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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Children Refugees

Paul Sweeney (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports, following comments made by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons, that local authorities across the United Kingdom, including Scotland, will be obliged to accommodate the increasing number of unaccompanied children refugees crossing the English Channel.

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government (Shona Robison): The issue is of major concern to the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and local authorities. In July, the Home Secretary wrote to all local authorities asking for more placements to be made available, and Scotland answered that call by creating a Scottish rota,

which is supported by the vast majority of councils and COSLA. The rota has been in operation since October and is working well. It is ensuring that Scotland meets the targets that have been set by the Home Office, and does so in a manner that prioritises the welfare of children, supports their needs and provides them with the best possible chance to integrate into our society.

The proposals that have been set out by the UK Government are a retrograde step that will create needless bureaucracy and will do little to support the welfare and wellbeing of those highly vulnerable children. In a short call with the minister, I made my views known to the UK Government, which I will follow up in writing later today. I have spoken to COSLA, which is as concerned as I am about the way in which the matter has been badly handled by the UK Government.

Paul Sweeney: I thank the cabinet secretary for her response. I record my absolute disgust at the way in which those vulnerable people, many of whom are fleeing war and persecution, have been treated by the Conservative Government simply for seeking a safe place in which to live.

We are talking about unaccompanied children, so it is important to be clear on the detail. Therefore, I have a number of questions that I would like the cabinet secretary to answer, if she can. Will she provide details of how many local authorities across Scotland meet the requirements that have been set out by the Home Office in today's announcement? How many children are likely to be coming to Scotland, and how long does the Scottish Government envisage that they will be in Scotland?

What work is the Scottish Government doing to ensure that all local authorities have adequate provisions for the necessary safeguards for those children while they are in Scotland? What type of accommodation will they be living in? It surely cannot be the case that they will be put in hotels or unsupervised accommodation, so I would appreciate it if the cabinet secretary could at least explicitly rule that out.

Reply from Shona Robison: Paul Sweeney has raised a number of issues. One of the reasons for the rota was the recognition that some Scottish local authorities are very small and do not necessarily have the infrastructure to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, which would put at risk the support that such vulnerable children would have. Therefore, there are good reasons for having the rota, which was put together so that children arriving in Scotland go to the most appropriate place.

If the rota had been allowed to continue, 45 out of every 650 children arriving in the UK would have come to Scotland, which is one more than the UK Government is mandating Scotland to take. On my call yesterday, I was told that local authorities would be mandated to take 44 children. Therefore, we would already have been more than meeting the requirement, and doing so in a way that supports the children.

Since October, when participation by Scottish local authorities commenced, 19 placements have been made, which is in addition to the 22 children who arrived under the national transfer scheme between January and September. Furthermore, around 200 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are already cared for by Scottish local authorities.

The member asked about the type of accommodation that will be used, which is an important issue. The children will be here for a long time, so we want them to become settled and to be put in settled accommodation as quickly as possible. It is in no one's interests for people to stay in hotels—we recognise the challenges of that. The Scottish rota is so important because it is the best way of ensuring that appropriate accommodation is made available for the children who arrive here.

Paul Sweeney: I thank the cabinet secretary for that response—in particular, for the detail on the Scottish rota. I would appreciate it if additional information about that could be provided in writing.

It is right that Scottish local authorities are providing accommodation for the children. I sincerely hope that the Scottish Government will do everything that it can to ensure that, during their time in Scotland, they are treated with the dignity, care and compassion that they so clearly need. After all, those children have seen unimaginable horror. I want to ask about funding. Although it is right that all local authorities play their part through the rota system, they are cash strapped. To be frank, they do not have the money to top up the £143 that the UK Government is making available for each child per night. Will the cabinet secretary confirm that the Scottish Government will, regardless of the cost, provide any additional funding that local authorities require, on top of the specified £143? This is about making sure that the kids are safe, and we cannot put a price on that. I strongly urge the Scottish Government to show compassion and to make that commitment here and now, because it is certainly not something that we will see from the Conservatives.

Reply from Shona Robison: First of all, we share COSLA's and local government's concern that the national transfer scheme constitutes a new financial responsibility on local authorities, so the first call is on the UK Government to provide the additional funding that is required.

The higher daily rate of £143 for funding contributions to local authorities applies to children who are transferring through the national transfer scheme. That is a small step in acknowledging some of the costs. However, the money is available only once the child is in the care of a local authority, so it does not recognise the steps that a local authority requires to take in advance of providing a placement.

The Scottish Government has already provided half a million pounds to local authorities to help with care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are arriving in Scotland. We will continue to speak with local authorities and COSLA about that. However, as I said, the first call is on the UK Government to step up and meet the full costs. ...

Miles Briggs (Conservative): Some 7,900 children in Scotland are in temporary accommodation, which is a 9 per cent increase from 2019. Seven councils are saying that they are likely to breach the Scottish Government's unsuitable accommodation order. What support will the Government provide in that regard?

Also, I do not think that we heard an answer to Paul Sweeney's question about whether hotels will be part of the accommodation that is used for unaccompanied children.

Reply from Shona Robison: There have been a number of pressures on temporary accommodation, not least of which has been Covid, which has seen temporary accommodation usage increase, for understandable reasons. We are working with local authorities to address the unsuitable accommodation order issues, as the member is aware.

We want children to be in accommodation that is suitable for children. Perhaps the member's first port of call should be his colleagues in the UK Government, in order to tell them that we have in Scotland a system that is made for the needs of Scotland in receiving children who need to be supported because they are very vulnerable.

All that we are asking the Home Office is that it allow the Scottish rota to continue. We play our part, and we will take our share of those very vulnerable children, but I ask the Home Office, please, to let us do that in a managed and proper way, rather than in the way that it says it will do it, which in theory could mean children being passed from one local authority to another around Scotland. We do not want that to happen, so I hope that the member will support us in lobbying the Home Office to do the right thing.

Kaukab Stewart (SNP): I was shocked to hear the comments of the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, that Scotland has not played its part in asylum dispersal, when this country has a proud record of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers. Does the cabinet secretary

agree that the Home Secretary must apologise for that misleading claim? Does the cabinet secretary also believe that asylum dispersal involving both children and adults must be done in a humane and dignified way and with the proper funding from the Home Office to provide the vital support that people need?

Reply from Shona Robison: Yes, I agree. I am struggling to understand the Home Secretary's remarks yesterday, which are extremely disappointing. Over the years, we have constantly made that point to the UK Government, but it has fallen on deaf ears. Scotland has more than played its part. Of all authorities in the UK, Glasgow City Council takes the most asylum seekers as part of the dispersal programme. Therefore, the comments that the Home Secretary made are not correct and do a great disservice to local authorities and the efforts that they are making.

Most of all, the comments attempt to use asylum-seeking children, and asylum seekers more generally, as something of a political football, and to attack the Scottish Government. The issue is too important for that. We want to reach a sensible agreement with the UK Government and the Home Office. My plea to them is that they listen not just to what the Scottish Government is saying but to what local authorities are saying. We want to give asylum-seeking children in particular the best support. I ask the UK Government to allow us, please, to provide support in a way that we know will work best for those children.

Maggie Chapman (Green): I thank Paul Sweeney for raising this important issue, and for highlighting the human rights that are at stake and the appalling approach that the UK Government has taken. What, if any, role will the Scottish guardianship service have in the process? What can we do to support local authorities to work with the third sector, which has been working in the area for many years? What, if anything, can we do with our limited powers to ensure that children are not separated from their families in the first place?

Reply from Shona Robison: I will write to Maggie Chapman on the specific point about the Scottish guardianship service. The third sector more generally has always been important for asylum seekers and refugees. It is through the third sector that they receive most of their support; we are keen to support the third sector in that. Yesterday, in response to the Home Secretary's comments, some strong voices from the third sector portrayed the Home Secretary as not giving a proper account of the experience of asylum seekers who come to Scotland. The third sector is pretty clear in its views on the matter.

I will write to the member on the specifics of her question.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13424>

English Channel (Deaths)

Elena Whitham (SNP): In light of the appalling loss of life off the coast of France yesterday, will the First Minister make the strongest possible representations to the United Kingdom Government to do whatever is required to prevent such needless tragedies from happening again?

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I take the opportunity to express my deepest sympathies at the loss of 27 lives in the English Channel yesterday. It was a tragic and shocking loss that will be felt deeply not just here in the UK but across the world. Those seeking refuge are human beings. They are driven out of desperation into boats crossing the channel and by a lack of humanitarian alternative routes.

I believe that it is important that those issues are addressed and done so with the needs of human beings in mind. We should be working together to ensure that those seeking refuge get protection from exploitation rather than punishment or criminalisation. They need rescue, not diversion back into treacherous waters. Scottish ministers have repeatedly called for a much more humane approach to asylum, and we will continue to do so in the wake of this dreadful tragedy.

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

COVID-19 Vaccination Status: Asylum

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-03695] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will allow professionals who support people seeking asylum to request proof of COVID-19 vaccination status on behalf of their clients.

Reply from Humza Yousaf: A representative may support someone with the process of accessing proof of COVID-19 vaccination status. However, the person requiring a certificate will ultimately need to confirm their identification either via the App or by calling the Covid Status Helpline on 0808 196 8565.

To support accessibility, we have created Easy Read, Audio and British Sign Language versions of the guidance explaining what information the Certificates contain and how to use them. These can be found on NHS Inform. Translations of the guidance into community languages have now been completed and are available.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-03695>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Pauline McNeill (Labour) [S6M-02199] **Concerns Over the Running of the Dungavel Detention Centre** – That the Parliament notes with concern some of the findings of a recent HMIP report on conditions at the Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre; understands that, according to the report, some women held at the centre, which is understood to predominantly house men, have expressed feeling unsafe at the Centre and that men with a history of sexual violence were no longer being held in a separate unit; further understands that many detainees have been held at the Centre for up to a year with no indication of when they will be removed and that some detainees, who had been granted bail, reportedly remained in the Centre due to a lack of available bail accommodation; considers that other areas of concern include reports of detainees arriving at the Centre at night, sometimes after lengthy journeys, of people who have remained in detention despite it being believed to be the case that they were the victims of torture in their country of origin, of some security arrangements being disproportionate and of unnecessary room searches being carried out; believes that conditions at the Centre should represent how Scotland as a country wishes to conduct itself when processing asylum seekers; further believes that MSPs should have the right to make welfare visits to the Centre, and calls on the UK Government to address the concerns raised in this report to improve the conditions at the Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-02199>

UK Parliament Debate

Migrants

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-11-25/debates/9FD5AE92-CEDB-4179-99FB-0D4DBE0A671E/Migrants>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre for Women

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel) [HCWS411] I am today announcing the opening of Derwentside immigration removal centre for women in County Durham. Detention plays a limited, but crucial role in maintaining effective immigration control and securing our borders. It is right that those with no right to remain in the UK are removed if they do not leave voluntarily.

This new, smaller immigration removal centre will replace Yarl's Wood as the only dedicated immigration removal centre for women. In order to maintain operational flexibility, we will continue to maintain some limited detention capacity for women at Colnbrook, Dungavel and Yarl's Wood. These changes will significantly reduce the overall immigration detention capacity for women.

Derwentside will be operated in line with the statutory framework established by the Immigration Act 1971 and the Detention Centre Rules 2001. The centre will provide safe, secure and fit for purpose accommodation for up to 84 women, with a full range of recreational and healthcare facilities tailored to women.

We are committed to ensuring the proper protection and treatment of vulnerable people in detention. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of women is at the forefront of the new facility, and builds on the learning and experience of Yarl's Wood. The new contract to operate the centre takes into account Stephen Shaw's reviews of vulnerability in detention, with increased staffing levels and major improvements in the frequency, diversity and accessibility of educational and recreational activities.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-23/debates/2111237000010/DerwentsideImmigrationRemovalCentreForWomen>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

English Channel Small Boats Incident

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): ... I would like to make a statement about the tragic drownings that took place in the channel yesterday. At least 27 people lost their lives. I know the whole House will join me in expressing our profound sorrow. Our thoughts are with the loved ones of those who have died, and with those who responded to that extremely distressing event.

Information is still being gathered about the situation in France as it becomes clearer. The Prime Minister chaired an emergency Cobra meeting last night and then spoke to the President of France. I am glad that President Macron indicated his determination to stop the vile people-smuggling gangs and, importantly, to work closely with all partners across Europe.

I have just spoken again with my French counterpart, Minister Darmanin. I once again reached out and made my offer very clear to France on joint France-UK co-operation and joint patrols to prevent these dangerous journeys from taking place. I have offered to work with France to put more officers on the ground and to do absolutely whatever is necessary to secure the area so that vulnerable people do not risk their lives by getting into unseaworthy boats.

There is a global illegal migration crisis. I have stated many times that these journeys across the channel are absolutely unnecessary, but as I have been warning for two years, they are also lethally dangerous. What happened yesterday was a dreadful shock. It was not a surprise, but it is a reminder of how vulnerable people are put at peril when in the hands of criminal gangs.

There is no quick fix. This is about addressing long-term pull factors, smashing the criminal gangs that treat human beings as cargo, and tackling supply chains. That requires a co-

ordinated international effort, and I have been in constant contact with my counterparts from France, Poland, Austria, Belgium, Italy and Greece, to name just a few. Due to the nature of the crisis and the fact that there are 80 million displaced people in the world, this was a major theme of discussion at the meeting of G7 Interior Ministers back in September. We are also seeing it play out on several land borders in Europe and in the Mediterranean sea.

Given the chance, the traffickers will always find people to exploit and manipulate, some of whom do not even know they are coming to the UK. That means tackling issues upstream and not waiting until people have reached EU countries. I have always been extremely clear that I want to co-operate—and am co-operating—with international colleagues.

The United Kingdom has given its unflinching and generous support to France to end this terrible trade in people smuggling. We are working to end these crossings not because we do not care and we are heartless; the United Kingdom has a clear, generous and humane approach to asylum seekers and refugees. Yes, people should come here legally and the system must be fair, but the main issue is this: crossing the channel in small boats is extremely dangerous. Yesterday was the moment that many of us had feared for many years.

The criminals who facilitate these journeys are motivated by self-interest and profit, not by compassion. They threaten, intimidate, bully and assault the people who get into these boats, and they have an absolute disregard for human life. They use the money they make for other heinous crimes. We simply have to break their business model and, of course, bring them to justice.

The Government's new plan for immigration, which will be put into law through the Nationality and Borders Bill, is a longer-term solution that will address many of these underlying factors to deter illegal migration and address underlying pull factors in the UK's asylum system. It will bring in a range of measures, including a one-stop appeals process; the ability to process claims outside the country; the ability to have differentiation and declare inadmissible to our asylum system those who arrive in the UK having passed through safe countries; and life sentences for people smugglers. People should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach, and nobody needs to flee France in order to be safe.

However, we are not waiting until the Nationality and Borders Bill passes; we are undertaking a wide range of operational and diplomatic work. I have already approved maritime tactics, including boat turnarounds, for Border Force to deploy. The Government, the police and the National Crime Agency are taking action at every level to take down the people-smuggling gangs. Once again, however, we cannot do it alone.

We continue to work closely with the French to prevent crossings. More than 20,000 have been stopped this year—all Members should recognise the magnitude and the scale of the illegal migration crisis that we are seeing. We have dismantled 17 organised criminal groups and secured over 400 arrests and 65 convictions. But this crisis continues, clearly demonstrating that we need to do more, together.

