly as possible has meant that it has not been possible, in all cases, to arrange local authority support. In those cases, we are putting in place hotel accommodation.

The Government is already working with over 100 councils across the UK to meet the demand for housing, with over 2,000 places already confirmed.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-13/48296>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Housing: Refugees

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [45221] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions officials in her Department have had with their counterparts in the (a) Housing, Communities and Local Government and (b) Treasury on the level of funding that will be made available to local authorities that will be housing refugees via the Afghan citizen's resettlement scheme.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [45222] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how additional funding will be allocated to local authorities that will house refugees via the Afghan citizen's resettlement scheme; and what his timetable is for allocating that funding.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will welcome 5,000 Afghans in year one, with up to a total of 20,000 in the next four years. We will keep the route under constant review and will operate it flexibly given the increasingly difficult conditions on the ground in Afghanistan.

All those brought to the UK under ACRS will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and be able to apply for public funds. To ensure they will be supported properly, changes will be made to legislation so that, if necessary, people arriving under ACRS do not need to meet the habitual residence test.

They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. A package of support to acclimatise to the UK, learn English, and find work, will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

We will match the tariff for the successful Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) to provide a complete package covering health, education and integration support costs for those on the ACRS. The core local authority tariff of £20,520 per person will be provided over a shorter period of three years, enabling more funding in those crucial early years to support resettled Afghans to integrate into British society and become self-sufficient more quickly. Funding will also be provided to support education, English language training and health provision (in year one only). We have also agreed a further £20m of flexible funding in the current financial year (2021/22) to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services.

We welcome the commitments already made by many local authorities and would urge all local authorities to participate in welcoming these at-risk Afghan citizens into our communities.

The challenge of integrating such a large number of people at pace and supporting them to rebuild their lives in safety cannot be met by central and local government alone. We will be actively working with the private, voluntary and community sectors to harness a whole society effort to address this challenge.

As part of this, we are creating a portal where people, organisations and businesses can register offers of support. This could include volunteering, offers of employment, or to provide professional skills *pro bono*, including helping those arriving deal with trauma, or offering donations of mobile phones, mobile credit or data, laptops, access to training, clothes and toys. This will complement the [Afghanistan housing portal](#) which has been set up to collect offers of additional housing support.

We will also be extending the Community Sponsorship Scheme (CSS) so that friends and neighbours, charities and faith groups can come together to support a family through the ACRS. We will make it easier and quicker for community groups to become sponsors so that more people can play a direct role in the warm welcome we will extend to these new members of our communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-08/45221>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-08/45222>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Information about the Community Sponsorship Scheme, referred to above, can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/694789/MiniGuide_16th_June.pdf

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [49300] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that Afghan refugees arriving in the UK have access to toothpaste, nappies, medicines and other basic necessities.

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [49305] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the length of time Afghan nationals will have to wait to be housed in the UK from the opening of the Afghanistan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: All those brought to the UK under Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme will be provided with essential living items whilst accommodated in bridging hotels.

They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. A package of support to acclimatise to the UK, learn English, and

find work, will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

The Government is working closely with local authorities to secure permanent accommodation for families and ensure families are moved into these homes as soon as they become available.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49300>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49305>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Helen Hayes (Labour) [50731] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions is she having with Ministerial colleagues in the (a) Department for Work and Pensions and (b) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on Afghan refugees' access to benefits and housing support.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Under Operation Warm Welcome, we are taking a cross-government approach to ensuring Afghans arriving in the UK are able to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate with their local communities.

Those brought to the UK under ACRS will be able to apply for public funds. To ensure they will be supported properly, changes will be made to legislation so that, if necessary, people arriving under ACRS do not need to meet the habitual residence test.

We continue to work with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible for families already in the UK. So far, 204 local authorities have agreed to house those who have been evacuated from Afghanistan, and we would strongly urge every council across the country to contribute to this national effort.

We are working with other government departments and local authorities to realise appropriate accommodation opportunities to meet the demands of this urgent national response.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50731>

Information about Operation Warm Welcome, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operation-warm-welcome-underway-to-support-afghan-arrivals-in-the-uk>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Andrew Bowie (Conservative) [52570] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assistance the Government is providing to newly arrived Afghan nationals seeking to enter employment.

Reply from David Rutley: Those coming from Afghanistan to the UK on the resettlement programmes will have the right to work here from day one, as well as immediate access to the benefit system and our existing employment offer, including our £30 billion Plan for Jobs.

Direct, personalised support is available from experienced work coaches in the temporary hotel accommodation where Afghans are staying across the country. Work coaches are there to help with any claims or queries and to provide tailored employment support. Resettling Afghans will also have access to our Refugee Leads Network, which links Jobcentres and organisations working with refugees and those on resettlement programmes, to help them integrate and find

employment in local areas. We will also work to ensure that English as a Second or Other Language provision, and other support, is available to those that need it.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-21/52570>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [48291] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what preparations are being made to enable refugees from Afghanistan with medical or other health professional qualifications to work in the NHS.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [48292] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will put training in place to assist refugees from Afghanistan to work in the social care sector.

Reply from Edward Argar: The National Health Service has several recruitment pathways for refugees based in the United Kingdom and in third countries, with the aim of supporting doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. Rapid induction training is available for all people joining the social care sector. We will work with stakeholders in these sectors and partners across the Government to understand what is needed to best support eligible refugees from Afghanistan.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-13/48291>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-13/48292>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Afghanistan

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51837] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the backlog of asylum claims is not affected by the change in situation in Afghanistan.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51841] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what priority is being given to Afghan asylum claims that have already been made by people in the UK where a decision is pending.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives that will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000 by March 2022 and providing improved training and career progression opportunities to aid retention of staff.

We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system. We have three key areas of focus in the short to medium term to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases by improving efficiency and productivity, reducing the number of outstanding claims and building high performing teams. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making.

All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy. Claims by Afghan nationals will be considered in the same way as claims from any other nationality.

We do not believe it is appropriate to prioritise claims from one nationality over another as many claimants, irrespective of nationality, are potentially vulnerable and no one is expected to leave the UK while they have a claim outstanding.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51837>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51841>

Afghanistan: Asylum

Brendan O'Hara (SNP) [49160] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme (a) applications were fully processed, (b) applicants and their families were able to leave for the UK before 14 August 2021 and (c) applicants were processed between 15 August 2021 and 28 August 2021 were (i) called forward to Kabul International airport and (ii) evacuated.

Reply from James Heapey: Under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, prior to the start of OP PITTING on 14 August, 850 applications were accepted, and 1,978 people were relocated to the UK.

During OP PITTING, no new applications were processed, although around 800 additional individuals were approved for the scheme as the eligibility criteria were expanded.

All of those eligible or otherwise approved for the scheme were called forward and around 7,000 were evacuated.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49160>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Helen Hayes (Labour) [50729] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that Afghan asylum seekers living in the UK are able to access immigration advice and legal representation.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: All asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can escalate any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support including legal advice where appropriate.

AIRE asylum services provide free independent advice, guidance and information on the asylum process, accommodation, financial support, finding legal representation and any other asylum related matters. AIRE run a national helpline that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50729>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [51760] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what resources he is making available to support Operation Warm Welcome.

Reply from Leo Docherty: The Government is committed to ensuring that those Afghan nationals who were relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and during the recent evacuation are well supported as they start their new lives in the UK. Defence is supporting Op WARM WELCOME through the provision of assistance to other Government Departments via the Military Assistance to the Civil Authorities (MACA) process and by building on existing networks to develop a network of service related expertise and experience to support those Afghans with a connection to Defence.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51760>

Information about Operation Warm Welcome, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operation-warm-welcome-underway-to-support-afghan-arrivals-in-the-uk>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Vicky Foxcroft (Labour) [48304] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve the adequacy and effectiveness of Operation Warm Welcome.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Operation Warm Welcome is the cross-Government programme of work for those we have relocated and resettled from Afghanistan. It will ensure that all those relocated to the UK can access the vital healthcare, housing, education and support into employment they need to fully integrate into our society, including English language training for those who need it.

As part of Operation Warm Welcome, the Home Office are giving indefinite leave to remain to all those being relocated under ARAP and the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme. We continue to work with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible for families already in the UK, with more housing being pledged every week and I urge every council across the country to contribute to this national effort.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-13/48304>

Information about Operation Warm Welcome, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operation-warm-welcome-underway-to-support-afghan-arrivals-in-the-uk>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Alan Brown (SNP) [41979] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing Afghan nationals in the UK to submit further submissions on asylum applications online.

Reply from Kevin Foster: In March 2020, to protect claimants and Home Office staff, we made changes to the further submissions process to allow for representations to be made remotely. It was always the intention of the Home Office to re-start the process of requiring further submissions from failed asylum seekers to be made in person as this helps to ensure people maintain contact with the Home Office and enables identity to be checked. In order to make this process more accessible, we have recently increased the number of locations people can lodge submissions, with Glasgow coming on line in mid-August 2021, in addition to the previous locations of Liverpool and Belfast.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41979>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51834] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of suspending the requirement for biometrics for Afghan (a) nationals ineligible under Operation Pitting trying to join British citizens or settled persons in the UK and (b) family members of refugees already in the UK, given there is no currently option to provide biometrics in Afghanistan.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: There are no plans to suspend the requirement for biometrics from Afghan nationals ineligible under Operation Pitting trying to join British citizens or settled persons in the UK and family members of refugees already in the UK.

