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**The Scottish Parliament will be in recess until 18 April 2022,
and the UK Parliament until 19 April 2022.**

The next issue of MEMO will be on 25 April 2022.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Ukrainian Refugees (Protection)

Jamie Greene (Conservative) [S6F-00962] To ask the First Minister what immediate safeguarding measures will be in place to ensure that arrivals from Ukraine are protected from organised criminal activity, human trafficking and exploitation. (S6F-00962)

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Any form of human trafficking or exploitation is abhorrent and people must be protected from it. Police Scotland's

national human trafficking unit continues to engage with internal and external partners and enforcement agencies to maintain high visibility of human trafficking and exploitation risks at points of entry around Scotland. Anyone with concerns about human trafficking should contact Police Scotland.

On safeguarding, where people are opening their homes to displaced people from Ukraine, hosts can apply for expedited disclosure checks of the same level of scrutiny as the initial checks that are carried out for those working with children and vulnerable adults. That comes under the new regulations that were introduced last week to ensure that we have a safe, speedy and free vetting system.

Jamie Greene: We all thank the huge number of Scottish families who have come forward to open their homes to the Ukrainians who are coming here through the United Kingdom-wide scheme. However, we have to be realistic about the fact that, sadly, not everyone who offers help will be well intentioned. In fact, organised criminal gangs may see what is happening in Ukraine as more of an opportunity than a tragedy.

A number of important organisations, including the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, or TARA, Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland and Scotland Against Modern Slavery have all raised valid concerns about the vulnerability and desperation of those who are arriving and the potential for harm as a result of arrivals being lured into low-paid, illegal or sexually exploitative activities or—even worse—simply being abused in private homes.

What work will be undertaken by the Government and its public agencies to adequately vet and prepare, and also educate, host families before the arrival of those who are coming to Scotland? After they have arrived and settled, what on-going safeguards will be in place in the medium to long term to ensure that we track, trace and monitor both the wellbeing and the safety of those who have resettled in Scotland to ensure that none of them is being exploited in any way whatsoever?

Reply from the First Minister: That is a very important issue. We are, and we have been, designing support services to ensure that appropriate safeguarding is in place and that we, and the partners with whom we are working, can take account of the on-going wellbeing needs of those who come to Scotland. Disclosure checks are an important part of that, but we are taking a multi-agency approach to ensure that people get the support that they need, not just on arrival and when they are first being accommodated but throughout the time that they may be in Scotland.

One of the reasons why we agreed the supersponsor route with the UK Government was to ensure that we could have an approach that gets people to Scotland quickly and accommodates them temporarily, while on a slightly longer timescale—I stress the word “slightly”—we can put in place all the wider support and do all the appropriate checks. We have support arrangements already in place, starting with the welcome hubs that have been established.

The big hold-up at the moment—we are working constructively with the UK Government to try to resolve this, and I met Michael Gove earlier this week to discuss it—is that, although we have the supersponsor route and the support in place, we are currently being held up by the slow pace of the granting of visas. I know that the UK Government is seeking to speed that up, and I hope that that happens quickly, so that we can start to welcome significant numbers of people to Scotland, with all the support that Jamie Greene rightly identifies as being vital for them.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13679&i=124162#ScotParlOR>

Ukrainian Refugees (Warm Scots Welcome Scheme)

Bill Kidd (SNP) [S6O-00946] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the warm Scots welcome scheme for Ukrainian refugees.

Reply from the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine (Neil Gray): We have worked rapidly with a number of partners to set up our warm Scots welcome programme and supersponsor scheme, linking in to the United Kingdom Government's visa and homes for Ukraine scheme.

We have established welcome hubs to support displaced Ukrainians who are arriving in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Cairnryan with a place of safety and security. Those will provide meals and accommodation and will triage people to find out what support they need. We will ensure that everyone is treated with compassion, dignity and respect.

We continue to work closely with the United Kingdom Government to understand when and how people are arriving in Scotland, and we share the frustration of those who want to provide accommodation in Scotland, and the anxiety of those fleeing war, at the slow pace of the Home Office in turning applications into visas. We are working with UK ministers to encourage them to move at a quicker pace, to allow people to arrive as quickly as possible.

Bill Kidd: Does the minister agree that the safeguarding of refugees in the UK is a top priority, and that policies to eradicate the human trafficking, procuring and sexual exploitation of women and girls are an important aspect of protecting those who are more vulnerable to such exploitation, such as lone women and children who are fleeing conflicts and humanitarian crises?

Reply from Neil Gray: Yes. It is, of course, vital that those who are fleeing the illegal war in Ukraine are protected as they seek to find a place of safety. Any form of human trafficking or exploitation is completely unacceptable, and I encourage anyone who has concerns about human trafficking to report them to the modern slavery and exploitation helpline or to Police Scotland. We have translated a range of key information on the Scottish Government website and I urge people who are seeking sanctuary in Scotland and those who are assisting them to follow those guidelines.

Police Scotland's national human trafficking unit continues to engage with internal and external partners and enforcement agencies to maintain a high visibility of human trafficking and exploitation risks at points of entry around Scotland.

This week, we have introduced new regulations to ensure that we have in place a safe, speedy and free vetting system. That means that people who are opening their homes to displaced people from Ukraine can apply for expedited disclosure checks of the same level of scrutiny as the initial checks that are carried out for those who work with children or vulnerable adults.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13679&i=124180#ScotParlOR>

Ukrainian Refugees (Support)

Siobhian Brown (SNP) [S6O-00947] To ask the Scottish Government what support Ukrainian refugees will receive after arriving at a welcome hub in Scotland. (S6O-00947)

Reply from the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine (Neil Gray): Multi-agency teams will be on hand at our welcome hubs to triage people, assess their needs and provide support such as healthcare, translation services, clothes, food, temporary accommodation and trauma support.

The people who come here from Ukraine have a right to work and to access social security and public funds, so we will ensure that they are aware of and get access to the wide range of services and support that they need. Welcome packs in Ukrainian will provide information on accessing a range of support, translators will be on hand to help and trauma experts will be on call.

Siobhian Brown: I have been contacted by many constituents who are looking to host refugees fleeing Ukraine. How is the Scottish Government co-ordinating with local authorities to ensure that refugees and hosts are given proper support?

Reply from Neil Gray: I thank Siobhian Brown for giving me the opportunity to thank people around Scotland for their incredible generosity in wanting to open their homes to those forced to flee Ukraine.

Scotland has a wealth of experience and learning from previous refugee schemes. As set out in the “New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022”, we have a tried and tested approach to integrating refugees into our communities, schools and workplaces.

We are working closely with a range of partners to develop clear guidance for local authorities and individual hosts, as well as to put in place support for Ukrainians who arrive through that route. We are also encouraging all those who wish to provide support to look at the Ready Scotland website, which has information about local refugee support groups. I encourage people to reach out to those groups, to see what more they might be able to do to help....

Sharon Dowe (Conservative): Much has been made of the supersponsorship scheme, but what of the next steps? As of last night, officials at the City of Edinburgh Council said that they were still waiting for data on those who have expressed an interest in hosting Ukrainians, so that they can start pairing refugees with homes. Meanwhile, hundreds of Scots who are ready to open their doors are still waiting for an update. Has that data been made available to councils since last night? How many Ukrainians who have arrived in Scotland have been matched with a home?

Reply from Neil Gray: Sharon Dowe will share my frustration at the slow pace of receipt of data from the United Kingdom Government. At the end of the day, we are still reliant on the UK Government’s immigration system in order to work at speed. To be fair, an incredible effort was made following the First Minister’s conception of the supersponsor idea on one Friday to getting the system up and running on the following Friday. However, since then, it has been a very slow process in getting applications turned into visas and in our receiving the data.