This is a complicated issue and there is no simple fix. It means a herculean effort, and it will be impossible without close co-operation between all international partners and agencies. I urge colleagues to reconsider their opposition to the Nationality and Borders Bill, because it is an essential element in finding a long-term solution to a long-term problem that successive Governments have faced over decades.

As we mourn those who have died in the most horrendous of circumstances, I hope that the whole House can come together to send a clear message that crossing the channel in this lethal way—in a small boat—is not the way to come to our country. It is of course unnecessary, illegal and desperately unsafe. ...

Nick Thomas-Symonds (Labour): ... Yesterday's human tragedy in the channel was the most awful of reminders of the dangers of crossing the channel, and that people's lives

are at risk every day in these makeshift, flimsy small boats. It is a sobering moment for our country, for France and for the international community.

We understand that at least 27 people have died, with some reports that that includes seven women and three children. Across the House, we think of those lost and of their loved ones left behind. We think, too, of those who have been rescued and are receiving medical treatment, fighting for their lives. I pay tribute to all those involved in the joint French-British search-and-rescue operation in the air and on the sea—people putting themselves in danger to help others.

I understand that there have been arrests in France of those suspected of this vile crime of people smuggling. I appreciate very much the difficulties and sensitivities when there is an ongoing legal case, particularly in another jurisdiction, and I further appreciate that it is at a very early stage. However, I would be grateful if the Home Secretary could give the House an update on possible timings for the legal case and reassure the House that Britain will give all co-operation that is required by the prosecuting authorities in France. Will that full co-operation extend not only to this tragic case but to all ongoing prosecutions where we can make an intelligence contribution?

I have raised on a number of occasions the arrangements we have in place with the French authorities. Will the Home Secretary set out how many days a week the full existing surveillance capacity is currently operating? What will she do urgently to increase that surveillance?

I pay tribute to the National Crime Agency and our frontline law enforcement officers for the work that they do. I heard what the Home Secretary said about law enforcement co-operation, but will she also tell the House what she will do to deepen that intelligence and law enforcement co-operation with the French authorities, and indeed with other countries, so that the focus is not only on coastal patrols, important though they are, but on disrupting the routes facilitated, often across hundreds and thousands of miles, by vile people-smuggling gangs with reckless disregard for human life?

May I also press the Home Secretary on properly managed safe and legal routes? Let me ask specifically about the Dubs scheme, which was closed down, having helped only 480 unaccompanied children, rather than the 3,000 it was expected to help. Will that scheme be urgently reinstated?

The Government have also announced the Afghanistan resettlement scheme. ... However, the Government now need to set out how, practically, they will make good on their promise to help a total of 20,000 people. We are some months on, and we need an urgent update on that.

Then there is the UK resettlement scheme, which was announced in February this year. The Government have released the statistics on that today. They show that, in its first year, only 770 people have been helped by the scheme. Taken with the other schemes, only 1,171 people had been helped to the end of September, when the promise from the Home Office was to help 5,000 people in the scheme's first year. What will be done to make good on that promise? What urgent action will be taken to help those most in need?

The Home Secretary mentioned the Nationality and Borders Bill, but she knows that the Opposition will not support a Bill that breaches the refugee convention and damages our standing around the world. Indeed, she has spoken today of a worldwide migration crisis. Will Ministers revisit their decision to cut the international aid budget, and lead on the international stage to help those fleeing persecution around the world?

Yesterday's terrible tragedy must be a moment for change. The time for urgent action to save lives is now.

Reply from Priti Patel: ... officers from Border Force and UK law enforcement are working in conjunction with the National Crime Agency and their French counterparts every day in some of the most appalling conditions. ... I have specifically mentioned the weaponising of illegal migration: the fact that women, children and even babies are being threatened and forced into the most appalling,

unseaworthy vessels. Officers in France have been physically attacked and injured. Our Border Force patrols and officers deal with many harrowing scenes every single day, so on that point I very much support and commend the work our people do. It is difficult work. ...

Surveillance capability is stood up every day and is dependent fundamentally on, for example, weather and whether planes and drones can fly. ...

On intelligence co-operation, their laws are different to our laws, and their prosecution powers differ to our prosecution powers. ...

The prosecutions that have taken place are very significant. Prosecution pathways in France differ to prosecution pathways in the United Kingdom. We share across different jurisdictions information about individuals who have been arrested, ... Resettlement is a fundamental pillar of this Government's work. ... Resettlement rights have been limited because of the pandemic, but we are committed and are working to resettle in the way that we have committed to do so. That links to the Afghanistan resettlement scheme, in addition to the 15,000 people evacuated under Operation Pitting. I have also publicly said that we can resettle only once we have the ability and the infrastructure to create resettlement pathways so that we do not just bring people here and let them lead an inadequate life. They need to rebuild their lives.

The right hon. Gentleman mentioned the Dubs scheme. I have actually put an offer on the table, not for the first time, to the French Government today on a returns agreement, looking in particular at family reunion children. ...

Martyn Day (SNP): This is a devastating tragedy and our thoughts are with those who have lost their lives, together with their friends and families. ...

I agree that greater co-operation to tackle the dreadful, criminal, people-smuggling gangs is required. However, this awful event should also signal a massive shift in approach towards the provision of safe legal routes to the UK, not doubling down on criminalising those who are the victims, if they get here, with up to four years in prison.

The Government's refugee family reunion rules are among the most restrictive in Europe. The Dubs scheme was closed and Brexit means that the so-called Dublin family reunion applications are no longer possible. Resettlement schemes are in limbo. The Nationality and Borders Bill will restrict family reunion rights even further, meaning that more people will feel compelled to make dangerous journeys to join loved ones. The reality is that offshoring is a disgrace. Will the Home Secretary publish the economic impact assessment for the Bill, which presumably confirms that it will waste billions of pounds and not work? Instead of blocking and closing down safe routes, we should be expanding them.

My question is quite simple: will the right hon. Lady commit to ending all discussion of the UK using dangerous and life-threatening push-back tactics in the channel? The Prime Minister said yesterday that all options were on the table in addressing this crisis. Will she confirm that they include looking at the one measure that would make an immediate difference, allowing refugees and asylum seekers to make their initial application from outside the UK, rather than forcing people to physically travel here to begin their applications?

Reply from Priti Patel: ... First, if the hon. Gentleman thinks there is a simple solution, I will restate for him that there is no simple solution. If he thinks that settlement schemes that have existed previously are the answer, I can tell him that they are not. If he has bothered to read the Nationality and Borders Bill, he should also look at the new plan for immigration and, importantly, at some of the wider reforms that are required to our asylum system, so that it becomes fit for purpose and meets the needs of people who are claiming asylum, and so that we have a differentiated approach to stop economic migrants masquerading as asylum seekers and elbowing women and children who need help and support out of the way. That is effectively what is happening right now.

This is about safe and legal routes—absolutely. ... the very purpose of safe and legal routes is to create the right kind of resettlement paths for people who are fleeing persecution and oppression in countries for a whole host of reasons. The world is changing and there is a great deal of instability out there. In doing so, we will create a legal path for them to make their claim from outside the United Kingdom, so that they will not have to come here to do so, and we will ensure that when they come here, they are supported in the right way in terms of accommodation and resettlement so that they can start their new life in the United Kingdom. That is exactly how safe and legal routes should work. That is why I am working with the International Organisation for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners on that. ...

It is such a shame actually, that once again, the Scottish National party, which has failed to support asylum seekers in its own local authorities—31 out of 32 local authorities have not even—*[Interruption.]* SNP Members might sit there and yell, “Shame!” at me, but 31 out of 32 of its local authorities do not participate in the voluntary dispersal scheme for housing and asylum seekers. There is an inconsistency in their approach. I absolutely agree about the need for safe and legal routes. This Government will do that properly. We recognise the type of instability, uncertainty, persecution and oppression experienced by people who need and should be claiming asylum in our country, but who are currently not getting it, and we will change that. ...

Edward Leigh (Conservative): What an appalling and entirely foreseeable tragedy. ... We cannot wait on the French co-operating and taking these poor people back, as they should. We have to act now in a national emergency to save lives. There are only two countries in the world that have solved this problem: Australia, which has an offshore processing centre, and Greece, which does push-back. We have to be tough. We have to face down the human rights lawyers. If Governments are weak, people die. ...

Reply from Priti Patel: I have been very clear—I know that this does upset some right hon. and hon. Members—that I have not ruled anything out. I put every option on the table, not just with France, by the way, but with other counterparts. For push-backs, Greece uses special forces, their military, the Hellenic coastguard and Frontex, just for the record—as I said, I have seen that. It also has a programme of reception centres. As my right hon. Friend will know, that is part of the new plan for immigration in terms of how we have differentiation, deal with the reform of the asylum system and make progress on casework.

The fact is that there is no one-silver-bullet solution to this. I know that my right hon. Friend and my colleagues understand that. That is why the new plan for immigration and the Nationality and Borders Bill are important. All colleagues will hear shortly about the Bill coming back on Report and its next stages. It is an important piece of legislation because it will set the direction of travel. Importantly, it will give the Government more powers to be much firmer and end many of the pull factors that have existed for too long and have actually helped to facilitate and encourage illegal migration. ...

To read this very lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-25/debates/68AB08E2-DD41-4674-B7B1-602A7375524F/EnglishChannelSmallBoatsIncident>

Channel Crossings in Small Boats

... **The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):** The number of people coming into our country illegally on small boats is unacceptable. It is the result of a global migration crisis. Just last week, I met my counterparts in the US, who are grappling with similar diplomatic, legal, legislative and operational issues. It is fair to say that in all my dialogues with counterparts and Interior Ministers, including the Polish Interior Minister this

morning, similar feedback is taking place across the board.

We would be in a much worse position if it were not for the work already undertaken by the Government. We have ensured that the National Crime Agency has the resourcing it needs to tackle and go after the people-smuggling gangs, resulting in 94 ongoing investigations, 46 arrests and eight convictions this year. We have also: reached two new deals with France, putting more police officers on French beaches and introducing new groundbreaking technology to better detect migrants; set up a joint intelligence cell with France to target migrant interceptions on French beaches; introduced new and tougher criminal offences for those attempting to enter the UK illegally; laid statutory instruments to stop asylum claims being made at sea; and agreed returns deals with India and Albania—and had discussions just last week with Pakistan—to take back more foreign national offenders and failed asylum seekers, with more returns deals imminent.

All these measures form part of the new plan for immigration, which I launched in this House in February this year. The remaining components of that plan are currently making their way through Parliament in the Nationality and Borders Bill, and I look forward to working with all colleagues to ensure that it receives Royal Assent as soon as possible. The Bill introduces a range of measures, including but not limited to: a one-stop appeals process; the ability for asylum claims to be heard offshore in a third country; the ability to declare those who arrive in the UK having passed through safe countries where they could have claimed asylum inadmissible to our asylum system, meaning no recourse to public funds and limited family reunion rights; visa penalties for countries refusing to take back their nationals; quicker returns of foreign national offenders; and a new age verification to prevent adult asylum seekers from posing as children.

If any hon. or right hon. Members have concrete proposals that are not already featured in the new plan for immigration, I would be happy to meet to discuss them. My door is always open, particularly to those from the Opposition Benches because of course they attack the new plan for immigration. They have not supported it and they voted against it, not because they are genuinely frustrated at the number of illegal migrants entering our country, as those on this side of the House and the British public are, but because they will always stand up for unlimited migration and free movement. They have always said that and always will do. That is why they have voted against the new plan to tackle crossings, with the right hon. Member for Torfaen (Nick Thomas-Symonds) opposing the development of operational solutions to turn back the boats. He even refuses to say if his ambition is to reduce the number of illegal migrants coming here. Can he do so today?

Those on the Government Benches will continue to confront this difficult and complex issue, no matter how controversial or complex others may deem it to be. We will find legislative and operational solutions, and we will treat this with the same grit and determination with which we have treated all the other challenges our country has faced, including leaving the European Union and delivering a points-based immigration system. Let me restate, as I did in February and have done repeatedly, that this will take time. The only solution to this problem is wholesale reform of our asylum system, which the new plan delivers.

Nick Thomas-Symonds (Labour): Some 25,700 people have risked their lives in these most dangerous shipping lanes this year alone. As the Home Secretary knows, the Government have already spent more than £200 million of taxpayers' money on deals with the French authorities that are not working. The situation is getting worse. Will the Government commit to transparency on how the money is spent?

On 9 August, I asked the Home Office to facilitate a visit for me to Calais so that I could scrutinise what the money was being spent on. I eventually had a response last month from the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, the hon. Member for Corby (Tom Pursglove), referring me to the Foreign Office. I still have no substantive response. What do Ministers have to hide? I am conscious that I am being challenged about our position on the Nationality and Borders Bill, so let me make it absolutely clear: a Bill that

breaches the refugee convention, that reduces protections for victims of modern slavery and that will not help the situation in the channel is not worthy of the Opposition's support. The Home Secretary has repeatedly made pledges that the route across the channel will be made unviable, but, as usual with this Government, it is all empty rhetoric and broken promises. The Home Secretary has blamed everyone but herself, and now we know that the Minister for the Cabinet Office, the right hon. Member for North East Cambridgeshire (Steve Barclay) has been brought in to look at this. Can we have some clarity from the Government? Who is actually in charge of immigration policy? Is it the Home Secretary or the Cabinet Office? Is not the fact that another Cabinet Minister has had to be brought in evidence that the Home Secretary has lost control of this dangerous situation?

Reply from Priti Patel: ... There is no single solution to fixing a global migration crisis. He speaks about a visit to Calais; from my last record, the United Kingdom is not responsible for visits to Calais, but I will happily take him to some of our processing sites around the country.

However, let us be very clear. The right hon. Gentleman has stated yet again that his party will not support the new plan for immigration or the Nationality and Borders Bill, which is the long-term solution to breaking the model, to reforming the asylum system, to deterring illegal migration and to addressing the underlying pull factors of the UK's asylum system. It will introduce a one-stop appeals process, which clearly he and his party are against; it will ensure that asylum claims can be heard offshore in a third country and it will ensure that those individuals who come to our country not as genuine asylum seekers, but as economic migrants, can claim asylum in first safe countries. That is on top of a raft of operational and diplomatic work that is taking place—not just in France, by the way, but in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Greece and Italy. We still speak to our European counterparts, and it is important that the Labour party acknowledges that Interior Ministers collectively have recognised a global migration problem.

I have said from the outset that this problem will take time to fix and that there is no silver bullet. The only solution is wholesale reform of our asylum system. Labour has consistently voted against the plan to do that. Instead of making practical suggestions, the Opposition are totally divorced from reality. They do not have a viable plan. The right hon. Gentleman constantly says that I should deepen my co-operation with France, while also criticising the Government for giving money to France to patrol its beaches. He has suggested the problem is down to reduced aid—failing to note that France is not a recipient of UK aid.

All the while the Nationality and Borders Bill is in Committee in the Commons, yet the Labour party continues to defend the rights of foreign national offenders, including murderers, rapists and those involved in the drugs trade—criminals, Mr Speaker. Labour has objected to provisions designed to prevent late submissions of evidence used to block removals of the very people we are trying to remove from our country, as well as to the one-stop-shop appeals process; it has opposed measures to tighten up immigration bail and to stop illegal migrants absconding. I come back to my opening remarks: we have a long-term plan to address these issues, while the Labour party will do everything possible to stop that plan from coming together.

John Redwood (Conservative): What is the Home Secretary's message to someone thinking of undertaking one of these illegal journeys, at great cost, as to why they should not take that risk and why it will not work?