This was set out in paragraphs 40 and 41 of the Afghanistan resettlement and

immigration policy statement published on 13 September.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement-accessible-version>

Biometrics underpin the UK's immigration system to support identity assurance and suitability checks on foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control. They enable us to conduct comprehensive checks against immigration and criminality records to prevent leave being granted to those who pose a harm to national security or are likely to breach our laws.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51834>

Afghanistan: Asylum

Lyn Brown (Labour) [50650] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to urgently assess the cases of people who are funded by the Government to work with UK universities on Official Development Assistance funded projects on matters which put them at particular risk of Taliban violence, including gender and women's rights, and whose applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme have not yet been responded to.

Reply from James Heapey: The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) was launched in April 2021 to support the relocation of Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) to the UK. The scheme is not time-limited and will endure, remaining open to any LES who were employed by HMG and worked for the UK Government in Afghanistan.

For those who are not eligible for ARAP, including individuals employed by third parties, we are directing them to the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The Home Office are working quickly to establish the details of the ACRS, which will provide protection for those identified as most at risk. The Government has committed to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years, making this one of the most comprehensive resettlement schemes the UK has ever established.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50650>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Helen Hayes (Labour) [50730] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals living in the UK are awaiting a decision on asylum applications as at 16 September 2021; and what steps she is taking to help ensure that applicants are responded to as quickly as possible.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on how many Afghan nationals are awaiting an initial asylum decision, but only up to and including June 2021. This data can be found at Asy_01c of the published Immigration Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021/list-of-tables#asylum-and-resettlement>

The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives which will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000 by March 2022 and providing improved training and career progression opportunities

to aid retention of staff.

We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system. We have three key areas of focus in the short to medium term to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases by improving efficiency and productivity, reducing the number of outstanding claims and building high performing teams. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50730>

Afghanistan: Asylum

Lyn Brown (Labour) [50652] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time taken was for processing applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme since 1 August 2021.

Reply from James Heappey: Since 1 August 2021 the applications received for the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) have increased exponentially. This has affected the processing times of each case, which varies enormously.

We do not record or hold the metrics for the processing times of applications, and any number of factors can affect how long it takes for an applicant to progress through each stage of the process, for example their location, access to IT, employment history verification, security checks, or family circumstances.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50652>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Chi Onwurah (Labour) [50016] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to process the claims of Afghan asylum seekers and refugees who have been waiting for more than six months for a decision on their applications.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations. All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy.

We are currently reviewing the country situation and will be issuing updated country policy and information notes shortly for Afghanistan, which reflect revised assessments of risk of persecution. We have therefore temporarily paused asylum decision making for Afghan nationals to ensure that our decision makers are only considering claimants' protection needs in the light of relevant and up-to-date country information.

However, we are continuing to interview those seeking asylum from Afghanistan to ensure we have the most up to date information and evidence relating to their claims.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/50016>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51833] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Afghan nationals who were called forward or authorised for evacuation under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme who made their own way to the UK after being unable to board airlift flights will be permitted to stay in the UK under that scheme and granted indefinite leave to remain.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: Those notified by the UK that they had been called forward, but were unable to board evacuation flights, will be offered a place on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Efforts are ongoing to facilitate

travel to the UK from the region for this group. Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement

Those who are eligible under ACRS will be granted ILR in the UK.

Those who arrive in the UK via irregular routes are able to claim asylum. The Government is clear that people should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach and not risk their lives making dangerous journeys.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51833>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51840] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that people who arrived in the UK under the Afghan (a) Relocation and Assistance Policy and (b) Citizens Resettlement Scheme are not required to meet the habitual residence test.

Reply from David Rutley: All those brought to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and recourse to public funds including benefit support.

The Department for Work and Pensions has legislated to exempt those arriving in the UK under the ARAP and ACRS from the habitual residence test for income-related benefits, and the past presence test and the habitual residence test for disability and carer benefits.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2021/1034/made>

Further information can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-those-arriving-from-afghanistan>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51840>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [45296] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals are in asylum detention centres; and what plans her Department has to remove those nationals from detention centres.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on people in immigration detention in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. The number of people in detention on the last day of each quarter are published in table Det_D02 of the [Detention detailed datasets](#). The data include those detained under immigration powers in HM prisons from July 2017 and can be broken down by nationality of detainee and place of detention.

The latest data relates to the number of people in detention at the end of June 2021. The Government is committed to a fair and humane immigration policy that welcomes those here legally, but tackles abuse and protects the public. There is a presumption in favour of liberty for all individuals and decisions to detain are taken on a case by case basis. Published Home Office detention policy is clear that detention must only ever be used sparingly and for the shortest period necessary.

Once a person is in detention, regular reviews are undertaken to ensure that their detention remains lawful, appropriate and proportionate. We do not detain people indefinitely. In order to protect the public, it is important that suitable accommodation is sourced prior to their release due to the risks associated with managing offenders in the community and the often-specific accommodation requirements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-08/45296>

Migrants: Afghanistan

Sarah Owen (Labour) [43709] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of waiving the fee for hotel quarantine for people arriving from Afghanistan (a) who worked for the UK's military and (b) as part of the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme.

Reply from Maggie Throup: There is a cross-Government effort to design a package for arrivals from Afghanistan, including the support that is needed to help these families relocate to the United Kingdom. The cost of managed quarantine is being considered in these discussions and we are actively looking to provide support where the need is greatest.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-07/43709>

Afghanistan: Deportation

Hilary Benn (Labour) [51593] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government is currently deporting people to Afghanistan; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Enforced returns to Afghanistan, including deportations, have been paused.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51593>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Other Immigration and Asylum

Immigration Controls: Marriage

Hilary Benn (Labour) [51592] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a British citizen seeking to bring a fiancé to the UK is required to provide proof that the couple have previously met in person.

Reply from Kevin Foster: A British citizen who wishes to sponsor their foreign national fiancé or proposed civil partner to enter the UK and reside here permanently under the family Immigration Rules must provide evidence to confirm the couple have met in person.

Further guidance on the fiancé or proposed civil partner visa can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fiancees-set01/fiancees-set01#set114-what-to-do-after-an-initial-refusal-on-the-grounds-of-not-having-met>

A British citizen who does not wish to reside permanently in the UK with their fiancé can apply for them to enter as a visitor to conduct their wedding. There are no specific provisions under the visitor Rules for the couple to have met in person prior to their application. However, the couple will be expected to prove their relationship is genuine, which having not met in person may call into doubt, however each case is considered based on its individual circumstances.

Further information on the marriage visitor Rules can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51592>

NHS: Migrant Workers

Stephen Timms (Labour) [51576] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason working families without permanent residence in the UK, who pay income tax and National Insurance, are also required to pay NHS surcharges.

Reply from Edward Argar: The National Health Service is a residency-based healthcare system, meaning that people who do not live here on a lawful, settled basis must contribute to the cost of their care, regardless of individual tax status. All temporary migrants of more than six months are subject to the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) at the point of visa application. This allows them to access NHS services without further charge while they are here with some exceptions. The IHS ensures that individuals do not face unexpected treatment bills and reduces the administrative burden on frontline staff of identifying chargeable patients and recovering charges.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51576>

Students: Immigration

Abena Oppong-Asare (Labour) [48378] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the impact of delays to decisions on Leave to Remain or Indefinite Leave to Remain on applications for student finance.

Reply from Michelle Donelan: Generally, to be eligible for student support, a student must be ordinarily resident in England and 'settled' in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course and must have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the 3 years prior to that date.

Settled status is granted by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and, once confirmation of that status is received, and, if necessary checked with the Home Office, Student Finance England is able to assess whether the student is eligible for student support. In general, Student Finance England will endeavour to reach a decision on an application within 30 days of all relevant information being submitted by the student.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-13/48378>

Youth Mobility Scheme: EEA Nationals

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [49252] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference the Independent Report, International review: immigration routes for social care workers produced for the Migration Advisory Committee, published 1 September 2021, whether her Department plans to implement the report's recommendation that the Youth Mobility Scheme should be extended to EEA member states.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) were commissioned on 6 July to review the impact of free movement ending on the social care sector. The MAC have indicated, in their letter accepting the commission, they will make use of expert social care advisors. On 19 August, the MAC launched a call for evidence to support this review. We look forward to receiving the MAC's report next year.

Our Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) agreements provide a valuable route for mutual cultural exchange and are not simply a one-way route for recruiting labour from overseas.. We will therefore not add nations to the YMS unilaterally.

We remain open to negotiating YMS arrangements with other countries and territories, including EEA countries, and last week laid changes to the Immigration Rules to add Iceland as a participating country in the scheme. However, as each YMS is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK nationals, with the detail negotiated and agreed between the relevant parties,

we are unable to disclose the status of ongoing negotiations with partner countries as they occur.

Further details of additional YMS agreements will be announced once they are concluded.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49252>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1013142/IMMIGRATION_ROUTES_FOR_SOCIAL_CARE_WORKERS.pdf

The call for evidence referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-the-impact-of-the-ending-of-freedom-of-movement-on-the-adult-social-care-sector>

Immigration: Hong Kong

Graham Brady (Conservative) [49032] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time taken by her Department was from an application being received to issuing National Insurance numbers to those people arriving from Hong Kong with British national overseas status.

Reply from Guy Opperman: Demand for the National Insurance Number (NINo) service is currently high with the average time taken to process applications around 13 weeks. This is for all employment inspired applications including people arriving from Hong Kong with British National Overseas status.

The Department is currently recruiting and training additional staff to reduce these waiting times.

The Department expedites NINo applications for those who require one in order to receive Social Security Benefits.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49032>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Hilary Benn (Labour) [49954] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether applicants who want to update their biometric residence card to reflect their EU Settled Status have to pay a fee for (a) the application and (b) biometrics in respect of their application.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Applicants who want to update their biometric residence card (BRC) to reflect their EU Settled Status are not required to pay a fee for either (a) the application or (b) biometrics in respect of their application.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/49954>

Immigration

Owen Thompson (SNP) [52546] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to provide access to free support for vulnerable individuals with pre-settled status to assist them in switching to settled status.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Since April 2019 we have awarded £17 million in grant funding to a network of 72 organisations, who provide a wide range of invaluable support across the UK, ensuring those vulnerable and most at-risk continue to get the help they need.