I appreciate the frustration that the member feels. We feel it too, and we are asking the UK Government to move much faster to make sure that those who are offering support with accommodation here in Scotland and those fleeing war in Ukraine get what they need as quickly as possible.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13679&i=124181#ScotParlOR>

Ukrainian Refugees (Access to Resources)

Gillian Mackay (Green) [S6O-00939] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its discussions with the United Kingdom Government to ensure that refugees arriving in Scotland from Ukraine have access to the resources that they need.

Reply from the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine (Neil Gray): We have been working closely with the UK Government on the operation of its homes for Ukraine scheme, and Scotland’s supersponsor offer to provide a safe place of refuge and sanctuary to displaced Ukrainians as part of that scheme is now open. The people who come here from Ukraine have a right to work and have access to social security and public funds, so we will ensure that people are aware of, and get access to, the wide range of services and support that they need. The complex needs and human rights of those who are fleeing the atrocities in Ukraine are our number 1 priority. Welcome packs in Ukrainian will provide information on accessing a range of support, translators will be on hand to help and trauma experts will be on call.

Gillian Mackay: This morning at the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee in the House of Commons, Lord Harrington, the Minister of State for Refugees, said that he had previously inadvertently given the wrong information on the £10,500 per person tariff that local authorities would receive to support refugees from Ukraine who are settling in our communities. He clarified that the funding would now only be available based on the number of people coming through the homes for Ukraine scheme and not anyone settling through the Ukraine family scheme. Does the minister agree that such a lack of parity for people who are fleeing the same war is unacceptable?

Reply from Neil Gray: Yes, I do, and I thank Gillian Mackay for raising that important and concerning development. I said in my previous answer that we have been working closely and well at the official and ministerial level, so it is all the more disappointing that the first that we heard of the development was when Lord Harrington articulated it to the Commons committee this morning. That is clearly unacceptable in itself.

The £10,500 per person tariff is for local authorities “to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities.”

It is there to meet costs incurred by councils that will come up regardless of how the people arrive. The Scottish Government is, of course, providing local authorities with funding of £13 million over and above the UK Government tariff.

The UK Government decision will clearly leave some local authorities disadvantaged because displaced people will arrive via the family route rather than the homes for Ukraine or supersponsor route. Any areas that have a significant Ukrainian settled population will obviously see more people arriving by the family route and they will therefore be disadvantaged.

I totally agree that such a potential lack of parity is unacceptable. I assure Gillian Mackay that we will pursue the matter vigorously with the UK Government, and I expect other areas across the UK to do likewise. The UK Government must reconsider.

Clare Adamson (SNP): The welcome hubs for Ukrainian refugees will be vital in getting the right information to people arriving in Scotland. What can wider civic Scotland and the media do to ensure that dignity, respect, and privacy are given to Ukrainian refugees to allow them the time to settle in Scotland?

Reply from Neil Gray: I thank Clare Adamson for raising such an important issue. It should go without saying that people arriving here who are escaping the trauma of war should be afforded dignity and privacy so that they can rebuild their lives here in Scotland. I hope that that will be respected by everyone across Scotland, the media and others included.

We will do all that we can with our local authority and third sector partners to ensure that we give the people who arrive from Ukraine the protection and safeguarding that they need. There is genuine goodwill among the people of Scotland towards the people who are arriving here, and it has been heartening to see that, but Claire Adamson is right that we need to continue to reflect on what is happening and ensure that they are given a warm Scottish welcome when they arrive.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13677&i=124131#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Immigration: Hong Kong

Jeremy Balfour (Conservative) [S6W-07458] To ask the Scottish Government how it has supported former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland.

Reply from Shona Robison: We welcome people from Hong Kong who have

chosen to move to Scotland. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting their integration into our communities and we have also published a dedicated British National (Overseas) welcome pack, in both English and Cantonese, on our website.

The Scottish Government is taking a coordinated cross-portfolio approach to support BN(O) nationals coming to Scotland, working with COSLA to assess the impact on public services in key local authorities. We have been pressing the UK Government to provide clarity on when the £2.98M funding for integration support will be transferred to the Scottish Government.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-07458>

Scottish Parliament Motions

Bill Kidd (SNP) [S6M-03629] Protecting Refugees and Making Scotland a Hostile Place for Human Traffickers – That the Parliament notes with concern reports that human traffickers are targeting Ukrainian women and child refugees, who are amassing in the countries bordering Ukraine and also in Germany; understands from reports that German, Romanian and Polish police are reporting of lone women and girls being approached by suspected traffickers and procurers, who, it believes, are using deceptive tactics of offering rooms and work, which would lead to dangerous exploitation and abuse; considers that these developments confirm the findings of the *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, as submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in December 2015, stating that "humanitarian crises or conflicts can also foster the demand factor. The ensuing chaos and lawlessness empower offenders to target vulnerable children in order to sell and/or sexually exploit them"; understands that two thirds of victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation are women and one third are children; notes that the charity A21, which re-shelters victims of trafficking, and the UNHCR, have released statements highlighting the vulnerabilities of women and children fleeing Ukraine; further notes that the UNHCR has emphasised the importance of family reunification schemes to protect children who have been split up from their parents while fleeing Ukraine, and has urged countries receiving refugees to adopt official blue dot safety points; believes that, when refugees arrive in Scotland, including in Glasgow, they must be protected by proactive safeguarding schemes and not be subject to the same prospects of abuse and forced prostitution; commends the Equally Safe strategy and the A Model for Scotland campaign as they address what it sees as the violent nature of the prostitution system and its facilitation of mass rape; notes the calls for Scotland to become a hostile environment for human traffickers and, to this end, to make the purchase of sex illegal, and further notes the view that the vulnerabilities and plight of Ukrainian refugees reinforce the need to address what it sees as the systemic violence against women and children, and that this underlines the urgency of tackling the demand for prostitution, which, it believes, fosters trafficking, in Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-03629>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/831601/files/A_HRC_31_58-EN.pdf

The strategy referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/equally-safe-scotlands-strategy-prevent-eradicate-violence-against-women-girls/>

Information about the campaign referred to above can be read at

<https://www.amodelforscotland.org/>

Sharon Dowey (Conservative) [S6M-03850] Supporting Hong Kongers in Scotland – That the Parliament supports the welcoming of Hong Kongers to settle in Scotland; understands the need to make them feel welcome in the communities that they choose to settle in; further supports the setting out of a plan to attract more Hong Kongers to Scotland; acknowledges what it sees as the role this has to play in accommodating British National Overseas (BNO) visa holders who are fleeing Hong Kong; considers that there is a need to stop bullying and racism, which, it believes, some Hong Kongers face from some Chinese communities in Scotland; expresses its support to those who are applying to the BNO visa scheme in order to escape what it considers as the anti-democracy environment in their home city, and hopes that Hong Kongers are happy with their decision to settle in Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-03850>

Alexander Burnett (Conservative) [S6M-03787] Commending Aberdeenshire on Welcoming Ukrainian Refugees – That the Parliament congratulates Aberdeenshire on its reported recognition as the top place in the UK for welcoming Ukrainian refugees; understands that more than 1,000 families from the area have signed up to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a figure that is expected to rise; acknowledges that the horrific situation in Ukraine has forced hundreds of thousands of innocent people to flee their homes, leaving everything they know and love behind; commends the north-east for playing a large part in helping refugees during this time of crisis, and thanks everyone who is taking part in the scheme across the country for their generosity and support for those in Ukraine.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-03787>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Immigration Rule Changes

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): [HCWS10] ... The changes reflect our commitments to Ukraine and the main changes are as follows:

We are now formally bringing the Ukraine Family Scheme, launched on 4 March 2022; the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme launched on 18 March 2022; and a new Ukraine Extension Scheme, which will launch on 3 May 2022 into the Immigration Rules.

These new routes show the UK stands shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine and its citizens. The changes we have made to the visa process are making it quicker and simpler for Ukrainians to come here, as well as ensuring those already here can stay.