Reply from Priti Patel: This is why we are bringing in new legislation. These individuals are putting their lives at risk and putting their lives in the hands of people smugglers. I come back to the work we are doing with the National Crime Agency, which has the resources and is going after the gangs, resulting in 94 ongoing investigations, 46 arrests and convictions—the last conviction was made last week,

of an Albanian people smuggler.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): Nobody wants to see people risking their lives in crossing the channel, but it is time for the Government to swap sensationalist rhetoric and barbaric Bills for evidence-based policy. The fact is that a significant majority of these people are likely refugees—Home Office officials have previously acknowledged that and so should the Home Secretary. Regardless of whether they are or not, these people should be treated decently and fairly, not criminalised, offshored or warehoused. The Home Secretary's Bill is picking on asylum seekers instead of people smugglers—it is desperate stuff. There is no silver bullet, but we need co-operation with our neighbours to tackle smugglers and a two-way transfer agreement that allows for families to be reunited here, as well as for removals, where appropriate and lawful. In other words, we need to fix the problems that Brexit has caused. The Brexiteers have made their bed and they should lie in it. The Government cannot legislate their way out of this. We know already that inadmissibility rules have made things worse, not better. We know that offshoring will cost a fortune, will not work, and will destroy lives and any credibility that the UK has left ...

So it is time for the Government to ditch the criminalisation and the other cloud cuckoo policies that the Home Secretary's own civil servants are criticising, and start working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the independent inspector of borders, with their real-world, evidence-based and lawful recommendations.

Reply from Priti Patel: I am going to restate that the Nationality and Borders Bill, which is going through Parliament, will make life harder for the criminal gangs behind these crossings—all Members should be supporting that. It means that people smugglers could face a life behind bars, and the hon. Gentleman should be supporting that. We will strengthen Border Force's powers to stop and redirect vessels and to search shipping containers to ensure that migrants are not being smuggled. Importantly, this will break the deadly business models of these smugglers. In addition, we want to make sure that the UK is less attractive to illegal migrants. He claims that all the people coming to the UK are genuine asylum seekers, but they are not, and the evidence shows that. Even the authorities in France say that 70% of people crossing the channel and entering France, and northern France in particular, are single men and they are economic migrants. ...

To read this very lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-22/debates/69973F3C-2383-4C12-AB0D-6BA1EBEDB7F8/ChannelCrossingsInSmallBoats>

Channel Crossings

Edward Leigh (Conservative): What progress [the Minister's] Department has made on tackling illegal migrant channel crossings. (904264)

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): The UK Government are addressing the challenge of illegal migration for the first time in decades through comprehensive reform to break the entire business model of people smuggling. For the first time, whether someone enters the UK legally or illegally will have an impact on how their asylum claim is processed and on their status in the UK if that claim is successful.

Edward Leigh: At the referendum, us Brexiteers told the people that we would take back control. It is clear that, in this aspect, we have lost control. If we tell the most desperate economic migrants in the world, "We will provide a free border taxi service across the channel, we will never deport you and we will put you up in a hotel for as long as you like", is it any wonder that more and more come? This is now a national emergency. Will the Home Secretary introduce an emergency powers Act to override the Human Rights Act, if necessary, and put people in secure accommodation now? Otherwise, we will not solve the problem.

Reply from Priti Patel: My right hon. Friend will be well versed in the work that we

are doing through the Nationality and Borders Bill, which speaks to the points that he has been making about asylum, processing, deportation and fast-track removals, and which, importantly, will ensure that we break the business model of traffickers who are smuggling people into the United Kingdom. ...

As I was saying, the new plan for immigration and the Nationality and Borders Bill are pivotal to the comprehensive reform of the entire system. There is no single solution, which is why the Bill is so important. I know that all hon. Members on the Government Benches will back the Bill, in stark contrast with those on the Opposition Benches.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-22/debates/793BFF21-420F-427E-9C95-E86086B20463/ChannelCrossings>

Channel Crossings

Philip Hollobone (Conservative): What steps [the Minister] is taking to (a) prevent and (b) speed up the removal of illegal migrants using small boats to cross the channel; and what recent representations she has made to her French counterpart on intercepting attempted small boat crossings. (904282)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Tom Pursglove): Our Nationality and Borders Bill sets out comprehensive measures to deter illegal crossings, tackle the criminal gangs responsible and protect lives. We are using all available options to bring crossing numbers down. The Home Secretary and the French Interior Minister agreed to accelerate the delivery of their joint determination to prevent all crossings and make this deadly route unviable.

Philip Hollobone: Given that we have given tens of millions of pounds to the French, including in night-vision equipment, automatic number plate recognition technology and access to drones, is it not completely disgraceful for large groups of French police to be pictured on the beaches in France waving large boats of migrants across the channel, as we have seen in recent days? If we are giving the French this money, please can we insist that they use it to stop this illegal flow?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: ... The Home Secretary had a constructive conversation last week with the French Interior Minister. He has repeatedly said that the determination is to stop 100% of these crossings. We entirely support that endeavour, and we must work towards that end. Clearly, the policing response on French beaches is integral to that, but it is also welcome that, for example, there has been a greater effort to disband some of the camps that we have seen around beaches.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-22/debates/58B8E0F6-31D1-470F-8726-61D519B63662/ChannelCrossings>

Refugees: UK Resettlement Scheme

Munira Wilson (Liberal Democrat): What progress [the Minister] has made on resettling refugees under the UK resettlement scheme. (904277)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): We have been welcoming refugees through the UK resettlement scheme since its launch in March 2021. That commitment will ensure that we continue to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for vulnerable refugees in need of protection, with our focus firmly on helping people from regions of conflict and instability directly.

Munira Wilson: I am proud that Liberal Democrat-run Richmond Council, and many of my constituents, stated early during the Afghan crisis that refugees are welcome in our borough, and that they would work hard to support and rehouse those evacuated. Over the past few weeks some £6,500 has been spent on family homes for evacuees from

Afghanistan, but as yet no families have been resettled in those homes. Not only is that a waste of taxpayers' money, but presumably there are many families in unsuitable hotel accommodation. What is the Minister doing to ensure that families who have been evacuated will be resettled quickly where accommodation is available?

Reply from Kevin Foster: ... Work is being done across the Government to support those who arrived as part of the emergency evacuation back in August, and those who will arrive under the resettlement scheme, to ensure they can be housed quickly.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-22/debates/3F900D37-6D35-44F3-84B7-C62640D47A53/RefugeesUKResettlementScheme>

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme

Helen Hayes (Labour): What progress [the Minister] has made on the implementation of the Afghan citizens resettlement

Reply from the Minister for Afghan Resettlement (Victoria Atkins): Through the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme, the UK will relocate up to 20,000 at-risk people in the coming years. We are working urgently across Government and with partners such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to design the scheme. We continue to support the thousands of people successfully evacuated from Afghanistan under Operation Pitting, and we will continue to support those who come under the scheme when it opens.

Helen Hayes: It is now almost exactly three months since Operation Pitting came to an end. My constituent continues to update me on the situation facing her brother, who is in hiding in Afghanistan with his wife, mother and three small children. Since the evacuation ended, they have lost an uncle and a cousin, both murdered by the Taliban, and they have received numerous threatening messages. They live in daily fear for their lives, yet the Government will not issue papers to give them the best chance of safe passage to the UK via a third country. Does the Minister have any regret that we are three months on and the scheme has not yet opened? When will she give some hope to people in such desperate circumstances as my constituent's family?

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The hon. Lady has articulated the real dangers that many are facing in Afghanistan; I think we can all agree on that. The reality is, however, that the ever-changing security situation in Afghanistan means that we still have no UK consular presence or Army presence there. That is something that we and other countries around the world that are trying to help Afghan people are having to grapple with. We are working at pace and we want to set the scheme up as an example of a safe and legal route under the Government's new plan for immigration.

Bambos Charalambous (Labour): Since mid-August, Germany, a country that has not had the military and overall engagement of the UK in Afghanistan, has flown more than 6,000 Afghans to Germany and provided them with protected status under its humanitarian admission programme. Can the Minister tell me what conversations she has had with counterparts in the European countries running such schemes to help to enable the quicker opening of the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme? There is a real risk that the people whom the scheme is intended to help will die before it becomes operational.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: I know the hon. Gentleman well, and I know that he will not have overlooked the 15,000 people whom we evacuated during the emergency conditions of Operation Pitting. Of course, there are still agreements carrying on with third-party countries for evacuating people—where it is safe to do so, where checks have been conducted and so on—each and every week. Not only do we have the ACRS in the process of being built, but we are meeting our commitment to those who have worked with the UK Government and the UK Army under the Afghan relocations and assistance policy, so work is ongoing to protect

people. We are working with international partners; indeed, I met the German delegation during the Conservative party conference to discuss with them the work the Germans are doing. However, we are very much in the hands of our international partners when it comes to opening up safe and legal routes through Afghanistan to us.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-22/debates/A16BFC81-38DF-4781-8872-814F59DDE472/AfghanCitizensResettlementScheme>

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

Removal of Illegal Migrants

Tom Hunt (Conservative): What steps [the Minister] is taking to speed up the removal of illegal migrants. (904278)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Tom Pursglove): Our new plan for immigration makes it easier to remove illegal migrants who have no right to be here. The one-stop process that we are introducing through the Nationality and Borders Bill will be fundamental to delivering on that in future. The Home Secretary has also been setting up a mix of formal and informal returns agreements with other countries, in order to tackle the drivers of illegal migration. Examples of that work include our new formal arrangements with India and Albania.

Tom Hunt: Does the Minister agree that when millions of people voted to leave the European Union, they did so to take back control of our borders—no ifs, no buts—and on our own terms, not only if the French agree? Does he also agree that, in a spirit of taking back control, we need to intensify our movements towards offshore processing, which we know was successful in Australia where, when it was introduced, the numbers fell of a cliff straightaway?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: ... There is no one single solution to this problem. The measures that we are introducing through the Nationality and Borders Bill are comprehensive, but we also need that co-operation with our French partners, and to tackle this issue upstream.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-22/debates/363F3E5A-26E4-4CF1-9866-5FA682EA456D/RemovalOfIllegalMigrants>

Asylum Seekers: Hotel Accommodation

Esther McVey (Conservative): What plans [the Minister] has for hotels used by her Department to accommodate asylum seekers. (904260)

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): The Department has long-term plans and proposals to change the way we accommodate asylum seekers.

Esther McVey: ... Some hotels are becoming full-time immigration centres and those residing there are in limbo in our town centres. What is the timescale for processing these individuals and for reverting the accommodation back into hotels?

Reply from Priti Patel: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right in her comments. Through changes linked to the new plan for immigration we will end the use of hotel accommodation for asylum seekers, which was a result of the pandemic—we had to take decisive action to ensure that those seeking asylum in the UK were protected under covid measures. It was a short-term solution and the new plan for immigration includes long-term changes in the offering for asylum accommodation.

Andrew Gwynne (Labour): One big reason why we need to use hotels is that the asylum processing system has basically imploded. The share of applications that received an initial decision within six months fell from 87% in 2014 to just 20% in 2019. What is the Home Secretary's explanation for that?

Reply from Priti Patel: There are a number of factors in terms of why there has been slowing down in the processing of asylum claims. In particular, because of the covid pandemic last year, decisions were not made and we had to change our accommodation policies in the light of Public Health England guidance, which is well documented and well known. That has put pressures on the wider system. Of course, the hon. Gentleman will be well aware of the proposals in the new plan for immigration on not only processing, fast-track removals and the changes we are making in legislation, but the digitalisation of the system. We will move from paper-based decision making to digitalisation and that work is already in train.

Philip Davies (Conservative): Asylum seekers are given somewhere to live while their application is being processed, along with £39.63 per person to pay for food, clothing and toiletries. It says on the Government website: "If you've been refused asylum" you will still be given somewhere to live and still be given "£39.63 per person...for food, clothing and toiletries".

Why on earth is the state still providing accommodation and money for people who have been refused asylum? Surely that is when Government support should be turned off.

Reply from Priti Patel: If my hon. Friend has read the new plan for immigration and the Nationality and Borders Bill, it will be abundantly clear to him that changes will be coming forth that will absolutely put an end to that.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): We agree that hotel use should end, but we should go back to the community dispersal of asylum seekers throughout the country. We need to ditch this ludicrous and dangerous idea that hotels are some sort of luxury for asylum seekers, because for very many of them the opposite is the case. The Home Secretary knows that the increased use of hotels has seen increased deaths in the asylum accommodation system. Why is the Home Office still placing large numbers of asylum seekers in unsuitable hotels in inappropriate locations, without so much as notifying the relevant local authority, never mind seeking its agreement or ensuring that appropriate levels of support are in place?

Reply from Priti Patel: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is, of course, because local authorities around the country, and particularly in Scotland, have not played their part in helping with dispersal accommodation. The hon. Gentleman should be ashamed of himself for coming to the House and making that point when the Scottish Government have done absolutely nothing to lift a finger in supporting the policy of dispersal accommodation. ...

Stuart C McDonald: That is one of the most outrageous answers that this incredible Home Secretary has ever given. Every single local authority in Scotland is anxious to play its part in resettling refugees. When it comes to dispersal accommodation, Glasgow has stepped up to the plate while other local authorities are withdrawing from the scheme, and they are doing so, quite rightly, because the Home Office refuses to put in place the support that is required to encourage them to do that. Instead of community dispersal, the Home Office is planning to press ahead with large-scale warehousing of asylum seekers in Napier-style accommodation centres. That is worse even than hotels. Will she confirm that the Home Office will, at the very least, seek local authority permission for building these centres in the middle of people's local authorities and will not seek to bypass local democracy, as it did with Napier barracks?

Reply from Priti Patel: We on the Conservative side of the House will take no lectures on bypassing democracy or local councils. For the record, 31 local authorities out of 32 in Scotland have refused to participate in the dispersal scheme. I say to the hon. Gentleman and to all Members of the House that, when it comes to changes to asylum accommodation, the whole of the United Kingdom needs to step up and play its part. That is how we will address the long-term issues with accommodation more widely. I can hear the hon. Gentleman say, "You need to play your part." On the funding side of matters, it is absolutely correct to say that the

Home Office, working with the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, has been doing everything possible to provide local authorities with financial support and assistance, but certain councils around the country still say no.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-22/debates/64A790BB-1CF9-4B4A-90D5-0C39F52347DA/AsylumSeekersHotelAccommodation>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Chi Onwurah (Labour) [77448] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will issue guidance on who is eligible to apply for the (a) ARAP, (b) ACRP and (c) other Afghanistan resettlement schemes.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: Guidance on eligibility for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy is available on gov.uk at:

[Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy: further information on eligibility criteria, offer details and how to apply.](#)

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is not yet open and remains under development. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will be some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk.

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/2021-11-18/77448>

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [76574] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghans nationals have been relocated to the UK under the ARAP scheme since the end of Operation Pitting on 28 August 2021.

Reply from James Heapey: 375 ARAP eligible individuals have been relocated to the UK. Our commitment to those who are eligible under ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure. The scheme remains open and we are working with international partners to establish routes for all those eligible for ARAP to relocate to the UK since 28 August 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76574>

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>

Visas: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas (Green) [73800] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Afghan family members of British nationals who have fled Afghanistan to neighbouring countries, if she will make it her policy to (a) waive fees for family member visa applications, (b) commit to expedite those applications in the context of their exceptional nature, (c) offer flexibility on English language and income requirements and (d) show discretion on the provision of documents; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Family members of British citizens and settled persons, including those with humanitarian protection in the UK, who were not called forward for evacuation as part of Op PITTING, or who are not offered resettlement under

the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, will need to apply to come to the UK under the existing economic or family migration and reunion rules. They will be expected to meet the eligibility requirements of their chosen route, which may include paying relevant fees and charges, and providing their biometrics.