We committed a further £4.5 million of grant funding for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 to fund the current network of 72 organisations to continue to provide a range of support across the UK well beyond the 30 June deadline. We are committed to making sure everybody eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) can apply for the status they deserve, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. This support is also available to those with Pre-Settled Status applying for Settled Status.

We are currently in consultation with the Grant-funded Network (GFN) to continue this support from 01 October 2021 – 31 March 2022.

We intend to issue reminders to people granted pre-settled status to apply for settled status before their pre-settled status expires if they have not already done so. We will set out the arrangements for this in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-21/52546>

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

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

Immigration

Owen Thompson (SNP) [52547] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to remind people with pre-settled status to switch to settled status when necessary to do so.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Since the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) opened in March 2019, the Home Office has undertaken a broad range of communications and stakeholder engagement activity to encourage EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members to apply for status under the EUSS. Extensive, and regularly updated information, factsheets and leaflets on the EUSS (including pre-settled to settled status conversion) have also been made available on GOV.UK. Stakeholders, including the Grant Funded Network of 72 organisations, have also been provided with regular updates, including on considerations for pre-settled status holders.

As of 30 June 2021, the Home Office had granted 206,490 applications for settled status from pre-settled status holders.

The Home Office also continues to communicate with EUSS status holders with information relevant to their status, including pre-settled to settled status applications. This currently includes an email exercise to all EUSS status holders, being sent throughout late September to October 2021 with reminders on key information, including pre-settled to settled status conversion.

When a person is granted pre-settled status, they also receive notification of what pre-settled status means, including the option to apply for settled status as soon as they qualify for it. This will generally be once they have completed five years' continuous residence in the UK. Pre-settled status holders' online UK Visas and Immigration account also provides key information on what a status holder can do in the UK, explains they can apply for settled status once they have lived continuously in the UK for five years and provides a link to GOV.UK with further information on how to do so.

The Home Office intends to provide individual pre-settled status holders with a timely reminder to apply for settled status before their pre-settled status expires.

We will set out the arrangements for this in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-21/52547>

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

Owen Thompson (SNP) [52548] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications to the EU Settlement Scheme have been successful; and how many and what proportion of those submitted before the June deadline have received their Certificate of Application to date.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the '[EU Settlement Scheme statistics](#)'.

The latest published information on EUSS applications concluded to 31 August

2021, by outcome type, can be found in the table on the [EU Settlement Scheme statistics collection](#) page on GOV.UK.

The data requested on Certificates of Application is not available. Where a person who applied to the EUSS by the 30 June 2021 deadline has not yet received a Certificate of Application, they can rely on the Home Office letter or email acknowledging their application to confirm they have made an in-time application.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-21/52548>

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

Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [47029] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to stop the universal credit and legacy benefit claims of individuals who qualify for EU Settled Status but have not yet applied for that scheme.

Reply from Chloe Smith: The Government has made clear its commitment to safeguard the rights of EEA nationals, and their family members, living in the UK prior to the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. They have done this through the introduction of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

The scheme opened to the public on 30 March 2019 and the deadline for the scheme for those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period was 30 June 2021. Every day thousands of people are being given status through the EUSS and to date the Home Office have received more than 6 million applications.

There is scope to make a late application based on reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. The Home Office have also released guidance for late applications and reiterated their general approach under the EUSS which is to look to grant status, rather than looking for reasons to refuse. Those covered by the Withdrawal Agreement who submit a late application to the EUSS will also be able to access benefits and services, if they are eligible, from the point their application is validated, and identity has been verified.

From 1 July 2021, the Department has continued to work in collaboration with the HO and HMRC to undertake further engagement activities and give those without status further opportunity to apply to the EUSS. Claimants that fail to make a late application will not have entitlement to benefits unless, and until, they apply. The Department is however taking all reasonable steps to engage claimants and provide them with multiple opportunities to apply before taking compliance action. This includes engaging with relevant customers through scheduled face to face and telephony contact, and Universal Credit (UC) journal prompts. The Department's visiting service is also available for those customers who are identified as the most vulnerable.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-10/47029>

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

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [49058] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number and proportion of people who illegally crossed the English Channel in August 2021 that were men.

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [49059] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the proportion of people illegally entering the UK by crossing the English Channel in boats.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office collates figures of Channel migrant arrivals for management information purposes. Home Office records indicate approximately 80% of arrivals in August were men. It should be noted that data assurance and validation processes for August figures are still in progress, that this data has been taken from live database, and that it is therefore subject to revision. The New Plan for Immigration Policy Statement contextualises small boats arrivals as a proportion of the wider cohort of irregular migration. In 2019, 11% of all irregular migrants arrived in the UK through crossing the Channel in small boats, compared to 32% by air and 51% by surface routes including clandestine entry in freight vehicles. In 2020, the proportion of irregular migrants who used the Channel crossing method increased to 50%, while those using air routes declined to 14% and those using surface routes fell to 32%.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49058>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49059>

The New Plan for Immigration, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration/new-plan-for-immigration-policy-statement-accessible>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [44236] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the number of illegal crossings of the English Channel are reduced.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: I refer the Honourable Gentleman to the answer my colleague gave to the Member for Ipswich on 26 April. Since that time, we have continued in our determination to end these dangerous and unnecessary crossings, and to tackle the criminality behind them.

These crossings are inherently dangerous; those embarking upon them are endangering themselves and others. The Home Office has developed techniques to physically oppose these crossings, and these are designed to discourage attempts. The aim in deploying these tactics is to reduce risk to life at sea. These techniques will only be deployed where it is safe to do so, and only after an individual assessment of circumstances and conditions has been made.

We are engaging with France at the highest levels to stop these crossings. So far this year, the French have stopped more than twice as many crossing attempts compared to 2020, and the proportion of crossings prevented is higher. Nevertheless, there is more to do to build on these efforts.

On 21 July, the Home Secretary agreed a further package of support with France, significantly increasing the equipped French police resource to patrol a wider area of coastline. The package will also enable more wide-area surveillance technology to be deployed to prevent crossing attempts.

The Nationality and Borders Bill will increase the maximum sentence for people smuggling to life, and will make changes so that how someone arrives in the country will impact their asylum claim. This legislation will break the business model of people smugglers, and I hope its passage will continue to receive the Honourable Gentleman's support.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-07/44236>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-19/183299>

Health Services: Undocumented Migrants

Catherine West (Labour) [52563] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social

Care, what steps he plans to take to ensure that undocumented migrants without proof of address or ID (a) are not refused by GP surgeries and (b) can access covid-19 vaccinations.

Reply from Maggie Throup: The national patient registration guidance from NHS England states that a fixed address or identification is not required to register or access treatment at general practitioner (GP) practices. Where necessary, the practice can use its address to register the patient.

Whilst an individual's National Health Service number might be used for administration purposes, it is not a pre-requisite to be offered the COVID-19 vaccine. For those not registered with a GP, NHS regional teams, working with various local systems, will contact those individuals to ensure they are offered the vaccine. Vaccinations against COVID-19 are offered to every adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status and no immigration checks will be carried out.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-21/52563>

Asylum

Afzal Khan (Labour) [51835] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has undertaken an assessment of the potential merits of expanding safe routes to claiming asylum in the UK, including accepting asylum claims at British embassies, High Commissions or visa application centres.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.

However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge. Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, we are not bound to consider asylum claims in British Embassies, High Commissions or visa application centres abroad from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come here. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach, this is the fastest route to safety.

We continue to prioritise and welcome the most vulnerable refugees in need of protection identified and referred by the UNHCR through our resettlement schemes, and there are no plans to change this approach. Through these routes we have resettled more refugees than any EU country since 2015.

In addition to our resettlement schemes, there are safe and legal routes for people to come to the UK should they wish to join family members here, work or study. They would need to meet the requirements of the relevant Immigration Rule under which they were applying to qualify for a visa.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51835>

Asylum

Anne Marie Morris (Conservative) [50034] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it remains her Department's policy to impose the cap on the number of asylum seekers the UK will accept of 5,000 in 2021 and 20,000 in total.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK does not impose a cap on the number of asylum claims the UK accepts. All asylum claims lodged from within the UK will be carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. In reference to the number of people included in your question, the UK's new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety. This scheme will resettle up to 20,000 people at risk, with 5,000 in the first year. This is in addition to those brought to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/50034>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum

Meg Hillier (Labour) [50634] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claims are awaiting resolution as at 16 September 2021.

Meg Hillier (Labour) [50635] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claims have been awaiting a decision from her Department for over 12 months.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office does publish data on how many initial asylum applications are awaiting a decision and by duration, but only up to and including June 2021. This data can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021/list-of-tables#asylum-and-resettlement>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50634>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50635>

Asylum: Standards

Daniel Zeichner (Labour) [50047] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to clear the backlog of asylum applications, and if she will reinstate the six-month service standard for assessing asylum applications.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office is committed to ensuring asylum claims are considered without unnecessary delay.

We have already made significant progress in prioritising claims with acute vulnerability and those in receipt of the greatest level of support, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Additionally, we are prioritising older claims and those where an individual has already received a decision, but a reconsideration is required.

The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives which will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000 by March 2022 and providing improved training and career progression opportunities to aid retention of staff. We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system.

We have three key areas of focus in the short to medium term to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases by improving efficiency and productivity, reducing the number of outstanding claims and building high performing teams. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making.