A Ukrainian national who is an immediate or extended family member of a person in the UK who is a British citizen, settled in the UK, or who has certain types of limited leave can come to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme if they were resident in Ukraine immediately before 1 January 2022. They can also bring their immediate family members to the UK.

A person who meets these requirements who is already in the UK can also apply to stay, so long as they have permission to be in the UK—except as a visitor—or if their permission to stay has recently ended.

Immediate and extended family members include married, civil and durable partners, fiancé(e)s or proposed civil partners, parents—of a person both under and over 18 years old—grandparents, grandchildren, children—both under and over 18 years of age—siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and in-laws, as well as their immediate family members—partner, parents and children.

A Ukrainian national and their immediate family members can come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme if they were resident in Ukraine immediately before 1 January 2022 and have an approved sponsor in the UK who has agreed to

provide them with accommodation for at least six months.

A Ukrainian national and their partner and children who had permission to stay in the UK on 18 March 2022—or which has expired since 1 January 2022—can stay in the UK under the Ukraine Extension Scheme.

All the routes are free.

Applicants must also meet suitability requirements and under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme the sponsor and anyone else living in the accommodation will be subject to security checks.

People applying for entry clearance who have a valid Ukrainian passport are able to start their application overseas, and, if they appear to be eligible, they will be permitted to travel to the UK and granted permission to enter for six months on arrival, and they can complete their application for three years' permission to stay by providing biometrics in the UK.

Successful applicants will be granted permission to stay in the UK with full access to work, study and public funds.

Due to the importance of providing the certainty reflected in these rules, they will come into effect on 30 March 2022 for the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme; and 3 May 2022 for the Ukraine Extension Scheme.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-29/debates/22032981000021/ImmigrationRuleChanges>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Ukraine Refugee Visas

Yvette Cooper (Labour): To ask the Home Secretary to make a statement on visas for Ukrainian refugees.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): ... Under the Ukraine family scheme, more than 23,500 visas have been issued to family members of Ukrainians already here in the UK. After setting up the scheme, we extended it to cover wider family members. Alongside that, we have set up the Homes for Ukraine scheme, to provide a safe and legal route for Ukrainians who do not have existing family ties in the UK. ... It has been heartwarming to see so many members of the public coming forward as sponsors ... Both those schemes are free and allow people on them to work and access public funds.

We have made it as easy as possible for people to apply. We have simplified the application form to make it quick and easy to use. We have increased capacity in visa application centres across Europe. Following advice from security and intelligence agencies that it was safe to do so, we have removed the need for biometrics to be taken from those with valid Ukrainian passports before arrival in the UK, allowing the vast majority of applicants to apply entirely online. We regularly monitor the scheme's operational performance, bringing in additional caseworkers to ensure Ukrainian applications are prioritised. Our humanitarian response has involved the whole of Government, local authorities and the devolved Administrations, and we will keep working together to support Ukrainians who want to come to the UK.

Yvette Cooper: ... This visa system is simply not working. It is leaving thousands of families in limbo because of Home Office bureaucracy. A businesswoman who is trying to get her sister and daughter to come here on the family visa scheme is still waiting, 10 days after she applied to the Home Office. A constituent of mine in Pontefract who applied under the Homes for Ukraine scheme has been waiting nearly two weeks to hear anything back from the Home Office. Another British host who applied for a visa for a woman undergoing a high-risk pregnancy has waited 12 days for a reply. Despite the Home Office helpline

saying that she would be treated as a priority, that woman has had to travel extensively to complete biometrics in Warsaw and has still received no reply.

A mother and two young sons who had been granted a family visa and were due to travel this week had their visa revoked at the last minute. They had been advised by the visa centre to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme as well, so that they could link up with a host family. Now the Home Office has revoked their first visa and said that they cannot travel, and it has told them nothing more about what is going on. This is Kafkaesque. What on earth is going on? Why is the Home Secretary so totally incapable of getting any grip on this, despite repeated questions we have asked?

Can the Minister tell us how many people have actually arrived on the Homes for Ukraine scheme? Why on earth is it too early to tell us? The Government should be able to give us the basic facts. On the family visas, 23,000 have been issued so far, but 25,000 people had already applied and submitted their applications more than two weeks ago, so it is clearly taking at least two weeks to clear cases. Even at the current rate, only 700 family visas have been issued since yesterday. At that rate, it is going to take well over a week just to clear the existing backlog of cases that he accepts have been submitted.

The Home Office has suddenly stopped publishing all the figures and deleted from its figures the thousands of people who are still waiting for a visa centre appointment. That is not good enough. It is not the kind of transparency we need to make sure that desperate people are getting the support they need. Why on earth is it taking so long? Why are we still demanding reams of bureaucracy and reams of information when the Government have been told by the refugees Minister and by Home Office officials that the security checks can be done really quickly? Why, then, is this taking so long? Why are they expecting people still to make these emergency journeys?

Tens of thousands of people are still stuck in the system. Families are desperate. People from across Britain have said that they want to help, yet the Home Office is letting the whole system down. Is that deliberate, or is it just total incompetence? Why on earth can the Home Secretary not get a grip on this and sort it out, to help desperate families? ...

Reply from Kevin Foster: First, it is too early to say how many people have arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but we are now publishing details of visa grants. By 9am today 3,705 visas had been granted, and the trajectory for visa grants is increasing every day. I remind hon. Members that at one point last week we issued nearly 6,000 family scheme visas in two days. Again, that shows the type of capacity available once we get decisions ready to be made, and we would expect to see a similar increase in trajectory on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

On the accusation that applications are being deleted, what has actually happened is, first, a removal of duplicates, for example where someone applied initially with biometrics and then did so without biometrics. Where someone did not qualify for the family scheme but they have someone in the UK who would be prepared to sponsor them—such as godparents, for the sake of argument—we transfer this over to the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Members will realise why that is a sensible and proportionate approach to take.

On the accusation about “reams of info”, we have cut back on what people are asked to supply. We do not need authorised translations and people can submit in Ukrainian, with the most basic of documentation: any evidence that shows residence in Ukraine. Again, we are not asking people to give us travel history or previous addresses; we are asking purely for something that shows they were resident in Ukraine in December and that there is a basic family link, if relevant, for the family scheme. We are cutting down the information purely to that which is necessary for vital safeguarding checks.

This is the latest in a number of humanitarian interventions and routes we have created over the past year. We saw the determination to help people in Afghanistan, from which we saw the biggest evacuation since Dunkirk; we saw the British

national overseas route delivered, with more than 100,000 applications over the past year; and now we see these two routes for Ukrainians set up in record time, with tens of thousands of people already having visas under them. I just compare that with how the shadow Home Secretary got on with her own pledge to rehome one Syrian refugee.

Robert Jenrick (Conservative): This is going to be a wonderful scheme and we are all looking forward to welcoming tens of thousands of Ukrainians to this country, but something is going wrong with the scheme right now. Tomorrow, the vast majority of sponsors will have waited two weeks and will not have heard anything at all. We are testing the patience of people in this country who have put themselves forward as sponsors and, much more importantly, we are letting down vulnerable individuals and families in Ukraine. We need to process only about 8,000 households, and we are talking about 20,000 or 30,000 applications in total. That is not a huge or insurmountable task, but it does require the Home Office to make sure that the resources and the leadership are in place to get this sorted. I hope that we have heard today from the Minister that that will now happen in the next few days.

Reply from Kevin Foster: My right hon. Friend is right to say that people want to get on and help. Tens of thousands of people throughout the country have made a very generous offer and they want to be able to extend that and for it to be taken up. We are rightly doing vital safeguarding checks. Sadly, we have had some pings on the police national computer in respect of some of the sponsors who have come forward, and we will need to consider them, but the vast and overwhelming majority of people want to do the right thing.