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.

Under the current Rules an applicant can already apply for their fee to be waived, for their case to be expedited, to be exempted from the English language requirement, if there are exceptional circumstances, and for evidential flexibility to be applied if they are unable to submit a specific document.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73800>

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

Ben Everitt (Conservative) [75167] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support Afghan refugees who do not have a permanent address to open a bank account.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: For those in bridging accommodation, the hotel address will be sufficient to allow them to do this, and if they encounter any issues these should be raised with the Hotel Liaison Officers.

These officers will provide support, advise and escalate any issues should they occur.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-15/75167>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Ben Everitt (Conservative) [75168] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress she is making to (a) backdate benefit payments to Afghan refugees and (b) reduce the delay in payments to those refugees.

Reply from David Rutley: The Department has played a key role in Operation Warm Welcome, including legislating to exempt those arriving under the Afghan relocation and resettlement schemes from the usual residency tests, which restrict access to certain benefits for arrivals to the UK, including Universal Credit. This means that eligible individuals will meet the residency requirements and are able to access benefits when they arrive in the UK.

DWP work coaches have supported all those in bridging hotels who need to make a claim, with currently over 2,900 claims for Universal Credit on the caseload, which covers roughly 4,500 claimants (families are treated as a single claim).

Immediately after a claim for Universal Credit has been taken, the full support of the Department is available, including job searches and training, as well as other support. The Home Office have issued cash cards to those arriving under the Afghan relocation and resettlement schemes for expenses until such time as their first Universal Credit payments, meaning those relocated are supported financially as soon as they enter the UK.

Accommodation and meals are paid for, as well as the provision of other additional essential items for those in bridging hotels, such as nappies, baby food/milk and toiletries including women's sanitary products.

As for those who were placed in local authority accommodation before claiming Universal Credit, the local authorities will provide financial support, including weekly cash support up until the first Universal Credit payment.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-15/75168>

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

Naturalisation: Applications

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [79379] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of naturalisation applications received by her Department were decided within six months in England in each of the last five years.

Reply from Kevin Foster: All naturalisation applications received by the Home Office are considered and decided by officials located in England.

The Home Office is committed to routinely publishing data as part of the Migration Transparency data quarterly release. The data can be found on Gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

The available data includes performance against the six-month service standard for all citizenship application decisions submitted to the Home Office.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79379>

Immigration: Appeals

John Redwood (Conservative) [77355] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the 2020-21 budget is for providing legal aid to people appealing migration decisions.

Reply from James Cartlidge: The Lord Chancellor has a duty to ensure that legal aid is made available in accordance with the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012), for cases where the relevant criteria, such as the financial eligibility of the applicant and/or the degree of legal merit in their case, is met, where applicable.

The Ministry of Justice works within HM Treasury allocations as shown in the Main and Supplementary Estimates

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-main-estimates>

each year. However, the nature of Legal Aid funding means that it is demand led, and as such the MoJ ensures sufficient allocation is made to cover the incurred costs.

Spend on legal aid since 2010 can be viewed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics>

which currently shows expenditure up to and including June 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-18/77355>

Immigration Rules: Families

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat) [74950] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish decision-making guidance for applications for family reunion under paragraph 319X of the Immigration Rules.

Reply from Kevin Foster: To strengthen existing policy including Paragraph 319X, we will provide additional clarity in the Immigration Rules on the exceptional circumstances where we would grant leave to a child seeking to join a relative in the UK.

We expect to lay the changes in Spring 2022. This will be accompanied by relevant guidance material.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-15/74950>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Visas: Dependants

Rupa Huq (Labour) [79431] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reviewing Adult Dependent Relative rules.

Rupa Huq (Labour) [79432] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how

many people adult dependant visas were applied for in 2020; and how many applications for adult dependant visas were rejected in 2020.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office continues to keep the Immigration Rules for adult dependent relatives under review and makes adjustments in light of feedback on their operation and impact. The adult dependent relative rules were reviewed in 2016 and the report of this review can be seen at: [Adult dependent relatives: review](#)

However, our overall assessment is the rules represent a fair deal for the UK taxpayer and are helping to ensure public confidence in the immigration system by protecting our public services from the significant NHS and social care costs to which these cases can give rise.

Home Office Migration Statistics capture data on a number of Adult Dependent Relative routes, which are grouped together with other routes under Family: Other (for immediate settlement) in our published data. This includes the number of applications received, granted and refused. The statistics are published at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962146/entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-dec-2020.xlsx

Not all Adult Dependent Relative applications are captured under the Adult Dependent Relative route and to capture accurate data would require a manual trawl of cases; to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79431>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79432>

Refugees: Resettlement

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat) [73797] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding was allocated to the UK Resettlement Scheme for (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) was announced in 2019 and was due to launch in April 2020. However, due to the pandemic and the associated resettlement pause (between March 2020 and December 2020), the scheme launched in March 2021 following the completion of Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

The overall funding package for UKRS includes a year one tariff of £8,520 per refugee resettled, for direct local authority costs. The package also includes additional support for educational and medical needs.

The Government also provides additional ESOL funding to enhance the English language skills of adults to improve their resettlement and integration experience and employability. Funding for years two-five is also allocated on a tariff basis, tapering from £5,000 per refugee in year two, to £1,000 per refugee in year five. Additionally, there is an exceptional cases fund to assist the most vulnerable refugees. Overall, this is a substantial level of funding which enables local authorities to support the vulnerable refugees they resettle as they rebuild their lives in safe and secure surroundings, among supportive communities in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73797>

Health Services: Migrant Workers

Steve McCabe (Labour) [904283] What progress her Department has made on the reimbursement of the Immigration Health Surcharge for foreign healthcare workers in the UK.

Reply from Kevin Foster: This government remains committed to fulfilling the PM's commitment to exempt health and care staff from the Immigration Health Surcharge.

Thousands of our hardworking health and care workers and their dependents have already received and continue to receive the Immigration Health Surcharge refunds and reimbursements they are entitled to.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/904283>

Visas: EU Nationals

Charlotte Nichols (Labour) [73996] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason there is not a service standard for EU Settlement Scheme Family Permit and Travel Permit; and if she will make it her policy to introduce a service standard for this type of visa.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The published service standards for EEA and EUSS family permits can be found at

Visa decision waiting times: applications outside the UK. It states;

If you are applying for an EEA family permit or an EUSS family permit you will get a decision as soon as possible after proving your identity and provided your documents.

The [withdrawal agreement](#) at article 13(3) states;

'Where the host State requires family members who join the EEA EFTA national or United Kingdom national after the end of the transition period to have an entry visa, the host State shall grant such persons every facility to obtain the necessary visas. Such visas shall be issued free of charge as soon as possible, and on the basis of an accelerated procedure.'

Therefore, there are no time-bound service standard attached to these routes

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73996>

Windrush Generation: State Retirement Pensions

Yvette Cooper (Labour) [62615] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter to the Home Affairs Committee dated 16 February 2021, what progress has been made on making arrangements to ensure that those affected by the Windrush Scandal receive the correct amount of State Pension.

Reply from Priti Patel: Work remains ongoing to put in place arrangements to ensure that where individuals have been denied access to employment, their National Insurance position is corrected so their State Pension entitlement is not affected. Information about these arrangements will be made available once they are finalised.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-25/62615>

The letter referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4739/documents/48321/default/>

Windrush Compensation Scheme

Yvette Cooper (Labour) [62612] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 183169, on Windrush Generation: Compensation, what estimate she has made of the number of applications to the Windrush Compensation Scheme that remain outstanding more than (a) two years, (b) 18 months and (c) 12 months after the applicants first submitted those applications.

Reply from Priti Patel: The number of cases being worked through the Windrush Compensation Scheme as of 30th September are 1709. Of these

- 192 have been in the process for 12-18 months.
- 196 have been in the process for between 18 months and 24 months.
- 24 have been in the process for over 24 months.

We continue to process the claims we receive as quickly as possible. Claims are taking longer to resolve than originally anticipated however there are 13 categories

and each person's experiences are different. We must ensure these are considered and understood carefully so we can offer people the maximum compensation to which they are entitled.

This holistic approach takes time but is ultimately beneficial to individuals. We are, however, committed to reducing the time between submission and decision significantly over the coming months.

Since April 2019, the Scheme has paid or offered £36.2 million. Of this, more than £30.6 million has been accepted and paid. Data on the number of claims received and the number of payments made is published as part of the regular transparency data release which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-september-2021>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-25/62612>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-19/183169>

Information about the Windrush Compensation Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-windrush-compensation-scheme>

Windrush Compensation Scheme

Yvette Cooper (Labour) [62613] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179171, on Windrush Generation: Compensation, what was the average number of calendar days from the date a claim was received to a full and final payment date, as at 31 August 2021.

Reply from Priti Patel: The average number of calendar days from the date a claim was received to a full and final value or zero entitlement offer being made is 454, at 31 August 2021.

We continue to work at pace to process the claims we have received. All primary and deceased estate claims will have been considered for a preliminary payment of £10,000 within 6 weeks of eligibility being confirmed under the terms of the Scheme.

A preliminary payment is offered as soon as we receive the minimum level of information required to show that they will be entitled to compensation under the Scheme. Some individuals whose claims remain outstanding may also have received an urgent and exceptional payment. Such payments remain available for those who have an urgent and exceptional need that cannot wait for a payment to be made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-25/62613>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/179171>

Information about the Windrush Compensation Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-windrush-compensation-scheme>

Windrush Compensation Scheme

Yvette Cooper (Labour) [62614] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter provided to the Home Affairs Committee on 28 April 2020, what percentage of requests for an Urgent and Exceptional Payment submitted from 1 October 2018 up to 31 August 2021 were concluded within ten working days of receipt.

Reply from Priti Patel: In December 2018, the Home Office established an Urgent and Exceptional Payments process for those members of the Windrush generation who had an urgent and exceptional need in advance of the Windrush Compensation Scheme. The process remains open for those who need it.

191 requests were received from 1 October 2018 up to 31 August 2021. 10% of these requests were decided within 10 working days of receipt. We treat requests for urgent and exceptional support as a high priority and aim to advise applicants of the outcome of their request within 10 working days, and sooner wherever possible. In addition, we aim to make payments within 14 days of a request for support.

Unfortunately, however, it is not always possible to make a decision within 10 days of a request for support, as we need to work with individuals in order to understand the reasons for their request and gather relevant information. Our support in Urgent and Exceptional Circumstances policy was updated in February 2021, in order to make clear to applicants the information that they can provide in order to help us to consider a request as quickly as possible.

We recommend that individuals consider the guide before making a request to us, and if possible, locate any relevant documents ready to share with the Help Team.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-25/62614>

The letter referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/832/documents/5367/default/>

Information about the Windrush Compensation Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-windrush-compensation-scheme>

Undocumented Migrants

John Redwood (Conservative) [74862] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate of the number of migrants entering the UK illegally he used when developing budgets for 2021-22.

Reply from Simon Clarke: As the department responsible for the migration and border systems, the Home Office produces a quarterly publication of immigration statistics:

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

These immigration statistics do not include information on the total illegal migrant population as the government does not make any official estimates. By its very nature, it is not possible to know the exact size of the illegal migrant population, or the total number of people who arrive to the UK illegally.

HM Treasury uses the latest immigration statistics and forecasts when setting department budgets, including the Home Office budget for 2021-22.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-15/74862>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [76654] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of small boat crossings in the Channel.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: I refer the Honourable Gentleman to the answer that I gave him on this matter on 28 October. I reiterate that these crossings are dangerous and unnecessary, and that we are determined to bring them to an end and to tackle the criminality behind them.

This is part of a wider European and global migration issue and we expect our international partners to engage with us to stop people making perilous crossings. We continue to work closely with France and other countries to make these crossings unviable, but we are clear that more needs to be done.

We welcome French Interior Minister Darmanin's suggestion that 100% of crossings could be prevented with the help of the UK's recent £54m package of support. That package is strengthening law enforcement deployments along the coast of France, more than doubling again equipped police resource focused on

addressing illegal migration; it is enhancing intelligence-sharing and making greater use of surveillance technology; and it is supporting more border security at key transport infrastructure along the Channel coast.

Nearly 20,000 crossings have been prevented this year despite the number of attempts almost trebling. So far this year there have been 46 arrests made by Immigration Enforcement of those involved in facilitating these crossings. There have been 9 convictions, attracting over 17 years in custodial sentences. Recognising that much of the criminality involved lies outside of the UK, we are also supporting wider law enforcement activity to tackle the threat of organised immigration crime. Between July 2020 and October 2021, the Joint Intelligence Cell has been involved in over 400 arrests relating to small boats activity in France, and has seen 17 organised crime groups involved in Channel crossings dismantled.

Tragically, we have seen a number of people lost at sea in recent weeks attempting these crossings. As I have said previously, we must ensure that those involved in people smuggling are punished with the severity it rightly deserves. The Nationality and Borders Bill ([Nationality and Borders Bill](#)) as a much stronger deterrent for those tempted to pursue that despicable path. These long overdue reforms will break the business model of the criminal trafficking networks and make their activities unviable.

Our New Plan for Immigration will address the challenge of illegal migration for the first time in over two decades through comprehensive reform of our asylum system, making big changes and building a new system that is fair but firm.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76654>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-20/51680>

Human Trafficking: English Channel

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [76797] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with her French counterpart on tackling human trafficking gangs that operate across the English Channel.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK and France maintain a longstanding relationship on tackling illegal migration at the shared border. The UK has committed several funding packages to supporting this work. Most recently, a bilateral funding arrangement was reached between the UK and France on 20 July 2021.

The Home Secretary maintains regular contact with her French counterpart, Interior Minister Darmanin, on the issue of illegal migration and small boats crossings. They last spoke on 15th November where they agreed to accelerate the delivery of the commitments made in the joint statement of July 2021.

The statement following the call can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76797>

Human Trafficking: Prosecutions

John Redwood (Conservative) [74863] To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions are underway or planned of individuals charged with trafficking and smuggling people across the Channel.

Reply from Alex Chalk: The Government stands resolute in its commitment to tackle Organised Immigration Crime. We continue to pursue the Organised Crime Groups who facilitate illegal travel to the UK and who exploit vulnerable migrants, knowingly putting people in life-threatening situations. We are committed to prosecuting those who profit from dangerous and unnecessary Channel crossings in small boats.

We do not hold data relating specifically to the points in the question. However, so

far in 2021, 9 people have been convicted for facilitation offences relating to small boat crossings, with sentences totalling over 17 years' imprisonment. Further, the Joint Intelligence Cell activity (UK-France joint investigations) has seen 17 small boat Organised Immigration Crime Groups dismantled since July 2020.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-15/74863>

Rohingya: Refugees

Naz Shah (Labour) [79400] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assistance her Department is providing to Rohingya families who are settled in Bradford from the UN Gateway Protection Programme to reunite with extended dependants who are residing stateless in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Government already provides a safe and legal route to bring families together through its family reunion policy. This 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. Refugees may apply to sponsor family via this route free of charge.