Asylum Operations are working to reintroduce a service standard and will be looking towards aligning potentially with changes being brought about by the New Plan for Immigration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/50047>

Asylum

John Spellar (Labour) [51588] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers are currently placed in each local authority in England.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We publish data on asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51588>

Asylum: Employment

Meg Hillier (Labour) [50633] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been granted permission to work as a result of the time taken for her Department process their case in last 12 months.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office are unable to state how many asylum seekers have been granted permission to work as a result of the time taken for the Department to process their cases in the last 12 months as the data is only held on paper case files or within the notes sections of the Home Office's databases. Therefore, the number of asylum seekers granted permission to work is not held in a reportable format.

However, the Home Office do publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision or further review and can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics, Asylum applications awaiting a decision, by duration:

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

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50633>

Asylum: LGBT People

Charlotte Nichols (Labour) [50775] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of raising the balance of probabilities to justify identity as a reason when assessing credibility of a claim for asylum in respect of LGBTQ+ people resident in the UK.

Charlotte Nichols (Labour) [50776] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of creating a second category of asylum seekers based on late evidence on LGBTQ+ people resident in the UK.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The New Plan for Immigration seeks to build a fair, but firm asylum system, ensuring we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.

On 16 September, we published an Equality Impact Assessment for the policies being taken forward through the Nationality and Borders Bill. This includes an assessment on potential impacts on people who are LGBTQ+:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-equality-impact-assessment>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50775>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50776>

The New Plan for Immigration, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration/new-plan-for-immigration-policy-statement-accessible>

Asylum: LGBT People

Charlotte Nichols (Labour) [50777] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the risk of increasing homophobic,

biphobic and transphobic assault and harassment in the asylum process through the use of offshore immigration processing centres.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The New Plan for Immigration seeks to build a fair, but firm asylum system, ensuring we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum. On 16 September, we published an Equality Impact Assessment for the policies being taken forward through the Nationality and Borders Bill. This includes an assessment on potential impacts on people who are LGBTQ+:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-equality-impact-assessment>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/50777>

The New Plan for Immigration, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration/new-plan-for-immigration-policy-statement-accessible>

Asylum: Children in Care

Tim Loughton (Conservative) [50936] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seeking minors placed in bridge hotels have subsequently been taken into care by local authorities in 2021 to date.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The transfer of minors from hotel accommodation into Local Authority care is fluid and evolving and data is not held in a reportable way, to provide them would be done at a disproportionate cost.

We publish statistics on how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors are transferred into Local Authority care at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-17/50936>

Asylum: Detainees

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru) [51791] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were housed in (a) Brook House Immigration Removal Centre and (b) Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre at the start of each of the last six months; and what proportion of maximum capacity that represents.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review to ensure that the Home Office has sufficient capacity, in the right places and that it provides value for money.

The Home Office will maintain sufficient capacity to support the removal of the men and women it proves necessary to detain for the purposes of removal. In order to meet operational needs and demands, we will continue to operate the immigration removal estate in a flexible manner.

The Home Office publishes statistics on people in detention on the last day of each quarter in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on people in detention under immigration powers are published in table Det_D02 of the [Detention detailed datasets](#). The data can be broken down by place of detention. The latest data release relates to the number of people in detention at the end of June 2021. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51791>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative) [HL2704] To ask Her Majesty's

Government what steps they are taking to work with (1) charities, and (2) local communities, to support refugees from Afghanistan; and what steps they are taking to (a) encourage, and (b) coordinate, charitable donations in support of this cause.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Under Operation Warm Welcome, we are taking a cross-government approach to ensuring Afghans arriving in the UK are able to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate with their local communities.

The challenge of integrating such a large number of people at pace and supporting them to rebuild their lives in safety cannot be met by central and local government alone. We will be actively working with the private, voluntary and community sectors to harness a whole of society effort to address this challenge.

As part of this, we are creating a portal where people, organisations and businesses can register offers of support. This could include volunteering, offers of employment or to provide professional skills *pro bono*, including helping those arriving deal with trauma, or offering donations of mobile phones, mobile credit or data, laptops, access to training, clothes and toys. This will complement the Afghanistan housing portal which has been set up to collect offers of additional housing support.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/hl2704>

Information about Operation Warm Welcome, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operation-warm-welcome-underway-to-support-afghan-arrivals-in-the-uk>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative) [HL2705] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to help recently arrived Afghan refugees culturally acclimatise and assimilate into the British population.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: All those brought to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and be able to apply for public funds. They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. The support provided for them will be similar to the commitments in the Syrian Resettlement Programme, with a complete package covering health, education and English Language support costs, and including cultural orientation to the UK.

We will be actively working with the private, voluntary and community sectors to harness a whole-of-society effort to address this challenge.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/hl2705>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative) [HL2703] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Afghan refugees who have recently arrived in the UK will be given mental health support.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The safety and wellbeing of Afghan refugees is of the utmost importance and we will work closely with accommodation providers and other partners to prioritise their safety and wellbeing. We are providing £3 million to ensure Afghan refugees receive the healthcare they need. This includes access to prescriptions, wound care and dressings, maternity care,

mental health support, and screening for infectious diseases. We will also offer the protection of a COVID-19 vaccination as they settle and rebuild.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/hl2703>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative) [HL2707] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to help recently arrived Afghan refugees find employment.

Reply from Baroness Stedman-Scott: Those coming from Afghanistan to the UK on the resettlement programmes will have the right to work here from day one, as well as immediate access to the benefit system and our existing employment offer, including our £30 billion Plan for Jobs.

Direct, personalised support is available from experienced work coaches in the temporary hotel accommodation where Afghans are staying across the country. Work coaches are there to help with any claims or queries and to provide tailored employment support. Resettling Afghans will also have access to our Refugee Leads Network, which links Jobcentres and organisations working with refugees and those on resettlement programmes, to help them integrate and find employment in local areas. We will also work to ensure that English as a Second or Other Language provision, and other support, is available to those that need it.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/hl2707>

Interpreters: Afghanistan

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL2629] To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are giving to former Afghan interpreters who have been granted asylum in the UK to seek employment.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) launched on 1 April 2021, offering relocation to former Locally Employed Staff in Afghanistan who have been assessed to be at serious risk as a result of their work. Work is underway across the whole of Government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with us in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK.

All those brought to the UK under the ARAP scheme will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare, and will be able to apply for public funds. The support provided to them will be similar to that received by those who came on the Syrian Resettlement Programme, ensuring that those who risked their lives by working closely with the British military and UK Government in Afghanistan get access to the vital healthcare, education, accommodation and support into employment they need to fully integrate into society.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-10/hl2629>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Immigration: Hong Kong

Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench) [HL2417] To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many British National (Overseas) visas have been granted, including to dependants, since 31 January, (2) how many individuals have been granted leave outside the Immigration Rules at the UK border since 1 January, and (3) how many British National (Overseas) passports issued each month since January.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: (1),(2) The Home Office publishes data on visas and the British National Overseas (BN(O)) route in the 'Immigration

Statistics Quarterly Release' on GOV.UK:

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

The data relates to the first and second quarter of 2021, January to June, and are derived from management information. These statistics include data on main applicants and dependants and are rounded to the nearest hundred. Data for Q3 2021 will be published on 25 November 2021.

(3) The table below provides the number of British National (Overseas) passports issued to customers each month since January 2021. *

Month	BNO Passports Issued
January	13,315
February	8,217
March	7,032
April	4,747
May	4,192
June	3,141
July	2,728
August	5,613

*These figures are correct at the time of reporting and subject to change.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/hl2417>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench) [HL2416] To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many permissions under the EU Settlement Scheme have been granted to date to (a) EEA, and (b) non-EEA, national family members of the main applicants, for settled and pre-settled status, and (2) how many applications under the EU Settlement Scheme have been received to date from individuals not living in the UK.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics'.

The latest published information on EUSS applications concluded to 30 June 2021, by nationality and outcome type can be found in table EUSS_03_UK available at: EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, June 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

EUSS_03_UK: EU Settlement Scheme: concluded applications by outcome type and nationality, 28 August 2018 to 30 June 2021 - UK total						
Country of nationality	Total	of which are Settled	of which are Pre-settled	of which are Refused	of which are Withdrawn or Void	of which are Invalid
Total	5,444,550	2,846,820	2,327,850	109,430	80,600	79,730
Total EU 27	5,065,570	2,725,830	2,103,510	94,800	68,010	73,330

The vast majority of EUSS applications are associated with a UK address, although there is no requirement to give a UK address and applications can be made in-country or in some cases from overseas. In our latest publication, we reported that "total applications include small numbers of records (1.6%) where locational data is not currently in an analysable form from live systems." This proportion includes applications associated with a non-UK address.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/hl2416>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL2631] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the devolved administrations regarding their policy to end illegal crossings of the English Channel by migrant vessels.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Border Security is a reserved matter. Consequently, discussions on this subject have not taken place with the devolved administrations, and there are no plans to do so.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-10/hl2631>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Lord Marlesford (Conservative) [HL2619] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many migrants are known to have crossed the English Channel by unauthorised or irregular sea transport and landed in England in each week during 2021.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office collates figures of channel migrant arrivals for management information purposes, and weekly arrivals data is therefore held. However, the Home Office preference for validation and assurance of data is for monthly figures as weekly data are not representative of trends and other factors that we deem important to understand small boat crossings.

The following figures for both monthly and weekly arrivals of migrants by small boat in 2021 are from a live database, and are subject to revision following those data validation and assurance processes.