I appreciate my right hon. Friend's wish that we go faster. As I have touched on, the rate at which visas are being granted is increasing. As we have seen with the Ukraine family scheme, once people have passed through a number of checks, we can quickly start to issue a large number of visas, which is what we plan to do. ...

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): Four million people are seeking sanctuary, but just 0.6% of them have been offered sanctuary in the UK. That is the inevitable consequence of using a clunky, bureaucratic and, frankly, traumatising visa system to deal with an urgent humanitarian crisis.

Around 140 countries do not require Ukrainians to have a visa before they travel there; we say it should be the same for the United Kingdom. I appreciate that the Government do not want to go as far as that, but why not allow even some Ukrainians—for example, those with biometric passports and children—to travel visa-free? That would free up significant capacity to speed things along. If that is not possible, will the Minister publish the reasons why he thinks it is not? If it is really all about security, why are there any other visa requirements at all? Why not grant a visa to any Ukrainian refugee who applies for one? Finally, I welcome the Ukraine extension scheme that was announced this week, but it still excludes the possibility of people bringing their family here under the family scheme. A seasonal agricultural worker who switches to that route will still not be able to sponsor their family under the family route. Why not allow that to happen? Why not also allow Ukrainians whose visas expired before January to apply under the extension scheme? Until that changes, the Government are still excluding the possibility of huge swathes of the Ukrainian community here being joined by their families. Allowing that is the least we should be doing.

Reply from Kevin Foster: I appreciate ... the fact that there is a fundamental difference in respect of our belief, based on the advice we have received, that there needs to be a visa process with safeguarding checks and certain key security checks. We would not usually publish such advice, particularly when it is from intelligence and security agencies, for reasons with which the hon. Gentleman will be familiar.

On the hon. Gentleman's specific points about the Ukraine extension scheme,

provided that the people on that scheme have at least six months' leave to remain—which they will have—they will be able to sponsor people under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. He gave the particular example of seasonal workers; the bigger challenge there will be to ensure that there is appropriate accommodation. I do not think any of us would advocate that it would be sensible to bring people into the UK without at least having an idea of where they would spend their first night in bed.

We have worked with the Scottish Government on their super-sponsor scheme, which allows someone who does not have a sponsor to come here, with the Scottish Government in effect becoming their sponsor here in the UK. Applications for that scheme have been received and we have been pleased to work on it with the Scottish Government and, in particular, with Neil Gray, to whom I pay tribute from the Dispatch Box for his constructive work.

Strong progress is being made. We have seen what we have already done with the family scheme; we would now expect to see the same trajectory for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The question asked in the previous session on this issue may perhaps be asked in this one, and we still believe it is right that we do safeguarding checks, particularly given that children will potentially come to live with adults they have not previously met. ...

To continue reading this very lengthy question and answer session in full see <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-31/debates/54673590-EFEF-45B6-94ED-A61B247AC5B8/UkraineRefugeeVisas>

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Mike Amesbury (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities if he will make a statement on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Eddie Hughes): ... In this country there has been an outpouring of public support for the Ukrainian people, and we have matched the generosity of the British public with an ambitious humanitarian offer to Ukrainians who wish to come to the UK to escape the conflict. As hon. Members will know, since the Home Office opened and expanded the Ukrainian family scheme and my Department launched the Homes for Ukraine scheme with our Home Office colleagues, both schemes have received thousands upon thousands of applications from people willing to open their heart and their home to a new guest. We have balanced the need to move rapidly with the equal need to get the Homes for Ukraine scheme right. The visa application process opened on Friday 18 March, since when we have seen the first arrivals come to the UK. Members on both sides of the House are as invested as we are in making the scheme as efficient and effective as possible. We are minimising bureaucratic foot-dragging and cutting unnecessary red tape, while making sure people are set up in the best possible situation to start a life in the UK and to access the right local services and support. The scheme will be a success only if local and national Government work as one, so we are providing councils with £10,500 per guest to help with all the support they will need. We have been working with the Local Government Association and individual councils across the country to fine-tune the scheme's practicalities and logistics. As the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said, we will keep things under review to ensure that local government has and gets what it needs. We are also working closely with the devolved Administrations to ensure that we have a consistent offer across the country. Some 4 million Ukrainians have been displaced by this bloody and unjust war so far. The UK will continue to respond to the gravity of the conflict and we will continue to work with Members of the House to open up our communities to Ukrainians in the weeks and months ahead.

Mike Amesbury: Nearly 150,000 people have signed up to sponsor Ukrainian refugees in

a testament to the generous spirit of our nation and regions, yet that generosity risks being wasted because the figures released confirm that just 2,700 visas have been granted by the Government under the scheme so far. Of course, visas being granted are not the same as refugees arriving here after fleeing for their lives from the bullets, missiles and bombs. Can the Minister tell the House how many refugees have arrived in the UK through the scheme and what has gone wrong so far in getting them here?

After the issue with visas, things are even less clear. There remain real concerns among councils that have not been addressed. How will they know when refugees have arrived in their authority and require services? Proactive data sharing is simply not good enough and safeguarding is falling down. Do the checks on sponsor families need to have been fully completed before a family can begin travelling to the UK? Does the £10,500 for councils, which the Minister mentioned, cover refugees only in this scheme or in the family visa scheme too?

There are real fears of a homelessness crisis if sponsorships break down. As reported yesterday by the Local Government Association, nearly 150 Ukrainians have already presented themselves to councils as homeless having fled the conflict to stay with family members in the UK who have no room. Can the Minister tell me and the House what urgent guidance and support his Department is giving to councils on those cases?

The Government must now take an active role in matching sponsors to refugees, otherwise the generosity of people who want to help will be wasted. The British people have stepped up in Ukraine's hour of need; it is clear that the Government urgently need to do the same.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: I think that the Government are acting urgently. ...

The hon. Gentleman mentioned a figure of 150,000; I believe that the number of people who have expressed an interest and are prepared to open up their homes is closer to 200,000. ... It is slightly frustrating to answer one question and have Opposition Members race ahead to the three or four others that have been asked. Patience would be a virtue for everybody involved in this process—at least for the sake of this urgent question. Mr Speaker, do you not think it would be nice for them to wait for the answer before they get too carried away?

How will councils know? We have a matching process and once the sponsor has been matched with the guest online with the form, councils will be alerted so that they know that a match has been made for a sponsor in their area. They can then begin the process of preparation immediately.

Will checks need to be completed fully before people travel? Inasmuch as once the visa is granted, checks will already have started, we will already have started to investigate whether there has been criminality on the part of either party. We need to make absolutely sure that we are reassured of the safety on both sides of the equation—of the person travelling here and of the people opening up their homes. Those checks will be carried out initially and then further checks will be carried out by the receiving authority once it has been notified of the match.

Once the authority has been notified, it will be expected to go out and inspect the property to make sure it is appropriate for such people's needs, and begin the process of further checks, as required. For example, if there are children or vulnerable adults in the households that are coming, a further enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check will be required.

With regards to the money, the £10,500 is for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Obviously, for the rest of the elements of this scheme, we are making a very generous offer in that people who arrive in the UK will be allowed to work and claim benefits immediately, so that they can begin to integrate fully here.

Finally, on the 150 homeless people the hon. Gentleman mentioned, he will know that I, as the Minister for homelessness, have a very keen interest in this. We will be investigating to ensure that we completely understand what has led to such a situation. As a Government, with the charities and all involved—and MPs have a

role in this—we need to make sure people understand that the most appropriate, safe and reliable route is that prescribed by the Government. ...

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): Almost 200,000 volunteers is of course absolutely brilliant, but the fact that only 2,000 or 3,000 people have yet benefited from it is obviously far from that. Can I encourage the Government to keep working to simplify the process, but also to raise awareness of this scheme? We have had complaints that there is a lack of awareness of it among those fleeing Ukraine.