Our policy makes clear there is discretion to grant visas outside the Immigration Rules, which caters for extended family members in exceptional circumstances – including young adult sons or daughters who are dependent on family here and living in dangerous situations.

There are separate provisions in the Rules to allow extended family to sponsor children to come here where there are serious and compelling circumstances.

Refugees can also sponsor adult dependent relatives living overseas to join them where, due to age, illness or disability, the person requires long-term personal care which can only be provided by relatives in the UK.

Refugees who have since gained British citizenship may sponsor family under Appendix FM of the Immigration Rules.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79400>

Asylum

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [79339] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking with her EU counterparts to negotiate a replacement to the Dublin convention in relation to asylum applications.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK is in discussions regarding the returns of asylum seekers to European Member States; it would not be appropriate to provide a running commentary on these negotiations.

We can confirm that work is underway to secure appropriate return agreements with safe countries. Returns may also be agreed with partner countries on a case-by-case basis without formal agreements. This happened historically, outside of the former Dublin arrangements, and will continue to be part of the approach we apply. Our inadmissibility provisions in the Immigration Rules give us the legal basis to declare an asylum claim as inadmissible where a person has a connection to or has passed through a safe country. The first returns on inadmissible grounds have been successfully carried out.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79339>

Asylum: Applications

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [76798] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time taken is between the submission of an application seeking asylum and her Department's initial decision.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office is unable to state what the average time taken is between the submission of an application seeking asylum and her department's initial decision as the Home Office does not publish this information

and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. Available breakdowns include whether cases have been waiting less or more than 6 months. This data can be found at Asy_D03 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets:

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

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76798>

Asylum: Appeals

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [76651] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are waiting to be removed from the UK having exhausted the appeals process in their asylum applications.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Information regarding the number of failed asylum seekers still living in the UK can be found on tables ASY03 and RCM02 of the most recently published immigration and protection transparency data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q2-2021>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76651>

UK Visas and Immigration: Asylum

Philip Davies (Conservative) [76623] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason people who have been refused asylum are able to access accommodation and other financial support from UK Visas and Immigration.

Reply from Kevin Foster: In order to fulfil our statutory obligations to meet minimum standards for failed asylum seekers, individuals are eligible to receive support under section 4(2) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 provided they meet conditions set out in the Immigration and Asylum (Provisions of Accommodation to Failed Asylum-Seekers) Regulations 2005.

The regulations require the individuals to show they are destitute and they are taking reasonable steps to leave the UK or face a practical or legal obstacle which prevents their departure.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76623>

The Regulations referred to above can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2005/0110520440/data.pdf>

Asylum: Local Government

Navendu Mishra (Labour) [76844] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether additional funding will be made available to local authorities with higher placements of asylum seekers.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office is working on an agreed change plan in partnership with Local Authority Chief Executives through the Home Office Local Government Chief Executive Group.

The plan seeks to achieve a more equitable dispersal of asylum seekers across the UK and seeks to overcome barriers to ensure availability of service provision.

We have established working groups with Local Authorities to determine best practice, one of which relates to defining potential additional funding requirements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76844>

Baptism: Asylum

Chris Loder (Conservative) [76831] To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, how many services the Church of England has

conducted specifically for the purposes of Baptising people seeking asylum in each of the last five years.

Reply from Andrew Selous: Data are not kept on the nationality or migration status of those who seek Baptism. The content of the rite of Baptism remains the same for all.

Clergy are required by canon law to ensure that all who come to Baptism as adults are given appropriate teaching on the tenets of the faith and in encouragement to private spiritual devotion. Therefore, the preparation process may require specific, lengthier input and instruction of some groups of candidates before the clergy person is confident of the independent faith of each individual.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76831>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre

Kate Osborne (Labour) [73986] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his planned timetable is for completion of the tender process for the Detained Duty Advice Scheme at Derwentside immigration removal centre; and when his Department plans to publish the outcome of that process.

Kate Osborne (Labour) [73987] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many legal advice surgeries will take place per week under the Detained Duty Advice Scheme at Derwentside immigration removal centre; and from what date those services will commence.

Reply from James Cartlidge: Applicants were notified that the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) had cancelled the procurement process for the Detained Duty Advice Scheme (DDAS) at Derwentside in its entirety on 16 November 2021.

This decision was taken as a result of receiving insufficient compliant tenders that met the minimum requirements detailed in the procurement process.

To provide access to DDAS services for Clients at Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) from 1 January 2022, the LAA will seek to continue the existing contingency arrangements, which were established on 18 August 2021 (but which have not yet been used due to the postponement of the IRC opening), for a period of 6 months (until 30 June 2022). During this time the LAA will review the volume of Clients at the IRC and how services are being delivered to inform its approach to procuring these services.

Under the contingency arrangements, 2 surgeries per week are planned for DDAS at Derwentside and appointments will be available as soon as detainees are being held there.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73986>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73987>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre: Females

Kate Osborne (Labour) [73988] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's planned timescale is for Derwentside immigration removal centre (IRC) to start holding women who are detained under immigration powers; and what the (a) certified normal accommodation and (b) operational capacity of that IRC will be.

Detention Centres

Kate Osborne (Labour) [73989] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) certified normal accommodation and (b) operational capacities are of (i) Colnbrook, (ii) Harmondsworth and (iii) Brook House immigration removal centres.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The new Derwentside immigration removal centre (IRC) will provide modern, decent and secure accommodation for around 80

women and we expect that the IRC will start holding women who are detained under immigration powers by the end of the year.

Unlike prisons, IRCs do not operate 'certified normal accommodation'. In order to meet operational needs and demands, we operate the immigration removal estate in a flexible manner.

The table below sets out the operational capacity for each requested immigration removal centre (if all rooms and beds are in use) on 1st November 2021.

IRC	Total Operating Capacity 2021
Brook House	448
Colnbrook	330
Harmondsworth	635
Total	1413

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73988>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73989>

Asylum: Deportation

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [76652] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who have been denied asylum have been removed from the UK in each of the last five years.

Reply from Kevin Foster: 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 Asylum related returns go to the end of March 2021 and are published in Ret_04 and Ret_05 of the [returns summary tables](#).

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/2021-11-17/76652>

Offenders: Deportation

Matt Vickers (Conservative) [74004] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to facilitate the deportation of foreign criminals.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government is clear foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them.

We make every effort to ensure that a Foreign National Offender's (FNO) removal by deportation coincides, as far as possible, with their release from prison on completion of sentence. Since January 2019 we have removed 8,441 FNOs and since April 2020, we have utilised over 99 charter flights to deport FNOs and other immigration offenders to countries across Europe and around the rest of the world. The Home Office operates the Facilitated Return Scheme (FRS) which offers non-European Economic Area FNOs the opportunity to volunteer to return to their country of origin early. From 1 April 2021, this has been extended to allow more FNOs to benefit from reintegration support which will lead to an increase in take up and the speedier removal of FNOs accepted onto the scheme, including any immediate qualifying family members.

Our New Plan for Immigration will make it easier to remove foreign criminals and those with no right to be in the UK and keep our citizens safe. The Nationality and Borders Bill will extend the period an FNO can be removed from prison under the early removal scheme (ERS) from a maximum of 9 months to 12 months, providing the minimum requisite period has been served. The Bill will also streamline the appeals process by introducing an expanded one stop process aimed at reducing the extent to which people can frustrate removals through sequential or unmeritorious claims, appeals or legal action. The Bill will also create a new power to impose visa penalties on countries who do not cooperate with the UK on the removal of their nationals who do not have a right to be in the UK.

Further information can be found in the [New Plan for Immigration Policy Statement](#) and the factsheet [Nationality and Borders Bill](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/74004>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Small Boats Incident in the Channel

The statement made by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons was repeated in the House of Lords ([see above](#) to read the statement in full).

Lord Rosser (Labour): ... yesterday's tragedy was the most tragic of reminders of the dangers of the English Channel, and that people's lives are at risk every day in these small boats. It is a sobering moment for us as a nation, for France and for the international community. As I understand it, at least 27 people have died. We think of those lost, their loved ones left behind, and the two who were rescued, who are receiving medical treatment and fighting for their lives. I pay tribute to all those involved in the joint French-British search operation in the air and on the sea, putting themselves in danger to help others.

I believe that there have been arrests in France of those suspected of the vile crime of people smuggling. I appreciate the difficulties and sensitivities when there is an ongoing legal case, particularly in another jurisdiction, but I hope that the Government can assure the House that we will give all the co-operation required by the prosecuting authorities in France if we are able to help in that regard. ...

May I press the Government on properly managed, safe and legal routes, and specifically the position on the Dubs scheme? It was closed down, having helped only some 480 unaccompanied children rather than the 3,000 many expected it to help. Will that scheme be urgently reinstated?

In the Statement, the Government spoke of a worldwide migration crisis, and that is the reality. In view of that, can the Government revisit their decision to cut the international aid budget and lead on the international stage with other countries to help those fleeing persecution? Yesterday's terrible tragedy must be a moment for change. The time for urgent action to save lives is now.

I noticed that the Home Secretary said in the Statement that she has approved maritime tactics, including boat turnarounds, for border staff to deploy. Can the Minister tell us a little more about these maritime tactics that have been approved? What changes will take place as a result? ...

... the Minister repeated the Government's position, which they have stated on numerous other occasions, that people should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach, and that nobody needs to flee France to be safe. Presumably, if our Government's stance is that you should claim asylum in the first safe country you reach, they would have to accept that for most people who have come through France and then across the channel on small boats, unless there is evidence to the contrary, France was not the first safe country that they reached. Presumably, most went through other safe countries before

they got to France. Do the Government accept that, on the basis of their own statement that you should claim asylum in the first safe country you reach, France's situation is, in that sense, no different from ours, because France would probably not have been the first safe country that they reached? ...

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): ...The Home Secretary talked about traffickers finding people to manipulate and said that some of them do not even know that they are coming to the UK. What evidence can the Minister share with the House that people smugglers “threaten ... bully and assault the people who get into these boats”?

What evidence is there that asylum seekers, who must know that they are in France, or at the very least in mainland Europe, who are getting into boats, do not know that they are coming to the UK?

The Home Secretary gives the impression that vulnerable people are being forced against their will into these boats. Surely people traffickers would be only too happy to save money on boats and leave those who had already paid them in mainland Europe? Is it not the truth that these desperate people, who often speak English and no other European language, and who often have relatives or other people they know in the UK, know that they cannot seek asylum in the UK unless they are in the UK?

The Home Secretary says that people traffickers “use the money they make for other heinous crimes”. What are the heinous crimes to which the Home Secretary is referring? She also talked about a “wide range of operational and diplomatic work”. How can the Home Secretary talk about boat turnarounds the day after at least 27 people lost their lives, given that it is a tactic that can only increase the risk of further tragic deaths? ...

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

... The Home Secretary has made it quite clear that she is considering all options and that nothing is off the table.

In terms of the heinous crimes that the Home Secretary talks about, it is interesting when you look at serious and organised criminals that these people are involved in multiple types of crime, not just people trafficking but money laundering, drugs and other things of that ilk.

In terms of evidence for bullying and people not knowing that they are coming to the UK, I am sure that the Home Secretary has said that based on the intelligence and information that she has got, so I think that stands. I assume it is fact.

The noble Lord, Lord Rosser, said that France is not the first safe country. That is precisely the point—people are not claiming asylum in the first safe country. They are then travelling to France and trying to get to the UK.

The noble Lord asked about the turnaround tactics. They are lawful ... They are delivered in accordance with domestic and international law and obligations. ...

We met our obligations under Dubs, and I outlined some of the other schemes under which people have come to this country since 2015, such as the Syrian resettlement scheme, family reunion visas and the BNO scheme. We now have the global resettlement scheme, the mandate scheme, the children's resettlement scheme and the vulnerable persons resettlement scheme. There are many routes under which people have come and will still be able to come here. ...

To read this lengthy question and answer session in full, see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-11-25/debates/BDC7C2D0-A51C-4B18-B985-066C423DF7E4/SmallBoatsIncidentInTheChannel>

Windrush Compensation Scheme

Baroness Benjamin (Liberal Democrat): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that people who applied to the Windrush Compensation Scheme have their claim decided as a matter of urgency.

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

My Lords, we remain committed to ensuring that people receive every penny of

compensation that they are entitled to and we have offered more than £37.2 million. There is no cap on the amount that we will pay and we have removed the end date of the scheme. Suggestions that only 5% have received a payment are misleading; 29% of the claims that we have received have had a payment. We are processing claims as quickly as we can and continue to make improvements. Many of these were recognised in the Home Affairs Select Committee's report, but we recognise that there is more to do and will consider the report carefully.

Baroness Benjamin: I thank the Minister for her reply. I declare an interest as chair of the Windrush Commemoration Committee, which is placing a national Windrush monument at Waterloo station, where I arrived when I was a 10 year-old in 1960. It will celebrate the enormous contribution of the Windrush generation to Britain.

But the Windrush scandal has created a stain on British history, and many innocent people branded as illegal, now in their 70s and 80s, are still traumatised by the burden of proof and the treatment that they have endured. There is an overwhelming feeling of distrust and a feeling that their compensation claims will never be paid. So to reassure these British citizens who have served this country well for generations, will the Government consider appointing an independent body to deal with the Windrush compensation scheme before any more of these claimants pass away?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: First, I pay tribute to the noble Baroness and all that she has done for the Windrush generation. I totally agree with her that the scandal of it, which spanned several decades, and Parliaments and Governments of every colour, is indeed a stain on our history.

With regard to the evidence, we have designed the scheme to be as simple as possible, and its whole rationale is to pay compensation, as opposed to not paying it. So the scheme operates on the balance of probabilities, and we will work with individuals to support them to provide and obtain as much information as possible to support their claim. We want to make it easy, not difficult, for them to do so, so caseworkers will contact other government departments and third parties, such as previous employers, if necessary. In July, we published refreshed casework guidance that clearly sets out how caseworkers should apply the balance of probability and go about gathering that evidence. We want people to receive the maximum amount of compensation, not the minimum, to which they are perfectly entitled.

Baroness Coussins (Crossbench): My Lords, the noble Baroness's Question refers to people who have applied to the compensation scheme, but what proactive action will the Government take to reach out and contact those who may be eligible to apply but still do not trust the Home Office and so have not put in an application yet?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: As I said previously in Questions about the Windrush scheme, we have reached out not just to communities where we think applications might be forthcoming but to communities and faith leaders overseas, because we want as many people to apply as are entitled to—not just entitled to but deserve—the compensation for their suffering. To go back to the noble Baroness's previous question, moving the scheme out of the Home Office would risk significantly delaying vital payments to those affected.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour): The Home Affairs Committee report said: "We can only conclude that four years on from the Windrush scandal, vital lessons have still not been learned by the Department." It is four years on. What is the Minister's explanation for this shameful failure?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, it was possibly a year ago, even two years ago, that I stood up and acknowledged that the scheme was not running as swiftly as it could, that people were not getting the compensation that they should and that we needed to do more to reach out. I fully accepted that criticism.

But, as I said to the noble Baroness, Lady Benjamin, we continue to make improvements to the scheme. The result of this is evidenced in the amount of compensation paid out rising from less than £3 million, which it was at the time, to over £31.6 million, with a further £5.6 million having been offered. We have brought in some new support measures to those claiming on behalf of relatives who have passed away. We have also increased our number of caseworkers to over 80, with another 34 coming online shortly. For those needing more support in applying, we have funded an organisation to provide free independent claimant assistance to individuals.