Week commencing	Week ending	Total arrivals by small boat
28/12/20	3/1/21	58
4/1/21	10/1/21	161
11/1/21	17/1/21	36
18/1/21	24/1/21	0
25/1/21	31/1/21	17
1/2/21	7/2/21	62
8/2/21	14/2/21	0
15/2/21	21/2/21	23
22/2/21	28/2/21	223
1/3/21	7/3/21	150
8/3/21	14/3/21	115
15/3/21	21/3/21	10
22/3/21	28/3/21	327
29/3/21	4/4/21	259
5/4/21	11/4/21	49
12/4/21	18/4/21	82
19/4/21	25/4/21	272
26/4/21	2/5/21	594
3/5/21	9/5/21	130
10/5/21	16/5/21	592
17/5/21	23/5/21	29
24/5/21	30/5/21	528
31/5/21	6/6/21	732
7/6/21	13/6/21	508
14/6/21	20/6/21	352
21/6/21	27/6/21	400
28/6/21	4/7/21	933
5/7/21	11/7/21	642
12/7/21	18/7/21	504
19/7/21	25/7/21	1529
26/7/21	1/8/21	160

2/8/21	8/8/21	1282
9/8/21	15/8/21	902
16/8/21	22/8/21	869
23/8/21	29/8/21	0
30/8/21	5/9/21	165
6/9/21	12/9/21	1862

Date	Total arrivals by small boat
Jan-21	224
Feb-21	308
Mar-21	831
Apr-21	750
May-21	1627
Jun-21	2177
Jul-21	3512
Aug-21	3053
Sep-21 (to 12 Sept)	2027

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-10/hl2619>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Lord Marlesford (Conservative) [HL2620] To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the annual cost of each illegal migrant that is picked up by Border Force having crossed the English Channel by boat.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data on the costs of migrants from this specific group is not collected. The cost of the asylum system to the taxpayer was published in the New Plan for Immigration policy statement.

New Plan for Immigration policy statement

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972517/CCS207_CCS0820091708-001_Sovereign_Borders_Web_Accessible.pdf

Immigration and Protection data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q1-2021>
Table - UKVI IP Q1 2021

[New Plan for Immigration policy statement](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-10/hl2620>

Refugees: English Channel

Lord Jones of Cheltenham (Liberal Democrat) [HL2580] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of deaths which could be caused by their policy of turning back boats of refugees in the Channel; and what assessment they have made of the implications of this policy for the UK's international reputation.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: These crossings are dangerous, illegal and unnecessary. Lives have been lost through them and we will do everything to deter such crossings and so ultimately reduce the risk to life.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-09/hl2580>

Asylum

Lord Marlesford (Conservative) [HL2623] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many persons claiming asylum have been granted either (1) asylum, or (2) permanent leave to remain, in the UK in each of the last 12 months.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on

asylum applications in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of initial decisions on asylum applications are published in table Asy_D02 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets. The table attached is derived from published data.

Table 1: Number of people granted protection or leave at initial decision following an asylum claim, by outcome, in the year ending June 2021 (see attached)

The latest available data on grants of settlement (indefinite leave to remain) to individuals previously granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave following an asylum application are published in settlement table se_02_q in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'.

Table 2: Asylum-related grants of settlement in the year ending June 2021

[Table 1 and Table 2](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-10/hl2623>

Undocumented Migrants: Deportation

Lord Marlesford (Conservative) [HL2622] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many illegal immigrants have been deported from the UK in each of the last 12 months.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK in each quarter in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly release'. The latest data on enforced returns (of which 'deportations' is a subset) go to the end of March 2021 and are published in Ret_D01 of the Returns detailed tables.

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns, which are enforced either following a criminal conviction, or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. The published statistics refer to enforced returns which include deportations, as well as cases where a person has breached UK immigration laws and those removed under other administrative and illegal entry powers that have declined to leave voluntarily. Figures on deportations, which are a subset of enforced returns, are not separately available. The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

- enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry);
- overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK;
- breach their conditions of leave;
- are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction and
- have been refused asylum.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-10/hl2622>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Douglas Chapman (SNP) [455] **Support for refugees** – That this House welcomes the initiative between the Social Enterprise Academy Scotland and the Scottish Refugee Council to support refugees by providing a series of six leadership and enterprise programmes which will help up to 84 people across Scotland; and further welcomes the focus on opportunities for new Scots to become valued contributors and leaders within their own communities.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58929>

Press Releases

More than £36 million offered in compensation to the Windrush generation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-than-36-million-offered-in-compensation-to-the-windrush-generation>

Security needed for EU Citizens

<https://www.gov.scot/news/security-needed-for-eu-citizens/>

Supporting EU students

<https://www.gov.scot/news/supporting-eu-students/>

Windrush Cymru: Celebrating a Generation

<https://senedd.wales/senedd-now/news/windrush-exhibition-opens-at-senedd/>

New Publications

Changes to the immigration rules: letter from the Cabinet Secretary for External Affairs to the Home Secretary

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/changes-to-the-immigration-rules-letter-from-the-cabinet-secretary-for-external-affairs-to-the-home-secretary/>

Windrush Compensation Scheme data: September 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1018454/Windrush_Compensation_Scheme_Background_Data_-_August_2021.ods

EU citizens - continued support: letter from the Minister for Europe to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/eu-citizens-continued-support-letter-from-the-minister-for-europe-to-the-secretary-of-state-for-work-and-pensions/>

EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, June 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-june-2021/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-june-2021>

Supreme Court judgement concerning the lawfulness of aspects of the detained fast track system for the determination of asylum claims and appeals

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2017/59.html>

News

Priti Patel's asylum plan will break international law, says UNHCR

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/asylum-migrant-bill-priti-patel-unhcr-b1925141.html>

Immigration system 'not meeting' Scotland's needs

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-58698128>

Nicola Sturgeon: UK must 'urgently revisit their entire post-Brexit immigration policy'

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19612989.nicola-sturgeon-uk-must-urgently-revisit-entire-post-brexit-immigration-policy/>

Some Afghan refugees to be housed in UK hotels for months

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/22/some-afghan-refugees-to-be-housed-in-uk-hotels-for-months>

Child refugees were ‘dumped’ in unsafe hotel, claims Brighton council

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/25/child-refugees-were-dumped-in-unsafe-hotel-claims-brighton-council>

Windrush victims launch legal action over compensation delays

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/21/windrush-victims-launch-legal-action-over-compensation-delays>

Government told to get ‘perspective’ on Channel migrant numbers by UN refugee agency

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/english-channel-crossings-un-perspective-b1925792.html>

Home Office slashes immigration enforcement budget as Channel crossings soar

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/09/29/home-office-slashes-immigration-enforcement-budget-channel-crossings/>

Channel crossings double 2020 total despite Home Office pledge to stop migrant boats

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/channel-crossings-migrants-home-office-b1928029.html>

Small boat Channel crossings in 2021 reach double 2020 total

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/27/more-small-boat-channel-crossings-this-year-than-during-all-of-2020>

English Channel migrant crossings hit monthly record

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/new-border-force-tactics-will-stop-just-1-of-migrant-boats-t7lp8j8wk>

Channel migrants asked just four screening questions as Border Force ‘beyond breaking point’

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/23/channel-migrants-asked-just-four-screening-questions-border/>

Only ‘small proportion’ of Channel migrant boats will be turned back

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/09/22/small-proportion-channel-migrant-boats-will-turned-back/>

Channel migrants: UK poised to start pushing back boats next week

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/channel-migrants-uk-poised-to-start-pushing-back-boats-next-week-nf8fxvnhc>

Turnback plan for Channel migrant boats is ‘dangerous’

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/turnback-plan-for-channel-migrant-boats-is-dangerous-qdr89z52m>

Migrant boat ‘had 20 lifebelts for 72 on board’

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrant-boat-had-20-lifebelts-for-72-on-board-9jmgrts2v>

Home Office senior official says ‘no plan’ to give asylum seekers right to work

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-right-work-home-office-uk-b1927608.html>

Home Office resisting calls to let asylum seekers work in the UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/30/home-office-resisting-calls-to-allow-asylum-seekers-work-in-the-uk>

Record number of asylum applications granted on basis of sexuality

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/23/record-number-asylum-applications-granted-basis-sexuality/>

Asylum seekers forced to sleep in 24-bed hostel rooms despite Covid risk

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-hostel-covid-southwark-home-office-b1928464.html>

Asylum seekers placed in ‘unsuitable’ Blackpool hotel despite council protests

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/28/asylum-seekers-placed-in-unsuitable-blackpool-hotel-despite-council-protests>

Home Office fails to remove more than 4500 migrants with potentially ‘inadmissible’ claims

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/27/home-office-fails-remove-4500-migrants-inadmissible-claims/>

Zimbabwe refugees may be sent back

https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/nov/17/zimbabwe.immigrationandpublicservices?CMP=gu_com

Home Office planned speedy removal of Vietnamese trafficking victims

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/27/home-office-planned-speedy-removal-of-vietnamese-trafficking-victims>

TOP

Community Relations

News

How superdiverse Britain became a multicultural success story

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/superdiverse-britain-multicultural-population-g9rkp7nqp>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament Debate

Ethnicity Pay Gap

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-20/debates/3A332BAE-A7AE-49BD-95F3-2E7875E04F66/EthnicityPayGap>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

UN Climate Conference 2021: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [44440] To ask the President of COP26, how many Black and minority ethnic people are part of the UK's COP26 negotiating team.

Reply from Alok Sharma: We have recently appointed a Diversity and Inclusion lead in the Campaigns and Engagement Team to lead on inclusivity and diversity for a successful and fully inclusive COP.

For additional wider information, the Government publishes statistics on Civil Service demographics annually on March 31st via the Office for National Statistics. This can be found on the GOV.UK website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-07/44440>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL2762] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure ethnicity pay gap reporting is mandatory for all large employers by 2023.