We have heard about the possible dangers of people trying to abuse the system for trafficking or exploitation purposes. Is that not also an argument for considering empowering local authorities to act as super-sponsors? That would allow a greater opportunity for safeguarding and for appropriate matching to be done.

May I ask about the co-ordination of the three different schemes that now exist? For example, could people who arrive under the family scheme who cannot be accommodated by their relatives instead be matched to one of the volunteers under the sponsorship scheme? That would seem a very simple and obvious way to avoid the homelessness we have heard about. It would also address the concerns expressed by the immigration Minister—the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, the hon. Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster)—when I raised the prospect of seasonal agricultural workers being able to bring in their families. Even if the families cannot be accommodated with them, why not use a community sponsorship scheme to solve that problem?

Local authority funding under this sponsorship scheme is excellent, but why is there no funding for areas where significant numbers of Ukrainians are arriving under the family scheme, for example? Should that not be looked at again? May I ask what thinking there has been about what will happen later this year if significant numbers of Ukrainians are no longer able to remain with their hosts?

Finally, we still have several thousand Afghans in hotels. Can volunteers be asked if they would be willing to take an Afghan as well?

Reply from Eddie Hughes: The hon. Gentleman mentions that 2,000 or 3,000 visas have been granted, but 27,000 visas have been granted across the two schemes, and I think we need to be mindful of that. On the super-sponsor route and the idea that councils might be allowed to do that, I think we need to tread cautiously. We have one scheme running, and we need to make sure this one is running as effectively and efficiently as possible.

I am absolutely delighted by the offer that has been made by the devolved Assemblies in Wales and Scotland. It is absolutely tremendous to see the work that is being done in Scotland, and it is a great demonstration of Governments working together across the United Kingdom to make this process work.

On moves between schemes, for the moment we are trying to ensure that people stick to one route wherever possible. We will keep this under constant review, because we need to make sure that we respond to a developing situation.

Finally, on Afghans, we learn from one scheme as we develop another, so as this one progresses we will understand what merits it has and what challenges it provides, and we will use that learning to determine what we can apply to other schemes in operation in this country. ...

To continue reading this very lengthy question and answer session in full see <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-31/debates/80D4B9A6-2A95-44AD-AF83-DB53A8BB0D61/HomesForUkraineScheme>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Stephen Timms (Labour) [140354] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she has given to caseworkers in her Department who are advising applicants to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme that have lost their required documents in Afghanistan.

Stephen Timms (Labour) [140355] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of offering a fee-waiver to people applying to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme who have lost their required documents in Afghanistan.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme commenced on 6th January, providing up to 20,000 women, children and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK. Those resettled through the ACRS will receive fee-free indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILR) in the UK.

There is no application process for the ACRS. Prioritisation and referral for resettlement will be in one of 3 ways, as set out in the policy statement

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

All individuals referred for resettlement under any of the ACRS pathways will be security screened, including checks against security and other databases and capturing biometrics. Those who have lost documents, are dealt with on a case by case basis by caseworkers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-15/140354>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-15/140355>

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

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

Afghanistan: Immigration

Stephanie Peacock (Labour) [144999] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals with UK visas who served (a) as interpreters and (b) in other locally employed staff roles have resettled in the UK as of 28 February 2022; and what steps her Department is taking to support those people and their families.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Over 15,000 people were supported to come to the UK directly following the evacuation of Afghanistan, and a further 2,000 have since arrived. The Home Office will publish the number of people being offered protection under UK Resettlement programmes in its quarterly Immigration Statistics. The next publication will be in May 2022.

On 31 August, the Government announced “Operation Warm Welcome” to support those who have been relocated to the UK in accessing accommodation and the vital health, education, and support into employment they need to fully integrate into society.

Following their arrival into the UK, Afghan evacuees are provided with housing, support to access benefits or employment and additional wrap around support provided by local authorities plus:

- Healthcare support – providing £3 million of additional NHS funding, so Afghans arriving under ARAP can access healthcare and register with a GP.
- Education support – making £12 million available to prioritise additional school places and enrol children as soon as possible.

- Support into accommodation – providing £5 million for local authorities to provide housing.

To harness the generosity of the British public and make sure those who want to help know where to turn, we have launched a new webpage, [Help people who have come to the UK from Afghanistan: Ways you can help](#) through which people can submit offers of support for people arriving from Afghanistan

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/144999>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Ukraine

Visas: Ukraine

Stephen Hammond (Conservative) [146591] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ease the visa application and subsequent refugee paperwork for Ukrainians who do not speak English to help them navigate the UK system at the Ukraine border.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office is continually making efforts to simplify the application process for Ukrainian refugees, and keeps this under regular review. Furthermore, the webpage for the Ukrainian Family scheme (which can be found here: [Apply for a Ukraine Family Scheme visa](#) is available in English, Russian and Ukrainian so that applicants can better navigate the form.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-24/146591>

Visas: Ukraine

Caroline Lucas (Green) [138017] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what practical support her Department plans to provide to Ukrainian refugees who are required to make an online application to come to the UK in the event that they do not have access to (a) a smartphone, (b) a computer and (c) internet signal; what languages the online application process will be available in; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kevin Foster: If someone is unable to make an online application to come to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme, their sponsor can submit the application on their behalf through the GOV.UK webpage. If an applicant requires further support uploading their documents as part of the application process, they can book an appointment at a Visa Application Centre to have their documents scanned and linked to their application.

The online application process for the Ukraine Family Scheme is currently only available in English, but guidance in Ukrainian is being made available.

Further information on the Ukraine Family Scheme can be found on the GOV.UK webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-10/138017>

Visas: Ukraine

Grahame Morris (Labour) [145841] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to make provision within the Ukraine family visa scheme for a family group which includes a non-Ukrainian national.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Applicants to this scheme must be Ukrainian nationals unless they are applying as part of a family group where their immediate family member, who is a Ukrainian national, qualifies under this scheme.

In this circumstance non-Ukrainian nationals will also qualify under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/145841>

Information about the Ukrainian Family Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Visas: Ukraine

Yvette Cooper (Labour) [144838] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Ukrainian children who lack individual passports are required to attend visa application centres to apply for the (a) the Ukraine Family Scheme and (b) Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Reply from Kevin Foster: If children have a valid passport, they will not need to give biometrics. If a child does not have a valid passport, they will need to attend a VAC to have their biometric information taken.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/144838>

Information about the Ukrainian Family Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

The following six questions all received the same answer

Visas: Ukraine

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [132271] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people in Ukraine that are eligible for the family migration visa with salary and English language thresholds applied; and what estimate she has made of the number of people who are eligible for that visa following the lifting of the salary and language thresholds.

Immigration: Ukraine

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [132270] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people with leave to remain in the UK with family members, as defined by the Home Office's guidance, Support for family members of British nationals in Ukraine, and Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine and the UK, who live in Ukraine.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [132273] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of eligible family members, as defined by her Department's guidance, Support for family members of British nationals in Ukraine, and Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine and the UK, in Ukraine rather than already in the UK.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [132274] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people living in Ukraine that have family members, as defined by her Department's guidance, Support for family members of British nationals in Ukraine, and Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine and the UK, who are British nationals.