Baroness Manzoor (Conservative): My Lords, I welcome my noble friend the Minister's personal commitment to this issue, which is very recognisable in the answers that she has given. However, only one in 20 people eligible for compensation have received it. The Government need to move faster and at pace because, as the Minister has indicated, people have died, and it would be nice for others to see resolution in their lifetimes.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I thank my noble friend for that. That claim that only 5% of people, or one in 20, have received a payment is actually a bit misleading. When we first set up the scheme, we made an estimate, which I remember saying to the House was quite difficult to make, of the number of people we thought might be eligible. That estimate was originally 15,000 and was then revised down to 11,500. It is now 4,600. Obviously, we will try our best to ensure that anyone who comes forward gets the compensation that they deserve. We now estimate, based on what I have just said to my noble friend, that 29% of people who have submitted a claim have received a payment.

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I pay tribute to my noble friend's tireless efforts. We now know that there are lengthy delays, even in clear-cut cases, to making an initial payment. But we know that the Home Office is capable of moving quickly: it has tabled 18 pages of new offences and police powers for the police Bill within two months of the Home Secretary asking for them. So what is it about the Windrush generation that means that they are not a priority for the Home Office?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I think that statement is incorrect. The Windrush generation and the Windrush scheme are a priority for the Home Office. I have been through some of the improvements that we have made: we are increasing the number of caseworkers, and the amount of compensation has risen quite dramatically since we put some of the changes in place, from £3 million to over £31.6 million, with a further £5.6 million having been offered. There is no cap on the amount of compensation that we will pay out. We have also removed the time limit so that as many people who can apply do.

Some of the cases can be quite complex and therefore take longer than might be normal—and, of course, we are going back decades in time—but we are keener than ever, and it remains a priority, to ensure that anyone who is due compensation will be paid it.

Baroness Bull (Crossbench): My Lords, the Minister was clear about the importance of trusted community and grass-roots organisations in reaching claimants who might be nervous about interacting directly with the Home Office, but we now hear that the stakeholder advisory group that brought those bodies together to help government to “build trust with the affected communities” has been disbanded. So what will government put in place to offset the absence of that group and to ensure that those communities can be reached?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, as I said, we have done extensive community outreach. Since 2018, we have held approximately 200 engagement and outreach events across the country, including approximately 120 one-to-one surgeries to help people with their documentation for the Windrush scheme. We have held 80 public engagement events to raise awareness of the

scheme. I will certainly take the stakeholder engagement point back to the Home Office, because it is a good point.

Lord Dobbs (Conservative): My Lords, I quite understand why it is necessary to be very sensitive and careful about handing out compensation money. After all, we have seen a very few awful cases of compensation claims when it came to Grenfell, for instance, which were simply criminal. However, I associate myself with every single sentiment which the noble Baroness, Lady Benjamin, has expressed. Windrush is an example of injustice, and at a time when there are wicked people trying to tear apart races in this country, putting one against the other, the solution to this Windrush scandal cannot come soon enough.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Well, I think I associated myself with pretty much every point that the noble Baroness, Lady Benjamin, made. As my noble friend said, the Windrush scandal is an injustice, and for decades no one did anything about it. We will do what we can as quickly as we can to ensure that people get the compensation that they deserve as soon as possible.

Lord Rosser (Labour): My Lords, I come back to the point made by my noble friend Lady Lister of Burtersett about the delay and the four-year period. I do not think that my noble friend received any satisfactory explanation as to why it has taken so long. The Home Affairs Committee has called for the scheme to be transferred from the Home Office to an independent organisation, and a National Audit Office report into the compensation scheme found that the scheme was “not meeting its objective of compensating claimants quickly”.

As I am sure that the Minister will be aware, on 21 June—some five months ago—the shadow Home Secretary called on the Government to give control of the Windrush compensation scheme to a new independent body following systematic mismanagement—that mismanagement being the delay and how few people have so far been compensated. I do not think we have heard any convincing answer as to why responsibility for the scheme should not be handed over to a new independent body.

Clearly the Home Office has failed; it has been criticised by the National Audit Office for that failure. We have had four years of delay. The Minister, on behalf of the Home Office, has not been able to tell us how many more years it will take the Home Office to complete this process. Can I urge her to go back to the Home Office and suggest that the management of the scheme is now transferred to a new independent body, as we called for five months ago, as the Home Affairs Committee has now also called for, and in the light of the National Audit Office report that said that people were not being compensated quickly?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I thought that I had pointed out both the improvements to the compensation paid since we made changes in December and the difficulties in suddenly moving a scheme out of the Home Office to an independent body. It would not necessarily result in faster and higher payments. As I have said, neither the amount of the payment nor the length of time in which people can apply for compensation are capped.

Lord Hamilton of Epsom (Conservative): My Lords, I associate myself with the remarks of my noble friend Lord Dobbs. I ask my noble friend the Minister: what is happening about those who have been deported to the West Indies?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: When someone is deported, it is usually for criminality. I do not have up-to-date figures on people who have been deported who would also be eligible for Windrush. Rather than make them up at the Dispatch Box, which I am disinclined to do, I will get those figures to my noble friend.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Labour Co-op): My Lords, I have listened very carefully to the noble Baroness the Minister, who we all have a lot of respect for. She said two years ago that she was frustrated at the delays. She has done her best at the Home Office and there are still huge delays. It was recommended months ago that the scheme should be

transferred to an independent body. Would it not give greater trust and confidence to the people who are seeking compensation if some action was taken on this?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I did try to explain what action has been taken, which has meant that compensation has risen from less than £3 million to over £31.6 million, with a further £5.6 million being offered since the changes were made in December. As I have explained, transferring out of the Home Office would not necessarily result in further improvements.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-11-24/debates/5045A2C1-F59D-4A51-8566-0537D463981C/WindrushCompensationScheme>

Operation Warm Welcome

Lord Young of Cookham (Conservative): To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Afghan refugees accepted under Operation Warm Welcome are currently living in hotels.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford): My Lords, the cross-government effort to ensure that people were brought from Afghanistan to the UK as quickly as possible meant that it was not always possible to arrange local authority support in advance of arrival. In those cases, we have put in place hotel bridging accommodation. There are approximately 12,000 Afghan people living in 80 bridging hotels. That figure changes regularly as people move in and out of hotels.

Lord Young of Cookham: My Lords, following the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, the Government deserve praise for evacuating some 15,000 people to safety in the UK and for then launching what they described as "one of the most generous schemes in our country's history" to resettle Afghan citizens. While many are indeed rebuilding their lives, too many, as we have just heard, are still stuck in hotels, with their children unable to access schools, with difficulty getting GP services and being unable to work because of problems with visas. Can my noble friend give a target date for moving into permanent accommodation the judges, doctors, members of parliament and other brave men and women who worked alongside us in Afghanistan?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, I am afraid I cannot announce a target date as it is subject to the number of housing pledges, the "jobs first" approach and other options. However, we continue to work with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation as soon as possible for families who were evacuated to the UK, and we are most grateful to the 323 local authorities that have pledged support.

Viscount Stansgate (Labour): I want to ask the Minister about a government promise that needs to be kept. I know personally of an Afghan interpreter who did great work with our Armed Forces and even translated for the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, when he visited the country. Unsurprisingly, the interpreter fled for his life and is desperately worried about his family, who remain in Afghanistan. I appeal to the Minister for advice. First, does she accept that his wife, young son, widowed mother and brother can be defined as "immediate family"? Secondly, if I write to the Minister with details of this case, will she undertake to look at it with a view to giving them visas to come to the UK? Thirdly and finally, does she accept that we owe a debt of gratitude to people of this kind and their families, and that they deserve to have the safe future in this country that was promised?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Viscount will of course appreciate that I cannot talk about individual cases at the Dispatch Box, but I appreciate his concern for his friend and his family. I would definitely appreciate the noble Viscount writing to me and then we can take the case forward.

Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, NGOs are reporting that there is no co-ordination on cross-departmental issues relating to the two separate Afghan refugee schemes. They are telling us that any request is pointed to a different department: MoD

points to FCDO, the FCDO points to the Home Office and it points to the Department for Levelling Up. It feels like nothing is getting done. Will the Minister undertake, as a matter of extreme urgency, that a publicly named Minister and civil servant be given responsibility for cross-departmental working relating to the Afghan refugee schemes?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I hope I can satisfy the noble Baroness in naming that Minister. It is my honourable friend Victoria Atkins, who is based in MoJ, DLUHC and the Home Office, and is responsible for the Afghan resettlement scheme.

Lord Bellingham (Conservative): My Lords, early reports seem to indicate that at least some of the victims of yesterday's appalling tragedy were from Afghanistan. The whole country was absolutely appalled and horrified at this disaster. Does my noble friend agree that the only way to prevent a repeat is to make sure that the UK bears down on those Mafia-style people-smuggling gangs, and to work with France to prevent further refugees leaving its shores?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Yesterday's tragedy brought into sharp focus the human cost of criminals, caring nothing for human life, recklessly bringing people across the channel—and in what did not even look like boats yesterday. I totally agree with my noble friend.

Baroness D'Souza (Crossbench): My Lords, the refugee burden on counties in the south-east of the UK is unfair. What incentives are being offered to families in other counties to open their doors to some of the persecuted Afghans? Are the UK Government considering schemes to place some of the hundreds of those waiting in hotels into settled communities, as is being attempted in Canada, for long-term social, economic and cultural benefits?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Baroness gets to the heart of what an ideal system looks like, which is integration into communities. There is of course a community sponsorship scheme; I pay tribute to the Church of England, and the Catholic Church in my own area, for the work they have done on that. On what we are doing to incentivise, we are giving £20,500 to local authorities over three years to support each person's integration. As I say, we are most grateful to those 323 local authorities which have pledged their support.

Lord Rosser (Labour): I believe the Minister said that there were 12,000 in hotels. How many have been resettled into permanent homes? I do not think she gave that figure but, as she said, there is no shortage of local authorities ready to provide support. There are of course issues with shortages in housing, for reasons that we all know. Is the scheme backed by full costs for a year going from central government to local councils?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We brought 15,000 people here and 12,000 are in bridging hotels. There is slightly more complexity to it than there being no shortage of offers, because some of the families are quite big. Sourcing accommodation suitable for large families is therefore perhaps more of a challenge than it might be. But we are working at pace and across government to try to get people permanent accommodation.

Lord Cormack (Conservative): Will my noble friend place in the Library a list of those local authorities that have taken refugees and a list of any that have refused? What is being done to vet hotels, following that dreadful incident where the young child fell out of a window and was killed?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I am not willing to provide a list of local authorities because one thing we were clear about, right at the start, is that this is not a name-and-shame exercise. There is gratitude for those local authorities which offer to take people and families. I can confirm to my noble friend that the hotels are of a good standard. Yes, it was an absolute tragedy about that poor child but the hotels certainly meet our standards.

Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws (Labour): I too commend the Government on

providing places for people fleeing Afghanistan but want to ask a number of questions about the schemes that exist. Is the ARAP scheme, which evacuated people who had worked in conjunction with our military, our embassies and so on in all sorts of capacities, still operating? For example, a policewoman who fled violence—one of the pioneering women police officers—is currently in Islamabad. Her temporary visa there is running out. She was working on prosecutions of people for assaults on our British military. Is the ARAP scheme still operating for the father of one of the judges I have in Athens who we managed to evacuate? The father was the writer of the constitution of Afghanistan, at our behest and that of the West. Are we still running a scheme for people who helped and made those things possible? ...

I just want to ask about a resettlement scheme being set up for Afghan citizens, which we keep being told about. When is it going to come into operation?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I will give the short answer to the first question, which is yes. The challenge on that is getting people out, as the noble Baroness knows because we have talked about it. We are still working on the ACRS, the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme, at pace to try to get it up and running. We intend to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and up to 20,000 in the coming years. It is one of the UK's most ambitious resettlement schemes ever.

Lord Herbert of South Downs (Conservative): My Lords, LGBT people are particularly at risk from the new regime in Afghanistan, so I welcome the lead which the United Kingdom has taken in already bringing such people to safety. I thank the Government for working in partnership with NGOs such as Rainbow Railroad, Stonewall and Micro Rainbow to achieve this. Will my noble friend the Minister commit to continuing to prioritise such people and ensure that they can be safely settled here in the UK?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I wholeheartedly share my noble friend's concerns. The people who are still there must be terrified. We will of course prioritise them, along with other very vulnerable people who remain in that region.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-11-25/debates/DEF07747-A18D-439A-AD80-650D78986D38/OperationWarmWelcome>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Families

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL3777] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether family reunion rights will be restricted for all group 2 refugees as a result of the proposed changes to the law in the Nationality and Borders Bill.

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL3778] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposed changes to family reunion rights in the Nationality and Borders Bill on the number of (1) men, (2) women, and (3) children, who will come to the UK via family reunion; whether they expect the number of such people to be lower than in previous years; and if so, by how many.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Family reunion will only be permitted to Group 2 refugees where refusing would be a breach of our international obligations under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Taken in combination with wider measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill, this policy seeks to deter migrants from undertaking extremely dangerous journeys to the UK from safe countries.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-08/hl3778>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL3898] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have reviewed the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme; and if not, what plans they have to conduct such a review.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL3899] To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they use to select individuals for resettlement under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL3900] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to use the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme as a model for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has committed to welcoming around 5,000 people in the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) - and up to 20,000 over the coming years. The ACRS will be partly modelled on the successful Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), which resettled over 20,000 refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict, over a seven-year period from 2014 to 2021. Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out under the Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September

The VPRS is now closed. The selection criteria used for the VPRS is replicated for the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), this information is available on gov.uk.

Evaluation of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), and also the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), is ongoing. The UK Government's strategy for evaluating the delivery and effectiveness of the VPRS and VCRS is outlined on gov.uk.

The VPRS was also twice inspected by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, in 2018 and 2020, with a number of recommendations accepted and implemented. Details of the inspections, and report overviews can also be found on gov.uk.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-09/hl3898>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-09/hl3899>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-09/hl3900>

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

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

Refugees: Rented Housing

Lord Hylton (Crossbench): [HL3807] To ask Her Majesty's Government what specific sites have been identified to provide rented housing for (1) Afghan refugees coming to the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), (2) other newly accepted refugees, and (3) British Overseas Nationals from Hong Kong.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office works with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), as well as other Government departments, on the provision of support, including housing, for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

For those resettled through UK Resettlement Schemes, local authorities are provided with funding to support their welcome and integration. Before committing to offering resettlement places a local authority should think about whether they have, or are able to put in place, the accommodation and support needed to ensure the appropriate care and resettlement of people in need of our help.

Afghans who have been evacuated before, during and since Operation Pitting are

being look after as set out in the funding package of 13 September 2021
Local authorities assist newly granted refugees with finding accommodation.
Migrant Help also provide support to newly granted refugees following a positive decision via the AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) contract.
Those arriving in the UK on the British National (Overseas) [BN(O)] visas are free to choose where to settle in the UK. BN(O) status holders should be able to demonstrate self-sufficiency with the UK for a period of six months as a prerequisite to the visa being granted. DLUHC, have provided practical advice to BN(O)s through an online Welcome Pack on settling in the UK, which includes guidance (in English and Cantonese) on renting and buying accommodation. DLUHC have also written to landlord and letting agent representatives to raise awareness of the BN(O) visa route, further supporting BN(O) status holders to access accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-08/hl3807>

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

The Hong Kong BN(O) Welcome Pack, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1013244/HK_BN_O_Welcome_Pack_August_2021.pdf

Asylum: Napier Barracks

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL3776] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they sought planning permission from Shepway District Council for the continued use of Napier Barracks to house people seeking asylum; and if not, why not.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Planning permission was not sought from Shepway District Council as we pursued the Special Development Order process, which meant there was no requirement to seek planning permission from local authorities.