Reply from Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to building a fairer Britain and ensuring that equality and opportunity is available for all. That is why my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister established the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which published its independent report on March 31st. We welcome the opportunity to consider the Commission's findings, and are looking at them in light of the work that has already taken place within government, including the consultation on ethnicity pay reporting. We will be publishing our response to the Commission's report later this autumn.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/hl2762>

The report referred to above can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331 - CRED Report - FINAL - Web Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331_-_CRED_Report_-_FINAL_-_Web_Accessible.pdf)

Planning Permission: Equality

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL2725] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand the National Planning Policy Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development to include an aim of striving for racial equality in all planning processes.

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) already expects that local plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, of which social sustainability is a key component. The planning system has three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. As well as an economic and environmental objective, this includes a social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, fostering well designed, beautiful and safe places that reflect current and future needs of all in the community.

These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the NPPF, including an expectation that planning policies and decision should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Further, local authorities must comply with

their duties under the Equality Act in exercise of their planning functions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/hl2725>

The National Planning Policy Framework, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

Doctors' List of Patients: Travellers

Baroness Whitaker (Labour) [HL2599] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent finding by Friends, Families and Travellers, published on 8 July, which found that 74 per cent of GP surgeries breached NHS England guidelines and the Equality Act 2010 in March and April by refusing to register nomadic patients.

Reply from Lord Kamall: NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Department are engaging with Friends, Families and Travellers on their report to understand the issues raised. NHS England and NHS Improvement have been clear on the need to continue to register new patients throughout the pandemic. Patients can register without attending the practice by delivering their applications by any means, including by post and digitally. Any patient refused registration and who is not registered with another practice may request immediate necessary treatment for a new or pre-existing condition for up to 14 days.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-09/hl2599>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Locked-out-A-snapshot-of-access-to-General-Practice-for-nomadic-communities-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf>

History: Curriculum

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat) [HL2760] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Black history is a mandatory part of the curriculum in all schools, including those which are not required to teach the National Curriculum.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity. We support all pupils and students in tackling racism and to have the knowledge and tools to do so.

The government believes that all children and young people should acquire a firm grasp of history, including how different events and periods relate to each other. That is why it is compulsory for maintained schools from key stages 1 to 3, and why academies are expected to teach a curriculum which is as broad and ambitious as the national curriculum. This expectation is set out in the Ofsted school inspection handbook, as part of their education inspection framework introduced in September 2019.

The national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the department expects schools to cover in each subject. The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. The department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, and this can include the voices and experience of Black people. The flexibility within the history curriculum means that there is the opportunity for teachers to teach about Black history across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the curriculum. For example, at key stage 1, schools can teach about the lives of key Black historical figures such as Mary Seacole, Rosa Parks, or others. At key

stage 3, schools can cover the development and end of the British Empire and Britain's transatlantic slave trade, its effects and eventual abolition. The teaching of Black history need not be limited to these examples. There is scope to include Black history and experience in other national curriculum subjects such as English and citizenship, and in the non-statutory subject personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education.

It is positive that teachers and schools are responding directly to the renewed attention on history teaching to ensure knowledge-based subject teaching. More history teachers reflected commitments in the most recent survey of history teachers by the Historical Association to develop more content in their teaching on Black and diverse histories. This change will provide pupils with more breadth and depth in their understanding of history.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-15/hl2760>

Press Releases

Scottish Qualifications Authority signs legal agreement to improve equality practices

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/scottish-qualifications-authority-signs-legal-agreement-improve-equality-practices>

Learning of Black, Asian and minority ethnic histories included in new Welsh Curriculum

<https://gov.wales/learning-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-histories-included-new-welsh-curriculum>

New Publications

Girls at risk of exclusion

<https://weareagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Girls-at-risk-of-exclusion-Agenda-briefing-September-2021.pdf>

News

Black Lives Matter training among new diversity courses offered to NHS staff

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/19/black-lives-matter-training-among-new-diversity-courses-offered/>

New data shows black and minoritised girls are more than twice as likely to be excluded from school as their white counterparts

<https://weareagenda.org/black-girls-school-exclusions/>

Black Caribbean girls in England 'twice as likely to be excluded from schools as white girls

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/sep/23/black-girls-in-england-twice-as-likely-to-be-excluded-from-schools-as-white-girls>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Sectarianism

Stuart McMillan (SNP) [S6W-02836] To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to tackle sectarianism in Scotland.

Reply from Keith Brown: The Scottish Government continues to take forward the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland which were reviewed positively by Professor Duncan Morrow in March 2017. The work has been focussed and delivered through education projects in schools, colleges, communities and workplaces for children and adults. It is important that we all take responsibility to do more to rid Scotland of bigotry and prejudice. The Scottish Government is fully committed to tackling sectarianism in Scotland and have invested an unprecedented £15 million since 2012 including £557,000 in 2021- 22.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-02836>

The review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-implementation-recommendations-advisory-group-tackling-sectarianism-scotland-report-dr/>

Anti-racist Education

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-02658] To ask the Scottish Government whether the new resources, *Promoting race equality and anti-racist education*, from Education Scotland will include materials on the experiences of Irish people, and people of Irish descent, living in Scotland, and any discrimination they have experienced.

Reply from Shirley-Anne Somerville: The definition of race underpinning the Education Scotland resource Promoting and Developing Race Equality and Anti-Racist Education: An Overview is the definition present in the Equality Act 2010. This definition encompasses white ethnic groups, including white Irish. The experience of Irish people is also referenced in the Changing the Race Equality Paradigm in Education Scotland's Understanding race and racism wakelet for practitioners. An Education Scotland website to support the publication of their resource, to go live by the end of September, will be regularly updated to include resources for practitioners relating to different minority ethnic groups who experience discrimination.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-02658>

Information about the resources referred to above can be read at

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/promoting-race-equality-and-anti-racist-education/>

The wakelet link has been deleted, but the publication referred to above is probably

https://864a82af-f028-4baf-a094-46facc9205ca.filesusr.com/ugd/7ec2e5_3326ce0c802a4bf8a5ec7f023a6cdae1.pdf

Racist Songs

James Dornan (SNP) [S6W-02656] To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to meet with representatives from Rangers FC, Police Scotland, Glasgow City Council and members from the Irish-Scottish community, in light of recent events in Glasgow and the reported singing of racist songs.

Reply from Shona Robison: The Scottish Government unequivocally condemns

all forms of hatred or prejudice, including anti-Irish racism, and understands the impact that recent events will have had on Irish communities in Scotland. There is no excuse – it is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Scotland is a diverse, multi-cultural society and this diversity strengthens us as a nation. That is why we are determined to tackle all forms of prejudice and discrimination. We continue to work with Police Scotland who monitor the situation on reported hate crimes and hate incidents closely. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans also meets fortnightly with the Chief Constable of Police Scotland, where a number of matters are discussed.

Additionally the Scottish Government meets regularly with faith and belief organisations and consults with organisations representing the Irish-Scottish community. We are continuing to consider further engagement with representatives of communities impacted by recent events to provide reassurance that the Scottish Government take all forms of hate crime and bigotry seriously.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-02656>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

NHS: Racial Discrimination

Peter Gibson (Conservative) [49283] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support victims of racial discrimination in the NHS.

Reply from Edward Argar: The NHS People Plan sets out actions to address racial discrimination, including the appointment of an equalities champion in every National Health Service organisation, equipping line managers to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion as part of wellbeing conversations, and launching a joint training programme for Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and Workforce Race Equality Standard Experts. NHS England and NHS Improvement will publish a race equality strategy later this year, building on the actions in the People Plan.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-14/49283>

The NHS People Plan [for England], referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ournhspeople/>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Football: Racial Discrimination

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL2675] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include racism in football as a priority in the Hate Crime Unit; and what resources they will provide to that Unit.

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: The Government takes all forms of hate crime very seriously. We are clear that victims of racially motivated abuse should be supported and that the individuals who carry out these hateful attacks should be brought to justice.

The Government is working with prominent footballers to understand more about the abuse they suffer on social media. We will continue to work with the Police, football representatives and those affected directly, to tackle this vile abuse, both on and off the football pitch.

We will outline our next steps in the forthcoming Hate Crime Strategy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-13/hl2675>

New Publications

Public attitudes towards offensive language on TV and radio

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/225336/offensive-language-summary-report.pdf

Antisemitism and Misogyny: Overlap and Interplay

<https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Antisemitism-and-Misogyny-Overlap-and-Interplay.pdf>

News

McConnell accuses SNP of allowing 'cancer' of sectarianism to grow again

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19590635.mcconnell-accuses-snp-allowing-cancer-sectarianism-grow/>

SNP accused of 14 years of 'occasional outrage and no action' on sectarianism

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/snp-accused-of-14-years-of-occasional-outrage-and-no-action-on-sectarianism-3388473>

Does Scotland have an anti-Irish problem? Yes, and it's getting worse

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19613564.neil-mackay-scotland-anti-irish-problem-yes-getting-worse/>

Police Scotland 'as bad as the Met' for sexism and violence against women

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/police-scotland-as-bad-as-the-met-for-sexism-and-violence-against-women-9btwzqxps>

Police officers investigated over 'misogynistic and racist' messages remain on duty

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/wayne-couzens-whatsapp-met-police-b1930946.html>

Officers investigated for allegedly sharing 'racist, misogynistic' messages with Wayne Couzens

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/30/officers-investigated-allegedly-sharing-racist-misogynistic/>

UK drug laws used as tool of systemic racism, says ex-No 10 adviser

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/sep/29/uk-drug-laws-used-as-tool-of-systemic-racism-says-ex-no-10-adviser>

'Racist' drug laws should be reformed, says former government adviser

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/racist-drug-laws-lord-woolley-b1929506.html>

Labour MPs pushed for NHS to be labelled 'institutionally racist'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/09/25/labour-mps-pushed-nhs-labelled-institutionally-racist/>