Asylum: Ukraine

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [132272] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her oral contribution of 1 March 2022, Official Report, what method her Department used to estimate that 100,000 Ukrainians are eligible for the family migration visa.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [133196] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's guidance titled Support for family members of British nationals in Ukraine and Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine and the UK, what estimate she has made of the number of people living in Ukraine with family members who have indefinite leave to remain in the UK, as at 2 March 2022.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Potential use of the route is difficult to estimate. A broad estimate of potential sponsors can be made, taking Ukrainian nationals with

settlement or holding status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and Ukrainians granted British citizenship as groups most likely to have familial links with Ukraine. Estimates are based on internal analysis. Data on these groups can be found in published statistics:

Table_Se_D01 of

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1055252/settlement-datasets-dec-2021.xlsx

Table EUSS_NON_EEA_02 of

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

Ukrainian nationals at Table Cit_D02 of

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1055257/citizenship-datasets-dec-2021.xlsx

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132271>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132270>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132273>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132274>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132272>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-02/133196>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine-and-ukrainian-nationals-in-ukraine-and-the-uk#non-british-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-01/debates/2BD3EE0E-5EF0-42E0-B9BE-3AA0D03BEF86/Ukraine>

Refugees: Ukraine

Owen Thompson (SNP) [137381] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to put in place extra levels of protection for unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine to the UK.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We recognise the deeply troubling circumstances faced by all Ukrainians who are caught up in this conflict, including unaccompanied minors, and the role many countries will need to play to safeguard those children. Safeguarding and protection of these vulnerable children is paramount. We have therefore held a number of discussions with leading international organisations who are working to ensure appropriate systems are put in place to process and safeguard unaccompanied minors who are fleeing Ukraine.

The Ukraine Family Scheme provides an immediate pathway for those Ukrainians, including unaccompanied minors, with family already settled in the UK to come to our country. The relevant safeguarding checks will be performed as part of the application process. It is designed to allow as many people as possible to come to Britain and gives them immediate access to the support they need.

The routes and visa changes which we have announced so far follow extensive engagement with the Ukrainian Government to ensure they respond directly to their needs and asks. We will continue to work closely with them going forward.

We are committed to working with local government to ensure appropriate

arrangements are in place, particularly for any unaccompanied minors who may arrive and for whom there is no option of being reunited with extended family. The UK already has well established policies in this area for unaccompanied children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-09/137381>

Information about the Ukrainian Family Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Children

Sarah Green (Liberal Democrat) [145082] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Ukrainian government regarding the inclusion of unaccompanied Ukrainian minors in Phase 1 of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We recognise the deeply troubling circumstances faced by all Ukrainians who are caught up in this conflict, including unaccompanied minors. Safeguarding and protection of these vulnerable children is paramount.

The routes and visa changes which we have announced so far follow extensive engagement with the Ukrainian Government to ensure they respond directly to their concerns. The Ukrainian Government stated to the UK Government in writing on 7th March 2022 that: “any Ukrainian Child who is currently outside Ukraine may not be adopted or placed in the care of foreigners without the consent of Ukraine”. The current rules in relation to unaccompanied children and the Home for Ukraine Scheme therefore respect this position.

We will continue to work closely with the Ukrainian Government going forward as to how we can work together to support unaccompanied children displaced by the conflict.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/145082>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

Foster Care: Ukraine

Navendu Mishra (Labour) [145051] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether local authority fosters carers will be eligible to host Ukrainian (a) groups and (b) individuals under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Reply from Will Quince: Any household can come forward to the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme. The decision to become a host family should involve everyone living in the household, including children, whose views, wishes and feeling should be taken into account. There will be additional considerations when the household includes children in foster care.

Foster carers are required to give written notice to their fostering provider when there is a change in the composition of the household. The department would expect foster carers to contact their fostering service provider and the local authority/authorities for any children already living in their care when considering applying to the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme (where the local authority is not their fostering service provider).

If a foster carer has capacity to take additional children, the department encourages them to approach their local authority about what support they can provide, including to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children already in the country and those who continue to arrive.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/145051>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

The following seven questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Ukraine

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [142482] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of provide Ukraine refugees with (a) laptops or other forms of IT, (b) broadband and (c) a SIM card for a phone to facilitate (i) contact with other Ukrainians in the UK and Ukraine and (ii) educational support for Ukrainian child refugees.

House Insurance: Refugees

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [145039] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with representatives of insurance companies on housing insurance of people who house (a) Ukrainian and (b) other refugees.

Refugees: Ukraine

Kate Green (Labour) [145857] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is taking steps to help Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme (a) access bank accounts and (b) apply for national insurance numbers.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [142481] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, whether there are any restrictions on what the £350 monthly provision for hosting a refugee is spent on; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of disbursing that funding directly to Ukrainian refugees to spend on their needs.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [144952] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, whether he will allow people travelling to the UK for the purposes of that scheme to meet with possible hosts prior to an allocation of a home to stay in.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [144954] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will commit to hosting a briefing session available to all (a) charities, (b) faith organisations and (c) other organisations on matching UK host families with Ukrainian refugees.

Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru) [145962] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how eligible individuals who do not hold a British passport can validate their application to become sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: Further to the oral statement by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up on 14 March, guidance for local authorities has been published on Gov.uk at

www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils

There are also published FAQs available online at

www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions

as well as information for sponsors at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance>

Information is available on safeguarding checks at these links, as well as on eligibility for the scheme. Phase One of the Homes for Ukraine scheme opened for applications on 18 March and is accessible via links from

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>

Those who had recorded their interest in the scheme were also contacted on that date. Details on future phases of the scheme will be announced in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-18/142482>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/145039>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/145857>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-18/142481>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/144952>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/144954>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/145962>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/dluhc-secretary-of-states-update-on-ukrainian-sponsorship-scheme>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Ukrainian Language: Education

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [142480] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make provision for an online Ukrainian language course to enable families hosting refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme to learn some basic language skills.

Refugees: Ukraine

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [143756] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans his Department has to issue guidance to people offering to sponsor Ukrainian refugees on how to identify refugees to host in the event that they do not know anyone personally fleeing Ukraine.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [144955] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to produce additional guidance on how best to host a refugee family for people who volunteer to host refugees from Ukraine.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Anne Marie Morris (Independent) [146532] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to extend the Homes for Ukraine scheme that would facilitate matching of volunteers with Ukrainian refugees who are not named individual contacts.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: I refer the Hon Member to the answer given to PQ UIN 145857 on 28 March 2022. The Government is working closely with the voluntary sector, local communities and faith groups, as well as local government and the devolved administrations. Resources for learning Ukrainian and Russian are widely available online.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-18/142480>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-21/143756>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-22/144955>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/146532>

The answer referred to above can be read immediately above, and at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/145857>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

Employment and Training: Refugees

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [138323] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she plans to take to ensure that Ukrainian refugees can (a) use their existing skills to work and (b) undertake further skills training if needed to obtain available work.

Reply from David Rutley: Under the Ukraine Family Scheme and 'Homes for Ukraine' schemes Ukrainian evacuees will have the right to work here from day one, as well as immediate access to our jobcentres, work coaches and other support, including our £30 billion Plan for Jobs, if they need it. This can include extra support available through DWP's Flexible Support Fund, which can be used for skills training. Translation services are available to help new arrivals with phone applications, with Work Coaches in DWP Jobcentres on hand to support people making claims online. DWP staff are also delivering additional face-to-face assistance to those who need it – including tailored support to find work and advice on benefit eligibility – and will continue to do so.

DWP's National Employer Partnerships Team (NEPT) has received a number of approaches from employers about opportunities for Ukrainian evacuees.. All have been contacted and advised that we will be in touch to take details of their opportunities to share with the wider DWP.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-11/138323>

Information about the Ukrainian Family Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Universal Credit: Refugees

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [143785] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether capital held outside of the UK by Ukrainian refugees will be treated as capital for the purposes of their universal credit eligibility.

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [143786] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of whether the time taken to determine Ukrainian refugees' eligibility for universal credit will be affected in the event that they hold capital outside the UK.

Reply from David Rutley: The emergency regulations laid on Monday 21 March 2022 ensure that Ukrainian evacuees can access Universal Credit and jobs support immediately. Each claim for benefit will be assessed individually and as quickly as possible. Available capital in the form of savings and investments will be taken into account. In order to be eligible for Universal Credit, claimants may have capital in the form of savings and investments of up to £16,000. Only capital in excess of £6,000 would cause Universal Credit to be reduced.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-21/143785>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-21/143786>

Social Security Benefits: Refugees

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [143787] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what additional resources she is allocating to support the efficient processing of claims for assistance for refugees relocated under the Ukrainian visa schemes.