Engagement with both Folkestone and & Hythe District Council (formerly Shepway District Council) and Kent City Council, outlining the background and explaining our plan to continue using the site was undertaken as part of the Special Development order process.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-08/hl3776>

Deportation: Jamaica

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL3845] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken following the remarks by the High Commissioner for Jamaica on 4 November: "from a human rights perspective I am deeply concerned about cases in which persons are being removed having lived in the UK since childhood and have no known relations in Jamaica or familiarity with Jamaica".

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are committed to an immigration policy which welcomes and celebrates people here legally, but which deters illegal immigration, prevents the abuse of benefits and services, removes immigration offenders and foreign national offenders from the UK and disrupts the Organised Crime Groups that prey on the vulnerable.

We worked very closely with the authorities in Jamaica and the Jamaican High Commission in the UK in the planning of this charter flight.

The Government is clear that foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them. Under the UK Borders Act 2007, the Home Secretary is required by law to make a deportation order in respect of a foreign national convicted in the UK and sentenced to at least 12 months' imprisonment, unless an exception applies.

A person's age upon arrival to the UK or length of time they have lived in the UK are not exceptions to automatic deportation but may be relevant factors, as well as the strength of their social, cultural and family ties in the UK, in considering whether a human rights exception applies. All human rights claims and claims to have been a victim of modern slavery are fully considered and determined before deportation including, where applicable, via the Courts.

The Home Office supports two Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Jamaica who provide re-integration support to those who are deported. This includes initial reception support and longer-term support including training and skills to enable them to find employment within Jamaica. They can also provide emotional and wellbeing support to those who need it. The UK is one of the few countries in the world who provide this support.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-08/hl3845>

Press Releases

Just over 7% of Scotland's population are non-British nationals

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/2021/just-over-7-of-scotlands-population-are-non-british-nationals>

Compensation Scheme failures have compounded injustices faced by Windrush generation – Committee finds

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/83/home-affairs-committee/news/159118/compensation-scheme-failures-have-compounded-injustices-faced-by-windrush-generation-committee-finds/>

Government to open new immigration removal centre

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-open-new-immigration-removal-centre>

New Publications

Immigration statistics, year ending September 2021

Overview of the immigration system

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/overview-of-the-immigration-system>

Summary of latest statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/summary-of-latest-statistics>

How many people come to the UK each year (including visitors)?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors>

Why do people come to the UK? To work

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work>

Why do people come to the UK? To study

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Why do people come to the UK? For family reasons

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-for-family-reasons>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/how-many-people-continue-their-stay-in-the-uk-or-apply-to-stay-permanently>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2021/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned>

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<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/population-estimates/pop-cob-nat-20-21/pop-cob-nat-20-21-report.pdf>

EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, September 2021

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

EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics tables, September 2021

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Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending December 2020

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An Inspection of UK Visas and Immigration Front End Services (August 2020 – June 2021)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1036046/An_Inspection_of_UK_Visas_and_Immigration_Front_End_Services_August_2020_to_June_2021.pdf

Home Office response to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report: An inspection of UK Visas and Immigration front end services

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-an-inspection-of-uk-visas-and-immigration-front-end-services/home-office-response-to-the-independent-chief-inspector-of-borders-and-immigrations-report-an-inspection-of-uk-visas-and-immigration-front-end-servi>

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http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0907/IFRP_Annual_Report_2019_2020.pdf

Home Office response to the Independent Family Returns Panel Report 2019-20

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0907/Home_Office_response_to_the_Indp_Family_Returns_Panel_Report_2019_20.pdf

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<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/7936/documents/82209/default/>

Afghanistan: hunger, poverty, and resettlement efforts

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/afghanistan-hunger-poverty-and-resettlement-efforts/>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/derwentside-immigration-removal-centre-equality-impact-assessment/derwentside-immigration-removal-centre-equality-impact-assessment-accessible-version>

News: Channel Migrants

Migrant tragedy is biggest loss of life in Channel

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-59406355>

Drowning of 27 migrants in English Channel is worst disaster on record: IOM

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1106562>

Channel migrants: PM calls on France to take back people who make crossing

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-59423245>

France scraps UK talks over Johnson migrants letter

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59428311>

English Channel deaths: Boris Johnson calls for joint patrols with France to stop migrant crossings

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19740425.english-channel-deaths-boris-johnson-calls-joint-patrols-france-stop-migrant-crossings/>

English Channel: Boris Johnson calls for joint patrols with France to stop migrant crossings after boat capsized, killing 27 people

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/english-channel-boris-johnson-calls-for-joint-patrols-with-france-to-stop-migrant-crossings-after-boat-capsized-killing-27-people-3470651>

France not doing enough to stop migrants crossing Channel, says Boris Johnson

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/france-is-not-doing-enough-to-stop-migrants-crossing-the-channel-says-boris-johnson-565vdgx9b>

Boris Johnson 'shocked and appalled' after at least 30 die in English Channel

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/boris-johnson-shocked-and-appalled-after-at-least-30-die-in-english-channel-3470536>

Priti Patel vows to do 'absolutely whatever is necessary' to stop Channel crossing tragedies

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19741489.priti-patel-vows-absolutely-whatever-necessary-stop-channel-crossing-tragedies/>

Migrant tragedy: Priti Patel calls for UK police to patrol French beaches after Channel deaths

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrants-trying-to-reach-uk-die-in-channel-after-boat-capsizes-off-calais-gwc3rl0vb>

Priti Patel to ask BBC and other media to reflect on 'dehumanising' language after migrant deaths

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/priti-patel-to-ask-bbc-and-other-media-to-reflect-on-dehumanising-language-after-migrant-deaths-3471816>

Avoid 'dehumanising' the dead in Channel tragedy, Priti Patel tells BBC

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/11/25/bbc-media-asked-avoid-using-dehumanising-words-like-migrant/>

Backlash after Priti Patel rebukes media over Channel 'migrants' label

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/nov/25/backlash-after-priti-patel-rebukes-media-over-channel-migrants-label>

Government rejects pleas for safe routes to UK for refugees following dinghy disaster

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/channel-migrants-dinghy-tragedy-johnson-b1964477.html>

Migrant crisis: Refugee and human rights charities call for 'safe' routes to UK after Channel drowning tragedy

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/migrant-crisis-refugee-and-human-rights-charities-call-for-safe-routes-to-uk-after-channel-drowning-tragedy-3472102>

Five arrested after Channel boat sinks, killing at least 27 people

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/crime/channel-migrant-arrests-update-smuggling-b1964069.html>

Stand off drowning migrants and report – or face prosecution, sailors warned

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/23/leave-drowning-migrants-die-face-prosecution-sailors-warned/>

Channel deaths: More boats arrive after 27 people drown

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-59412329>

Channel migrants: Around 50 people make journey after deadly boat sinking

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/channel-tragedy-migrants-dover-calais-b1964056.html>

And still they come ... Migrants land in Dover this morning after crossing Channel overnight

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/25/migrants-land-dover-morning-crossing-channel-overnight/>

Migrant tragedy: No let-up in Channel crossings despite danger

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/children-and-babies-among-600-migrants-to-cross-channel-from-france-today-vshrwg7pv>

Channel migrant crossings have tripled in a year

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/channel-migrants-tide-small-boats-failure-state-tory-party-craig-mackinlay-vmtw09m89>

Channel tragedy: Whose lives were lost off Calais?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59416022>

Migrant tragedy: What do we know about the people who died in the Channel?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/migrant-tragedy-channel-people-died-b1964798.html>

Channel disaster: Kurdish woman is first victim identified

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59439533>

Kurdish woman Maryam 'Baran' Nuri Hamdamin one of first Channel victims to be identified in migrant death crisis

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-channel-victims-named-kurdish-b1965135.html>

Child and five women among dead after boat sinks in English Channel

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/channel-migrants-france-boat-sinks-b1963634.html>

Channel drownings: what happened and who is to blame?

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/25/channel-drownings-what-happened-and-who-is-to-blame>

Migrant crisis: The Channel beaches that host a lethal trade in human hope

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59419963>

Channel deaths: What do we know so far?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-59406788>

Why do migrants leave France and try to cross the English Channel?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53699511>

Channel migrants: Forced into a cramped, flimsy boat, they didn't stand a chance

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/channel-migrants-forced-into-a-cramped-flimsy-boat-they-didnt-stand-a-chance-nr8mpwkm2>

Smuggler shot migrant in the kneecaps when he refused to board boat

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/25/bit-like-drowning-scene-film-titanic/>

Home Office refuses to say if 'inhumane' migrant boat pushbacks have started

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/channel-boat-pushbacks-migrants-b1964922.html>

Migrant support group launches legal challenge against home secretary over 'pushback' tactics

<https://www.independent.co.uk/politics/priti-patel-pushback-plan-legal-challenge-b1963869.html>

We need to remember that refugees and migrants are people first

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/refugees-migrants-channel-boat-drowning-b1964299.html>

Channel crossing: Why Iraqi Kurds are making risky journeys to Europe

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/channel-crossing-death-europe-iraqi-kurds-b1964281.html>

If an Australian or a Canadian can book a flight, why couldn't Mariam?

<https://www.paih.org/newly-wed-bride-amongst-the-drowned-in-the-english-channel/>

Migrant Crisis: Why are people crossing the English Channel? Is it illegal? What are the UK and France doing about it?

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/migrant-crisis-why-are-people-crossing-the-english-channel-is-it-illegal-what-are-the-uk-and-france-doing-about-it-3471762>

Why are so many migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/channel-crossing-tragedy-small-boats-vf59328b9>

Why do migrants risk their lives crossing the English Channel over staying in France?

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2021/11/25/do-migrants-risk-lives-english-channel-staying-france/>

Why do migrants cross the Channel to the UK and not stay in France?

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/why-do-migrants-cross-the-channel-and-why-cant-the-uk-return-them-to-france-gqhnrcwx>

Channel migrants: Gangs use Brexit to lure passengers

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/channel-migrants-gangs-use-brexit-to-lure-passengers-6sf9kf0lr>

Dinghy deaths tragedy brings home our hostility to the world's desperate

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/24/dinghy-deaths-tragedy-brings-home-our-hostility-to-the-worlds-desperate>

Migrant crisis: Refugee and human rights charities call for 'safe' routes to UK after Channel drowning tragedy

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/migrant-crisis-refugee-and-human-rights-charities-call-for-safe-routes-to-uk-after-channel-drowning-tragedy-3472102>

Failure to prosecute migrants arriving illegally leaves UK looking like 'soft touch'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/26/failure-prosecute-migrants-arriving-illegally-leaves-uk-looking/>

Scottish Refugee Council response to the tragic loss of life in the Channel

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/our-response-to-the-tragic-loss-of-life-in-the-channel/>

Moderator and Archbishop issue statement on refugee crisis

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/articles/moderator-and-archbishop-issue-statement-on-refugee-crisis>

Positive Action in Housing statement in response to the drowning of 27 refugees in the English Channel

<https://www.paih.org/statement-in-response-to-drownings-in-the-english-channel-today/>

Ministers bus cross-Channel migrants to Scotland for processing

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ministers-bus-cross-channel-migrants-to-scotland-for-processing-xnh7n967z>

'I come, or I die': fatalistic refugees say Channel crossing their only option
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/26/i-come-or-i-die-fatalistic-refugees-say-channel-crossing-their-only-option>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Sturgeon calls for migrants not to be used as 'political footballs'
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19741100.sturgeon-calls-migrants-not-used-political-footballs/>

Nobel failure: Home Office admits elite visa has lured no scientists
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nobel-failure-home-office-admits-elite-visa-has-lured-no-scientists-lr62sfwql>

Windrush scheme failures compound previous injustice, say MPs
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-59385477>

Windrush survivor: Will we get government compensation before we die?
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-59385477>

Home Office should be stripped of responsibility for compensating Windrush victims, MPs say
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/windrush-compensation-home-office-b1963040.html>

The Home Office can't be trusted to properly compensate Windrush victims
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/nov/24/home-office-compensate-windrush-victims-home-affairs-select-committee>

More than 20 Windrush scandal victims died 'without receiving compensation'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/11/24/20-windrush-scandal-victims-died-without-receiving-compensation/>

Windrush scandal: Home Office failures 'compound injustice' for victims
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/windrush-scandal-home-office-failures-compound-injustice-for-victims-cr10f5brr>

Students who have lived in UK since childhood denied loans – report
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/nov/23/student-finance-england-young-migrants-lived-uk-childhood-denied-loans>

Asylum claims to UK reach highest level in nearly 20 years
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-59414460>

Asylum applications rise by a fifth in year amid record Channel crossings
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-applications-refugees-channel-uk-b1964125.html>

UK asylum claims at highest level since 2004, with record backlog of cases
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/nov/25/uk-asylum-claims-at-highest-level-since-2004-with-record-backlog-of-cases>

Asylum claims soar to highest level in nearly 20 years amid Channel migrant crisis
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/25/asylum-claims-uk-soar-highest-level-20-years-amid-channel-migrant/>

Asylum claims at highest level for 20 years as Channel crossings surge
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/asylum-claims-at-highest-for-20-years-as-channel-crossings-surge-bk8kx79sq>

Councils to be forced to take child asylum seekers
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-59382187>

Councils forced to take unaccompanied children arriving in small boats
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/english-channel-asylum-migrant-children-b1962743.html>

Councils to be forced to care for unaccompanied migrant children
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/23/councils-forced-care-unaccompanied-migrant-children/>

Voluntary council scheme to look after unaccompanied migrant children is made mandatory
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/voluntary-council-scheme-to-look-after-unaccompanied-migrant-children-is-made-mandatory-xqn50n5dl>

Scots councils request urgent talks with Priti Patel after claims of inaction over asylum crisis
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19735291.scots-councils-request-urgent-talks-priti-patel-claims-inaction-asylum-crisis/>

Priti Patel accuses Scotland of 'not pulling its weight' on asylum seeker crisis
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19733580.priti-patel-accuses-scotland-not-pulling-weight-asylum-seeker-crisis/>

Priti Patel accuses Scotland of 'not pulling its weight' over asylum seeker crisis
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/priti-patel-accuses-scotland-of-not-pulling-its-weight-over-asylum-seeker-crisis-3467408>

Councils need money to take asylum seekers, says MP
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-59387636>

Asylum seekers put in hotels across Scotland
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-59418771>

Asylum decision making – what needs to change?
<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/asylum-decision-making-what-needs-to-change/>

UK task force 'to consider moving migrants from hotels to Army barracks', according to recent reports
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/national/uk-task-force-to-consider-moving-migrants-from-hotels-to-army-barracks-according-to-recent-reports-3466198>

Plan to house more asylum-seekers in military barracks ‘a recipe for disaster,’ warn charities

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/napier-barracks-asylum-seekers-housing-b1962217.html>

Migrant bus trips to Dungavel immigration detention facility condemned

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrant-bus-trips-to-dungavel-immigration-detention-facility-condemned-g0vdxzx85>

Scotland tries to help refugees – but UK policy is a crime against humanity

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19745255.kevin-mckenna-scotland-tries-help-refugees---uk-policy-crime-humanity/>

The UK migrant dilemma - it's all about Brexit

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-59369179>

It's time we re-examined our obligation to refugees

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/its-time-we-re-examined-our-obligation-to-refugees-pdq5xzcfcg>

Britain is losing its soul over problem of migration

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britain-is-losing-its-soul-over-problem-of-migration-wb3wphwss>

‘If you lived like us in Kurdistan, you might risk it all to reach Britain’

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/if-you-lived-like-us-in-kurdistan-you-might-risk-it-all-to-reach-britain-6zs7h8cl9>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Ethnicity Pay Gap

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op): What steps [the Minister] is taking to tackle the ethnicity pay gap; and if she will make a statement. (904385)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Paul Scully): We are considering the range of views and experiences outlined in responses to the ethnicity pay reporting consultation, further soundings from employers and the conclusions of the independent report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, and we will respond formally in due course.