Britons getting less tolerant of racist language on TV, Ofcom finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/sep/22/britons-getting-less-tolerant-of-racist-language-on-tv-ofcom-finds>

European Day Against Islamophobia 2021: ENAR condemns “Woke Islamism” theory as a political weapon to further legitimise the demonisation of Muslims and those perceived as Muslims in Europe

<https://www.enar-eu.org/European-Day-Against-Islamophobia-2021-ENAR-condemns-Woke-Islamism-theory-as-a>

Sikh MP Tan describes the racist abuse he faces for wearing a turban

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tanmanjeet-dhesi-racism-parliament-b1923566.html>

Black woman charged more rent than her white neighbours for smaller property

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/black-tenant-rent-sanctuary-housing-b1928583.html>

Bristol University sacks professor accused of antisemitic comments

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/oct/01/bristol-university-sacks-professor-accused-of-antisemitic-comments>

Bristol University anti-Semitism row comes to a head as professor is sacked

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/10/01/bristol-university-anti-semitism-row-comes-head-professor-sacked/>

London 'gray aliens' graffiti was anti-Semitic, jury told

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-58545509>

Four charged over anti-Semitic abuse shouted from car

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-58621498>

Scottish/Kenyan storyteller Mara Menzies fights racism with words in her new book Blood and Gold

<https://www.scotsman.com/must-read/scottishkenyan-storyteller-mara-menzies-fights-racism-with-words-in-her-new-book-blood-and-gold-3404629>

Bernardine Evaristo on a childhood shaped by racism: ‘I was never going to give up’

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/sep/25/bernardine-evaristo-on-a-childhood-shaped-by-racism-i-was-never-going-to-give-up>

Steven Gerrard calls for more severe punishments to tackle racism

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/steven-gerrard-rangers-glen-kamara-racism-b1930760.html>

Glen Kamara target of abuse by schoolchildren as he is sent off in Rangers’ loss against Sparta Prague

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/glen-kamara-target-of-abuse-by-schoolchildren-as-he-is-sent-off-in-rangers-loss-against-sparta-prague-t8pvkc3ht>

West Brom fan jailed over ‘grossly offensive’ racial abuse posted on Facebook

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/west-brom-facebook-rupert-jones-manchester-city-wolves-b1929862.html>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Opening Ceremony 2021

Opening Ceremony 2021: To Mark the Sixth Session of the Scottish Parliament (full video)

<https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/opening-ceremony-2021-to-mark-the-sixth-session-of-the-scottish-parliament-october-2-2021>

Press Releases

Recorded crime remains at low levels

<https://www.gov.scot/news/recorded-crime-remains-at-low-levels/>

Record your organ and tissue donation decision

<https://www.gov.scot/news/record-your-organ-and-tissue-donation-decision/>

Scottish Human Rights Commission concerned about rights to freedom of assembly and association at the Scottish Parliament

<https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/news/commission-concerned-about-rights-to-freedom-of-assembly-and-association-at-the-scottish-parliament/>

New Publications

Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2020-2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2020-2021/>

Recorded Crime in Scotland: August 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-august-2021/>

Letter from the Scottish Human Rights Commission to the Presiding Officer: Freedom of assembly and association at the Scottish Parliament

<https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/2227/letter-to-spcb-re-freedom-of-association-29092021.pdf>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Travellers: Ethnic Groups

Baroness Whitaker (Labour) [HL2813] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that (1) departments, and (2) other publicly-funded bodies, categorise Gypsies, Travellers and Roma as "white minority ethnic groups" for statistical and reporting purposes, rather than designating them either as "white British" or "minority ethnic".

Reply from Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have, therefore, asked the Authority to respond. ...

Professor Sir Ian Diamond – National Statistician: ... A core principle of the UK Statistics Authority's strategy *Statistics for the Public Good*[1] is inclusivity. I can

assure you that we are taking steps towards ensuring our statistics reflect the experiences of everyone in our society so that everyone counts and is counted, and that no one is forgotten.

Following consultation, research, and testing by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), a new 'Roma' response option was added to the ethnic group question within the higher-level 'White' category for Census 2021 for England and Wales[2]. This was in addition to the 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' response option, which has been included since the 2011 Census[3].

Our Census 2021 output and analysis plans[4] include separate tailored analysis on both the Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities and the Roma communities in England and Wales. As part of developing this analysis we are engaging with Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller community organisations, as well as other government and expert users, to better understand the data and analysis needs around these communities.

The GSS (Government Statistical Service) harmonised standards set out how to collect and report statistics to ensure comparability across different data collections in Government. For ethnicity[5], we suggest reporting with greater granularity, which has been recommended by the Minister for Equalities (*Departments and other agencies should publish a statement on GOV.UK outlining their plans to move their data collections to the Government Statistical Service's (GSS) harmonised ethnicity data standard*).[6] Over the past 12 months these standards have been adopted as the GDS's (Government Digital Service) design pattern[7] for equalities information, meaning that Government digital services collecting administrative information are recommended to adopt these standards.

In addition, the GSS Harmonisation Champions Network[8], which includes representatives from all departments across Government which publish National Statistics, also encourage their departments to adopt these harmonised standards. Finally, I'd like to highlight the work of the Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF), a group of senior academics and civil society leaders with expertise on a range of equalities topics and research methods. In October 2020, I commissioned this group to develop recommendations on how to make a step-change in the inclusivity of UK data and evidence in a broad range of areas, including ethnicity. Their recommendations will be launched on 28 September and will form the basis of a programme of work to be taken forward across government and more widely to radically improve the UK's inclusive data infrastructure, including in relation to different ethnic groups. ...

[1] <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/statistics-for-the-public-good>

[2] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/nationalidentityethnicgrouplanguageandreligionquestiondevelopmentforcensus2021>

[3] https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/census/2011census/howourcensusworks/howweplannedthe2011census/questionnairedevelopment/finalisingthe2011questionnaire/final-recommended-questions-2011-ethnic-group_tcm77-183998.pdf

[4] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/census2021outputs/2021dataproducs/analysis/ethnicgroupnationalidentitylanguageandreligion>

[5] <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity>

[6] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/second-quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities>

[7] <https://design-system.service.gov.uk/patterns/equality-information>

[8] <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/about-us/champion-networks/harmonisation-champions>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-16/hl2813>

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Health Information: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS

Coronavirus helpline

People living in Scotland who don't have any symptoms but are looking for general information can call the coronavirus helpline. If you're a non-English speaker you can still use this service. Phone 0800 028 2816, tell the call handler that you need an interpreter, give the name of your preferred language and you will be connected to a Language Line interpreter. You will not have to pay for this.

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>

Get a record of your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination status

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/after-your-vaccine/get-a-record-of-your-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-status>

Protect-Scot contact tracing app

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

Healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers

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

NHS Near Me (Scotland)

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

<https://www.nearme.scot/>

NHS (England and Wales)

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

Scottish Government Press Releases

Vaccine certification introduction confirmed

<https://www.gov.scot/news/vaccine-certification-introduction-confirmed/>

Vaccination programme progression

<https://www.gov.scot/news/vaccination-programme-progression/>

Vaccination appointments for 12-15 year olds

<https://www.gov.scot/news/vaccination-appointments-for-12-15-year-olds/>

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) update: First Minister's statement – 28 September 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-28-september-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement – 21 September 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-21-september-2021/>

UK Government Publication

The R value and growth rate

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-value-and-growth-rate>

News

Judge refuses to delay Scots vaccine passport scheme

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-58747315>

Covid in Scotland: Vaccine passport app launch hit by problems

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-58756079>

Covid Scotland: Vaccine uptake lowest in young people, ethnic minorities, and deprived areas

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19615042.covid-scotland-vaccine-uptake-lowest-young-people-ethnic-minorities-deprived-areas/>

Covid: How close is Scotland to full vaccination?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-58548727>

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Other News

Far-right group Britain First allowed to register as political party

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/britain-first-political-party-electoral-commission-b1927943.html>

Lone police officers to offer verification check to members of the public

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2021/october/lone-police-officers-to-offer-verification-check-to-members-of-the-public/>

Black History Month launches in UK with 'proud to be' campaign

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/01/black-history-month-launches-in-uk-with-proud-to-be-campaign>

Black History in Scotland celebrated by artworks and events along walking, wheeling and cycling routes

<https://tfn.scot/news/black-history-in-scotland-celebrated-by-artworks-and-events-along-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-routes>

Betty Campbell: Statue of Welsh black heroine unveiled

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-58721710>

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Bills in Progress

** new or updated this week

UK Parliament

Asylum Seekers (Accommodation Eviction Procedures) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2995>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2918>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) (No. 2) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3003>

Asylum Seekers (Return to Safe Countries) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2961>

Barnett Formula (Replacement) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2982>

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3002>

Human Trafficking (Child Protection) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2953>

Human Trafficking (Sentencing) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2963>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2986>

Immigration (Health and Social Care Staff) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3005>

Modern Slavery (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2892>

**** Nationality and Borders Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Public Bill Committee

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-21/debates/c08d585d-759e-4ed6-8a62-dd3e4a52dd62/NationalityAndBordersBill\(FirstSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-21/debates/c08d585d-759e-4ed6-8a62-dd3e4a52dd62/NationalityAndBordersBill(FirstSitting))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-21/debates/86708e23-7b74-4b2e-baeb-ecfbcf05eb4/NationalityAndBordersBill\(SecondSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-21/debates/86708e23-7b74-4b2e-baeb-ecfbcf05eb4/NationalityAndBordersBill(SecondSitting))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-23/debates/7ca593db-c83d-48c0-98ff-300ed88e15ce/NationalityAndBordersBill\(ThirdSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-23/debates/7ca593db-c83d-48c0-98ff-300ed88e15ce/NationalityAndBordersBill(ThirdSitting))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-23/debates/122e6daf-470b-49c5-a05e-4daba0170c73/NationalityAndBordersBill\(FourthSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-23/debates/122e6daf-470b-49c5-a05e-4daba0170c73/NationalityAndBordersBill(FourthSitting))