Reply from David Rutley: The Government's new Ukraine Family Scheme and 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme will help thousands of Ukrainian families and individuals to enter the country. DWP is working closely with the Home Office to understand potential demand.

Under these schemes Ukrainian evacuees will have the right to work here from day one, as well as immediate access to the benefit system and our existing employment offer, including our £30 billion Plan for Jobs. Ukrainian evacuees who claim benefits like Universal Credit will have access to direct, personalised

employment support from experienced Jobcentre Plus work coaches, who will help them to find and move into employment, with extra support available through DWP's Flexible Support Fund. Translation services are available to help new arrivals with phone applications, with Work Coaches in DWP Jobcentres on hand to support people making claims online. DWP staff are also delivering additional face-to-face assistance to those who need it – including tailored support to find work and advice on benefit eligibility – and will continue to do so.

DWP's National Employer Partnerships Team (NEPT) has received a number of approaches from employers. All have been contacted and advised that we will be in touch to take details of their opportunities to share with the wider DWP.

Timeframes are still being finalised and there is regular discussion with Other Government Departments. Refugee Employment Network are also linked into activity and will be involved in sharing opportunities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-21/143787>

Information about the Ukrainian Family Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

English Language: Education

Bridget Phillipson (Labour) [145853] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the sufficiency of teachers qualified to teach English as a second language to Ukrainian speakers.

Reply from Robin Walker: The department is preparing to make sure all school-age children who resettle from Ukraine are able to access education. We are working across government on this and will set out more details when available.

Just like any other children living in the UK, Ukrainian children have a right to attend school in England. Local authorities are obliged to offer suitable schooling. All school-age children arriving from Ukraine will be eligible.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that all their pupils, including those who have a first language other than English, develop the English language skills they require to access the curriculum and achieve their potential. Schools are experienced in supporting children with English as an additional language. The expectation that they should do so is set out in the Teachers' Standards. It is also covered in initial teacher training (ITT) courses.

All ITT courses must be designed to allow trainees to meet the teachers' standards, including standard 5. This states that teachers adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils. Standard 5 is clear that all teachers must have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language. The Teachers' Standards are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

Ukrainians aged 19+ and their family members settled under the Ukraine Family Scheme, and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine) in the UK, can access training to gain the skills they need to move on with their lives. This includes provision funded through the Adult Education Budget, including ESOL, and level 3 free courses for job offer.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/145853>

Textbooks: Languages

Bridget Phillipson (Labour) [145854] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has given directions to his Department to assess or improve capacity for translating educational materials into (a) Ukrainian and (b) Russian.

Reply from Robin Walker: 10,000 lessons can now be auto-translated into Ukrainian, Russian, and other languages through remote education resource Oak National Academy, serving millions of children through the COVID-19 pandemic. This will help schools who support many pupils for whom English is a second language.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/145854>

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

Naturalisation

Peter Kyle (Labour) [146692] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) applications for British citizenship by naturalisation have been made and (b) applicants have been granted British citizenship by naturalisation in each of the last six years.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes UK data on applications and grants of British Nationality in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

Data on applications and grants of British Citizenship by naturalisation, by year, are published in table Cit_01 of the [Citizenship summary tables](#) dataset. The latest data relates to 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-24/146692>

Asylum: Equality

Lyn Brown (Labour) [147043] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she will take to ensure equal treatment of asylum seekers of all ethnicities and nationalities fleeing war; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). As a signatory to the Refugee Convention and ECHR, we are legally obliged to consider all asylum claims made in the UK and admitted to the asylum system, and we are legally obliged to consider people's human rights in all circumstances where a person would be removed from the UK.

Every asylum claim, regardless of the ethnicity or nationality of the claimant is carefully considered on its individual merits by assessing all the evidence provided by the claimant against a background of country information from a wide range of credible sources, including the Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office, the media and non-governmental sources, such as the UNHCR, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Refugee status is granted when someone has a well-founded fear of persecution under the Refugee Convention for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. For those who do not have a well-founded fear of persecution for a convention reason, we consider whether they are at risk of serious harm and are in need of protection on humanitarian grounds. This ensures that we do not remove anyone who faces persecution or serious harm on return to their country of origin.

All asylum decision making policies are developed and reviewed in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010; to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and

persons who do not share it. Protected characteristics include race.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-25/147043>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [146579] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's report entitled The UK Government's Approach to Evaluating the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes, published on 13 December 2018, whether she plans to publish an equivalent report on the ACRS and ARAP schemes.

Immigration: Hong Kong

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [146580] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's report entitled The UK Government's Approach to Evaluating the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes, published on 13 December 2018, whether she plans to publish an equivalent report on the Hong Kong British National Overseas scheme.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office operates a mixed method evaluation of refugee resettlement. The work is underpinned by an indicators of integration framework

[Home Office Indicators of Integration framework 2019 third edition](#)

We will be setting out the approach to evaluating ongoing refugee resettlement in due course.

The British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route is a managed migration route enabling BN(O) status holders and their eligible family members to move to the UK, if they decide that is the right choice for them. A £43.1 million welcome programme is in place to support them.

On 31 January 2022, the Home Office published data on the characteristics of British National (Overseas) visa holders, which is available at:

[Survey of Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) visa holders 2021](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-24/146579>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-24/146580>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918444/uk-approach-evaluating-vulnerable-resettlement-schemes-horr106.pdf

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

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

Information about the Hong Kong British National Overseas scheme can be read at
<https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa>

Refugees: Resettlement

Dan Carden (Labour) [135615] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to introduce a longer-term global resettlement programme for refugees who wish to come to the UK.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK has a long history of supporting refugees in need of protection. The UK continues to welcome vulnerable people through the existing global UK Resettlement Scheme, Mandate Resettlement Scheme, Community Sponsorship Scheme and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Since 2015, we have resettled more than 27,000 refugees through safe and legal

routes directly from regions of conflict and instability - around half of whom were children.

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) commenced on 6 January and will provide up to 20,000 women, children, and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

In addition to our resettlement schemes, we also operate the following safe and legal routes:

- Refugee family reunion, which enables the spouse or partner and children of a refugee sponsor who are under 18 years of age to join their family member in the UK. More than 39,500 family reunion visas have been granted since 2015
- Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), for current or former locally employed Afghan staff working for or alongside the UK Government. We have relocated over 8,000 people under ARAP so far, with more continuing to arrive.
- A bespoke immigration route for British National (Overseas) status holders and their family members in Hong Kong, which reflects the UK's historic and moral commitment to those who elected to retain their ties with the UK after Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997. The route was launched in response to China's passing of the National Security Law in Hong Kong which significantly impacts the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong. As of the end of December 2021, there have been 97,057 successful grants since the route launched on 31 January 2021.

In response to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the Government has introduced two new schemes: the Ukraine Family Scheme announced on 4 March, and for those without family links to the UK, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme announced 14 March.

Resettlement is only one strand of our international efforts helping refugees. It is complemented by the UK's significant humanitarian aid programme and diplomatic efforts.

More information on existing resettlement schemes can be found in the published guidance [Resettlement: policy guidance](#) and [Afghan citizens resettlement scheme](#). Further information on the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme can be found in the published guidance [Apply for a Ukraine Family Scheme visa](#) and [Homes for Ukraine – Homes for Ukraine – Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine](#)

More information on safe and legal routes can be found here: [Nationality and Borders Bill: Factsheet Safe and Legal Routes](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-07/135615>

The following six questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Temporary Accommodation

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [138089] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are currently in bridging accommodation.

Refugees: Hotels

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [138086] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many bridging hotels are being used for refugee resettlement.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [138087] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many rooms in bridging hotels are unoccupied as of 10 March 2022.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [138088] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that all future designated bridging accommodation is located in communities.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [138090] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department, what steps she is taking to support people who are accommodated in bridging hotels.