Kate Osamor: Unlike the gender pay gap, there is no legal requirement for companies in the UK to publish their ethnicity pay gap. Research from the TUC has shown that black workers earn 12.8% less on average than their white counterparts, and the gap widens to almost one quarter less when comparing workers with degrees. The Labour party, the TUC, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the CBI are all calling for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting. Can the Minister tell the House when the Government will follow suit and rectify this harmful practice?

Reply from Paul Scully: As I said, we will respond in due course. In the meantime, voluntary reporting by employers exists and we have seen it increase over the past three years. Clearly, there is a balance to be struck, and that is what we are working through with consultation across the board.

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Diplomatic Service: Ethnic Groups

Valerie Vaz (Labour) [80291] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many UK ambassadors are (a) Black, Asian and minority ethnic and (b) to which countries they are ambassadors to.

Reply from Amanda Milling: As of 31 March 2021, 5% of FCDO Heads of Missions, Heads of Posts and Governors declared an ethnicity as Black, Asian or minority ethnic. Further details, including on countries where Heads of Missions, Posts and Governors serve, can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations>

As part of the FCDO's Inclusion Framework, the Achieving Potential pillar actively supports all staff to achieve their potential. This supports the FCDO's objectives, taking personal action to address barriers faced by groups and individuals and demonstrate all staff are valued for their contributions. The FCDO continues to make progress developing the talent pipeline and supporting participation from under-represented groups in Civil Service Talent Schemes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-23/80291>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Prisoners: Ethnic Groups

Lord Bradley (Labour) [HL38=924] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people are currently in prison aged (1) 18 to 24, and (2) 25 to 29, broken down by ethnicity.

Reply from Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The table below shows the numbers of prisoners aged 18 to 24, and 25 to 29, broken down by ethnicity as of 30 September 2021.

Table 1: Number of prisoners, by specific age group and ethnicity, England and Wales as at 30 September 2021

	18-24	25-29	All age groups
All ethnicity groups	11,703	13,031	78,756
Asian or Asian British	1,260	1,188	6,435
Black or Black British	2,442	2,128	10,029
Mixed	976	854	3,865
Other ethnic group	289	262	1,208
White	6,617	8,498	56,573
Unrecorded	87	61	421
Not stated	32	40	225

Data quality

The figures in this table has been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Source: Prison NOMIS System, PQ HL3924 (Ministry of Justice; DASD-DES)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-10/hl3924>

New Publications

Letter from Baroness Williams of Trafford to Baroness Lister of Burtersett regarding clarification of what is meant in the draft statutory guidance for police on unauthorised encampments by 'not gold-plating human rights and equalities legislation'

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0920/Baroness_Williams_to_Baroness_Lister-Unauthorised_encampments.pdf

The guidance referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1026903/Draft_stat_guidance_UEs.pdf

Ethnic inequalities in health in later life, 1993–2017: the persistence of health disadvantage over more than two decades

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/D0EEF72760DDFD4D15F627BA59D06507/S0144686X2100146Xa.pdf/ethnic-inequalities-in-health-in-later-life-19932017-the-persistence-of-health-disadvantage-over-more-than-two-decades.pdf>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament Debate

Islamophobia Awareness Month

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-24/debates/DD26BF90-337B-4E89-8FC7-8D913BDE59CB/IslamophobiaAwarenessMonth>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Islamophobia

Jamie Stone (Liberal Democrat): What steps she plans to take with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to tackle Islamophobia in sport. (904384)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and sport (Nigel Huddleston): I am sure the whole House has been appalled by recent reports of racism in cricket, a sad reminder that racial discrimination still exists within sport. There can be no place for it. Sports bodies must take robust action to tackle this behaviour. The Government and our sports councils are committed to ensuring that sport is inclusive for everyone, and will be watching; where action does not go far enough, the Government are prepared to step in.

Jamie Stone: It seems to me that we have an opportunity here to tackle hate crimes by raising them to the status of aggravated offences. Clearly, training and resources would have to follow that decision, but, while we can all say the right things and be quite correct in what we say about absolutely opposing Islamophobia and antisemitism, unless we do something concrete, we may have this problem for a lot longer than we think.

Reply from Nigel Huddleston: I agree with the hon. Gentleman. He is right: we must ensure that laws are constantly updated and reviewed. That goes for the offline world, but also the online one; I am sure he will be aware of the work we are doing, with cross-party support, on online safety to tackle the important issues he raises.

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Universities: Antisemitism

Matt Vickers (Conservative) [75173] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to tackle rising levels of anti-Semitic abuse on university campuses.

Reply from Michelle Donelan: The government is clear that antisemitism is abhorrent, and we expect higher education (HE) providers to be at the forefront of tackling the challenge of it.

The department has pushed for several years for greater action from HE providers in addressing antisemitism. This has included encouraging institutions to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, in order to have clarity of what constitutes antisemitic behavior. This in turn enables providers to better understand and recognise incidences of antisemitism and take action to address them.

As part of this work, the former Secretary of State for Education wrote out to all HE providers urging adoption of the IHRA definition, stating that we would consider further action if institutions did not adopt. A follow-up letter was sent in May 2021, reinforcing the government's expectation that providers adopt the IHRA definition, stressing the even greater importance of doing so in light of an increased number of antisemitic incidents recorded as a result of the conflict in the Middle East.

In response to this, on 10 November 2021, the Office for Students published a list of providers who have adopted the definition. I am pleased to report good progress in the last year, an increase from around 30 to over 200 providers having adopted. This includes the vast majority of universities. I will continue to urge all providers to adopt.

Adoption of the IHRA definition is only a first step towards ridding HE of antisemitism. I want to be very clear that, while the government considers that adoption of the definition is crucial, it is not enough on its own. I will continue to work with the sector to ensure it better understands antisemitism and does more to end it. I intend to bring together key stakeholders from the sector to examine what more can be done to make Jewish students and staff feel safe on campus.

I will continue to work tirelessly to ensure it is eradicated from our world-leading providers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-15/75173>

The Secretary of State's first letter referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/GavinWilliamson/status/1314506646115278848>

He wrote a follow-up letter in February (not May) 2021 which can be read at

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/48277145-4cf3-497f-b9b7-b13fdf16f46b/ofs-strategic-guidance-20210208.pdf>

and a letter to headteachers in May 2021 referring to an increased number of antisemitic incidents recorded as a result of the conflict in the Middle East. This can be read at

<https://twitter.com/gavinwilliamson/status/1398374786871537664>

The list of providers who have adopted the definition, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/cddac91e-e9a5-49ff-8197-8a5a76c31cde/providers-who-have-adopted-the-ihra-working-definition-of-antisemitism.pdf>

Press Release

New legal fund to tackle race discrimination

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/new-legal-fund-tackle-race-discrimination>

News

MP ‘faces Islamophobic online abuse every day’

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/mp-faces-islamophobic-online-abuse-every-day-7tv69dwt7>

Cabinet Office anti-racism trainer Mizanur Rahman wished death on ‘Zionists’

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cabinet-office-anti-racism-trainer-mizanur-rahman-wished-death-on-zionists-dhtxcbx2r>

Labour Leicester councillor suspended in anti-Semitism probe

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-59387129>

How Toblerone’s filter banned Muhammad from gift products

<https://tellmamauk.org/revealed-how-toblerones-filter-banned-muhammad-from-gift-products/>

It’s not just cricket. Racism against Yorkshire’s south Asian Muslims has a long history

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/nov/21/cricket-racism-yorkshire-south-asian-muslims-azeem-rafiq>

ECB deploys extra staff to deal with flood of racism claims

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ecb-deploys-extra-staff-to-deal-with-flood-of-racism-claims-hwskzmqjs>

Azeem Rafiq: Michael Vaughan says he is sorry for hurt former team-mate has suffered

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/cricket/59432187>

Michael Vaughan ‘sorry’ for hurt Azeem Rafiq has gone through in racism case

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cricket/michael-vaughan-azeem-rafiq-yorkshire-england-bbc-b1965195.html>

Michael Vaughan ‘sorry’ for hurt Rafiq has gone through in racism case

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/michael-vaughan-sorry-for-hurt-rafiq-has-gone-through-in-racism-case-6bzb5v6c7>

Commission receives over 2,000 responses about discrimination in cricket

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cricket/azeem-rafiq-yorkshire-essex-daily-mail-england-and-wales-cricket-board-b1962916.html>

Balwinder Singh Rana: the fearless anti-fascist who fought racism at work – then on the streets

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/nov/24/balwinder-singh-rana-the-fearless-anti-fascist-who-fought-racism-at-work-then-on-the-streets>

Britain's conversations about racism have become deeply counter-productive

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/21/britains-conversations-racism-have-become-deeply-counter-productive/>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Releases

Commitment to future Citizens' Assemblies

<https://www.gov.scot/news/commitment-to-future-citizens-assemblies/>

First Minister's Chanukah Message

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=5131661123564998>

New Publication

Scottish Government response to Doing Politics Differently – The Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland

<https://tinyurl.com/hjwfczyp>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Meat: Ritual Slaughter

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [76653] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of (a) halal and (b) kosher meats exported from the UK.

Victoria Prentis: The 2018 Food Standards Agency's survey into slaughter methods in England and Wales indicates that approximately 24% of meat from sheep slaughtered without stunning was exported to the EU. The Food Standards Agency will be undertaking a further survey in early 2022, which will provide the latest slaughter data.

There is no requirement on meat Export Health Certificates (EHCs) to stipulate if an animal was stunned or not.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-17/76653>

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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>

Book a flu or coronavirus booster vaccination

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/vaccinebooking>

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

Tackling the threat of new COVID-19 variant

<https://www.gov.scot/news/tackling-the-threat-of-new-covid-19-variant/>

Self-isolation for all travellers returning from six African countries

<https://www.gov.scot/news/self-isolation-for-all-travellers-returning-from-six-african-countries/>

Autumn/Winter vaccination milestone

<https://www.gov.scot/news/autumnwinter-vaccination-milestone/>

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/>

UK Government Press Releases

Prime Minister sets out new measures as Omicron variant identified in UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-sets-out-new-measures-as-omicron-variant-identified-in-uk-27-november-2021>

Pregnant women urged to get COVID-19 vaccine following new UK safety data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pregnant-women-urged-to-get-covid-19-vaccine-following-new-uk-safety-data>

COVID-19 variants identified in the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-variants-identified-in-the-uk>

UK Government Publications

The R value and growth rate

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

Other Organisation

Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity / Runnymede Trust

Ethnic Minority Older People, Histories of Structural Racism and the COVID-19 Pandemic

https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/205973173/Runnymede_COVID_Older_people_briefing_FINAL.pdf

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New Publication

The Power of Language: A consultation report on the use of collective terminology at the NHS Race and Health Observatory

https://www.nhsrho.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NHS_RaceHealthObservatory_Terminology-consultation-report-NOV-21.pdf

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Other News

Survey finds 'BAME', 'BME' and 'Ethnic Minority' not representative

<https://www.nhsrho.org/news/survey-finds-bame-bme-and-ethnic-minority-not-representative/>

BAME label 'crudely conflates' ethnic groups and should be scrapped, research finds

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/25/bame-label-crudely-conflates-ethnic-groups-should-scrapped-research/>

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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>

Evidence session, Joint Committee on Human Rights

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/3043/html/>

and

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/3047/default/>

Notice of amendments

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0187/amend/natbord_rm_rep_1129v2.pdf

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

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

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

The future of recorded crime and police activity statistics (closing date 10 December 2021)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-future-recorded-crime-police-activity-statistics/>

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.

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

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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Scotland's Winter Festivals 2021/2022 Small Grants Fund

closing date: 17 January 2022

Scottish Government / BEMIS grants of up to £2,000 are available to constituted, charitable and non-profit organisations or community groups to host an event for Burns Night. Scotland's Winter Festivals aim to mobilise the people of Scotland and those with an affinity to Scotland to join in the Burns Night celebrations. Our diverse ethnic and cultural minority communities are key elements of Scotland's past, present and future so BEMIS want to ensure that your story, history, and narrative plays a full part in Scotland's Winter Festivals. For information and to apply, see <https://bemis.org.uk/swf/>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Serve Your Community: Police Officer Information Session for BME Communities

29 November 2021 (Inverness, 6.00–9.00)

Police Scotland events for people from all minority ethnic backgrounds, to encourage more

applications from groups currently under-represented within the Police Service. Includes an opportunity to hear from serving BME Police Officers, and to try the fitness test. For information contact recruitmentpositiveactionteam@scotland.pnn.police.uk and also send a request to join the closed Facebook page at “Police Scotland Positive Action”.

**** this week!**

Books for the Hostile Environment: Facts, Fictions and Futures of Migration

3 December 2021 (Edinburgh, 2.30–3.30)

Winter Tales Book Festival event asking what literature can do to resist the hostile environment. The panel features renowned authors, academics, and activists who come together to present facts and fictions about migration, point to possible futures, and ponder the role that literature can have in making societies more welcoming. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yjawa7hb>

**** this week!**

Cathy MacDonald in conversation with Mona Siddiqui

4 December 2021 (Edinburgh, 11.30–12.30)

Winter Tales Book Festival event with BBC broadcaster Cathy MacDonald who interviews Mona Siddiqui about her writing career, the inspiration behind her writing, and how her beliefs have shaped her work. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/v8dy3kh3>

**** this week!**

Jewish Tales from Scotland

5 December 2021 (Edinburgh, 12.15–1.15)

Winter Tales Book Festival stories and music event bringing aspects of Scottish Jewish history to life with a tour of the ‘Jewish quarter’ of Edinburgh and of the Gorbals in Glasgow, where we will listen to the sounds of the streets, the tenements and synagogue music of the early twentieth century. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/59pxv4wy>

**** Marginalised Voices: The Impact of Covid on Older Ethnic Minority People**

6 December 2021 (online, 2.00–3.30)

Runnymede Trust and the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity webinar to discuss why Covid has had such a devastating impact on the older ethnic minority population. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3cycnkay>

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>

Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement

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>

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

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

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>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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>

No Recourse to Public Funds

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>

Light the Darkness: UK Holocaust Memorial Day 2022

27 January 2022 (online, 7.00–8.00)

Households across the UK will be lighting candles and safely putting them in their windows to remember those who were murdered for who they were, and stand against prejudice and hatred today. For information see <https://www.hmd.org.uk/take-part-in-holocaust-memorial-day/ukhmd/>

Supporting Refugee Integration

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>

Working with Interpreters

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>

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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SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438) <https://www.scojec.org/>

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

BEMIS is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. (Scottish Charity, no. SC027692) <http://www.bemis.org.uk/>



The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.gov.scot/>

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