**** Online Safety Bill (Draft)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Evidence session: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Sub-Committee

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/2788/html/>

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2883>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** The impact of the ending of freedom of movement on the adult social care sector**
(closing date 29 October 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-the-impact-of-the-ending-of-freedom-of-movement-on-the-adult-social-care-sector>

**** Proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill**

(closing date 22 December 2021)

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/proposals-for-bills/proposed-assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Fearless Scotland – National Youth Survey (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/fearless-Scotland>

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Job Opportunities

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

Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

Rural Communities Ideas into Action Fund

Closing date 8 October 2021

Scottish Government funding to help rural communities thrive through community-led initiatives. It offers small grants of up to £3,000 for grassroots locally-led rural groups or organisations to support community projects that fit with local needs, and large grants of between £3,001 and £50,000 for not for profit organisations to invest in community-led initiatives that respond to local need. For information see

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/rural-communities-ideas-into-action-fund/>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Black History Month

Throughout October 2021

Black History Month encompasses the history of African, Caribbean and Asian people in Scotland, and focuses on people whose sacrifices, contributions and achievements against a backdrop of racism, inequality and injustice are often forgotten about. For information, including the full programme of events, see

<https://www.blackhistorymonthscotland.org/whats-on>

**** this week!**

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

6 October 2021 (online, 10.00–12.30)

12 January 2022 (online, 10.30–12.30)

2 March 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAiH training on 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 see <https://tinyurl.com/24ba4stk>

**** this week!**

Exploring my Leadership

6 October 2021 (online, 6.00–9.00)

7 October 2021 (online, 6.00–9.00)

15 October 2021 (online, 6.00–9.00)

18 October 2021 (online, 6.00–9.00)

19 October 2021 (online, 6.00–9.00)

Scottish Refugee Council/Scottish Enterprise Academy workshops to enable Scottish refugees to step forward as leaders for their communities and shape a new future. It will develop participant's leadership skills, support them gain the tools to have an impact on their community and offer a supportive opportunity to connect with peers. These training sessions will develop understanding of what leadership is and explore the kind of leader

participants want to become. For information see <https://your.socialenterprise.academy/course/view.php?id=706>

**** next week!**

Being a Black Woman in Society Today

12 October 2021 (online, 6.00–8.00)

Glasgow University Student of Colour Network panel discussion for Black History Month to explore identity, intersectionality and race. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2rv9j9vb>

**** next week!**

Know Your Rights: Hate Crime Workshop

13 October 2021 (online, 11.00–1.30)

Migrants' Rights Network workshop for migrants, caseworkers, charities, and others who want to learn how to better identify hate crime in their communities. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/u9xfxdby>

**** next week!**

New Scots Storytellers media training: Looking after yourself in the media

13 October 2021 (online, 12.00–2.00)

Scottish Refugee Council workshop for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland who are interested in speaking to the media – perhaps about the work of their community group or experience of living in Scotland. These workshops are an opportunity to practice skills, ask questions, meet new people, prepare for media interviews and find your story. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/pyebjp7w>

**** next week!**

Interpreting Culture – Improving Cross-Cultural Communication

14 October 2021 (online, 10.30-13.00)

Interfaith Scotland course to explore how culture forms a lens through which we interpret behaviour, and learn how to improve our inter-cultural communication. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/27mj9h3b> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** next week!**

Supporting Refugee Integration

14 and 15 October 2021 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

15 and 16 February 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

28 and 29 April 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

11 and 12 October 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

15 and 16 December 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day course to enable participants to understand the principles of a refugee-led integration framework, understand how dependency is created and how to build on people's resilience, and feel confident to facilitate refugee-led integration effectively. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/ukvn5rs5>

**** next week!**

Responding to and Reporting Racism in Football

15 October 2021 (Glasgow, 7.00–8.30)

Show Racism the Red Card event for Black History Month, with speakers from established Black-led amateur football teams to discuss historic and current racism in the grassroots game and approaches to tackling it. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3dywjbmw>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

20 October 2021 (online, 10.00–12.30)

19 January 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

9 March 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAiH 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 see <https://tinyurl.com/24ba4stk>

**** Clearing space, Building Resistance**

22 October 2021 (online, 6.00–8.00)

Black History Month talk by Gary Younge that reflects on the lack of established Black institutions in the UK and the impact this has on efforts to achieve racial equality. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/ju76v6rn>

Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement

26 and 27 October 2021 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

9 and 10 December 2021 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

3 and 4 February 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

29 and 30 March 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

16 and 17 June 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

6 and 7 September 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

27 and 28 October 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day course drawing on the experiences of people seeking asylum and people who have been resettled in the UK, to examine why people might need to flee their own country, how they seek asylum in the UK, and what opportunities exist for rebuilding their lives here in the UK. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/jd2tey6w>

No Recourse to Public Funds

27 October 2021 (online, 10.30–12.30)

26 January 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAiH workshop 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 see <https://tinyurl.com/24ba4stk>

**** New Scots Storytellers media training: Dealing with difficult questions**

27 October 2021 (online, 12.00–2.00)

Scottish Refugee Council workshop for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland who are interested in speaking to the media – perhaps about the work of their community group or experience of living in Scotland. These workshops are an opportunity to practice skills, ask questions, meet new people, prepare for media interviews and find your story. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/pyebjp7w>

Transparency and Trust

27 October 2021 (online, 1.00–2.00)

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator webinar to help charity trustees and advisors to charities think about what they can do to help boost public confidence in charities. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y99b8av3>

**** Respect & Recognition: The contributions of minoritised social workers**

27 October 2021 (online, 4.00–5.30)

University of Edinburgh Social Work Department and Scottish Association of Social Workers panel discussion for Black History Month to explore the contributions of social workers from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/9jmvdmdu>

Scottish Interfaith Week 2021

31 October to 7 November 2021 (Scotland-wide)

Scottish Interfaith Week will coincide with COP26 (United Nations Climate Change Conference 2021), and the theme for 2021 is Together for Our Planet. Event submissions are now open and can be registered on the [Scottish Interfaith Week website](#). Sign up to the [Scottish Interfaith Week newsletter](#) to receive updates.

New Scots Leadership Programme

Module 1: November 2021 (dates tbc) (online and face-to-face)

12 day leadership programme from the Scottish Refugee Council and Scottish Enterprise Academy to equip refugees living in the Glasgow area with practical skills to help them understand themselves better; lead, motivate and inspire others, and consider how they can take a more strategic approach to lead in their community, whether this is their community of refugees or the geographical communities that they find themselves in. For information see <https://your.socialenterprise.academy/course/view.php?id=710>

**** Scotland's Human Rights Report Card: Race and Human Rights**

8 November 2021 (online, 3.30–5.00)

Scottish Human Rights Commission workshop on Scotland's performance around race and human rights, to inform submissions to the UN Universal Periodic Review. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/56yfmzym>

**** New Scots Storytellers media training: Working with journalists**

10 November 2021 (online, 12.00–2.00)

Scottish Refugee Council workshop for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland who are interested in speaking to the media – perhaps about the work of their community group or experience of living in Scotland. These workshops are an opportunity to practice skills, ask questions, meet new people, prepare for media interviews and find your story. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/pyebjp7w>

3 Mottos For Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

17 November 2021 (online, 13.00–16.30)

Interfaith Scotland course considering diversity in its widest sense, looking at three models which provide insight on our experience of difference: the role of the dominant identity in shaping organisations; why some people overlook the disadvantages that others experience; and how to respond to misunderstandings or offence. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/b762err8> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Working with Interpreters

23 and 24 November 2021 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

15 and 16 March 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

27 and 28 September 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

24 and 25 November 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day courses to enable participants to understand the legal context and qualifications governing interpreters in the EU, UK and Scotland, know the different types of interpreting, identify the differences between an interpreter and a bi-lingual support worker, and who to use when, and recognise when it is inappropriate to use a family member, a friend or a community member to interpret. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/puykxxnu>

**** New Scots Storytellers media training: Representing your organisation/community**

24 November 2021 (online, 12.00–2.00)

Scottish Refugee Council workshop for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland who are

interested in speaking to the media – perhaps about the work of their community group or experience of living in Scotland. These workshops are an opportunity to practice skills, ask questions, meet new people, prepare for media interviews and find your story. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/pyebjp7w>

**** New Scots Storytellers media training: Mock interviews**

8 December 2021 (online, 12.00–2.00)

Scottish Refugee Council workshop for refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland who are interested in speaking to the media – perhaps about the work of their community group or experience of living in Scotland. These workshops are an opportunity to practice skills, ask questions, meet new people, prepare for media interviews and find your story. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/pyebjp7w>

Working With People From Diverse Religion & Belief Identities

14 December 2021 (online, 13.00–16.30)

Interfaith Scotland course on improving confidence in discussing and responding to the religion and belief of those we work with. The event will explore the core beliefs and cultural practices of the main faiths, and individual needs that may arise from a person's faith or belief identity. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/83rwadrb> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Working with Unaccompanied Refugee Children

21 and 22 April 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

10 and 11 November 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day course to enable participants to recognise the legal difference between children seeking asylum, children who have been trafficked, refugees and migrants, appreciate the journeys that children have made to be in the UK including being trafficked, understand the Age Assessment process, identify the rights and entitlements of separated children, and become familiar with the statutory responsibilities of the Scottish Guardianship Service. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3fedr5xn>

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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/disclosure-types>

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services

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

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

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*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** 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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