Refugees: Housing

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [138091] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of building homes for the resettlement of refugees.

Reply from Kevin Foster: There are currently over 12,000 in bridging accommodation. This cohort includes Afghan nationals who may be eligible for Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and British nationals.

We are working at pace across government and with over three hundred Local Authority partners to secure longer term housing for Afghan evacuees so they can settle and rebuild their lives as soon as possible.

We currently have Home Office Liaison Officers (HOLO's) in place in bridging hotels. The role of the HOLO is to provide both face to face support and remote support when not physically present. They are reactive to the needs of those accommodated in hotels and can provide signposting to other government departments and Local Authorities and ensure safeguarding concerns are appropriately acted upon.

We are also providing funding to local authorities to deliver support services in the hotel, including ensuring access education and health services

Wherever possible we have contracted bridging hotels in or near major conurbations to ensure access to services, yet we are reliant on them being available to us for use as we cannot compel hotel owners to work with us or to allow use of their property.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-10/138089>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-10/138086>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-10/138087>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-10/138088>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-10/138090>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-10/138091>

Temporary Accommodation: Refugees

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [142483] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to expand the Homes for Ukraine scheme to refugees from other conflicts, such as in Afghanistan, so they are not required to stay in bridging accommodation.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: As set out in the FAQs on Homes for Ukraine, the UK has a long and proud history of welcoming migrants including recent arrivals from Syria, Afghanistan and Hong Kong. Every scheme is different and learns from the successes or challenges of those before. There has been a sponsorship route in operation for some years, and Homes for Ukraine is a developed version of that. We will look to see whether there are lessons we can apply from this scheme in future.

Where members of the public also wish to help Afghans or other refugees, we would encourage them to do so through working with their local authority, or through the Community Sponsorship scheme.

I refer the Hon Member to the following link:

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Interviews

Dan Carden (Labour) [134076] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time for scheduling of an asylum substantive interview was over the past five years.

Asylum

Dan Carden (Labour) [134077] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to make decisions on asylum claims that are older than three years.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office does not currently report on the average time that is taken between the date of an asylum claim to the date of a substantive asylum interview taking place. However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. This data can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics: [List of tables](#)

The Home Office currently have several specialist decision-making units, including a unit progressing older asylum claims. We are also working to increase the number of decision makers, shorten and improve asylum casework training and consolidation. This investment in our people will speed up processing times and increase the throughput of asylum decisions.

The decision-making route remains the same for all asylum applications however we have created additional hubs to provide a greater ownership, improved consistency, and management of the cohorts to ensure quick decisions can be made.

The Asylum Transformation programme is working to transform the asylum system and continue to streamline and simplify processes to speed up decision making to increase efficiency and output. The development and delivery of changes to the asylum process across the end-to-end asylum system include the increased use of technology, improved screening and accelerated decision-making procedures to drive delivery efficiency.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-03/134076>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-03/134077>

Asylum: Children

Emma Lewell-Buck (Labour) [125193] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children starting to be looked after by local authorities between 14 July and 22 November 2021 were (a) accommodated in hotels upon or after arriving in the UK, (b) were aged (i) 10 and under and (ii) between 11 and 18 on arrival, (c) assessed by a registered medical practitioner upon arrival in the UK and (e) in receipt of legal advice whilst being housed in a hotel.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children being placed with a local authority between 14 July and 22 November 2021 who have been accommodated in hotels upon or after arriving in the UK is 890. Of these 2 were aged 10 or under and 888 were aged between 11 and 18 on arrival. This is based on local management information and subject to change.

Nurses are on site at the hotels where the young people are assessed and they are also registered with a GP.

Children making an asylum claim in their own right are eligible for assistance in the form of legal aid and the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) will fund a legal representative's

attendance at the substantive interview.

There is no requirement for legal representation at first encounter when the welfare interview is conducted because children should not be asked questions about issues that relate to their asylum claim.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125193>

Free School Meals: Migrants

Catherine McKinnell (Labour) [145862] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2021 to Question 88857 on Free School Meals: Migrants, when he expects his Department's evaluation of access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds to be completed.

Reply from Will Quince: The department will be extending free school meal (FSM) eligibility to children from all groups with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). More information on this can be found in written statement HCWS714, available here:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-03-24/hcws714>

Information on the number of children who received a free meal, and attracted pupil premium funding under the temporary extension of FSM eligibility to some NRPF households in the 2021/22 financial year can be found in the third document here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2021-to-2022>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-23/145862>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-07/88857>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Ukraine Refugee Visas

The statement made by the Minister in the House of Commons was read in the House of Lords.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): ... The British people have shown immense generosity in the support they want to provide to the Ukrainian people. The purpose of this is to look at Home Office bureaucracy and challenge the Government about whether the bureaucracy that has been put in place is inhibiting people in a desperate situation from coming to this country. The Minister repeated the statistic that 23,500 visas had been issued for family members, but the figure that has been repeatedly asked for, and which has not been given, so far as I am aware, is for how many have arrived. ...

The Statement made a point about the relaxation of the rules regarding biometric tests for those with valid passports. Another question which I also asked a couple of days ago was about the position of very young children who do not have a passport, and newborn babies and those soon to be born. How will their families be affected? Will the parents and wider family still be required to travel long distances to have the biometric tests done? ...

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: ... The noble Lord's second question was to do with children. If I may paraphrase, he said, "Yes, everyone knows security is important, but what security risk can children pose? Do children with their mother have to have biometric tests, et cetera?" The answer is yes, but I should explain the reason, because I asked that question a lot myself, as the noble Lord may imagine. Unfortunately, people traffickers are alive and well and are prospering. We have been warned of this by the Ukrainian and Polish Governments, so we have to be sure that the children are in fact the children of the person claiming to be their mother and I am afraid that involves a visit to the visa centre. All I would say in

mitigation is that 90% of applicants are now able to apply online without using the biometric tests. The visa centres are a much quicker way of doing it. The officials are briefed to do it as quickly as possible. If there is evidence that we can look at that those children are children of the mother that they say they are, we are flexible as we can be, but I make no excuse for doing that, because we do not know another way around it. ...

Lord Dubs (Labour): ... I have written to [the minister] about a family, a mother and a child, who have made five separate applications to get here, yet nothing seems to be happening. The bureaucracy is still there, and it is delaying people. We are a laughing stock. One has only to switch on the news; every day there are families complaining that they cannot get here. It is embarrassing for us all.

One other thing: the Minister says he does not know the number of arrivals. That seems to contrast with the almost daily tally of people who have arrived illegally on boats. We seem to know exactly how many have arrived day by day, yet we do not know how many there are when they come under an official scheme. We need to be given confidence that something is working.

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: ... I take a little—I want to be tactful and not say “offence”; I do not say that at all—disagreement with what he said about us being a laughing stock. With our family scheme and our Homes for Ukraine scheme, more than 20,000 people have gone through the system. I assure him and noble Lords that this is not complacency. The figure is more than 3,000; the scheme started days ago. I will be held to account at this Dispatch Box, but I think it is too early to do so. ...

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-31/debates/A4D2840E-FAEC-4067-9E2D-03E785BD07DB/UkraineRefugeeVisas>

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

The statement made by the Minister in the House of Commons was read in the House of Lords.

Baroness Hayman of Ullock (Labour): My Lords, during the Statement in the other place, the Minister said that 200,000 people were interested in the Homes for Ukraine scheme, yet figures released confirm that just 2,700 visas have been granted so far under the scheme. It appears that Ukrainians are not sufficiently aware of its existence. So what are the Government doing both to raise awareness and to simplify the process as much as possible?

Secondly, the Local Government Association told the DLUHC committee yesterday that 144 Ukrainians refugees had presented as homeless. The Minister, Eddie Hughes, said the Government were going to investigate to ensure an understanding of what had led to this. But they urgently need housing, so can I ask the Minister what is actually being done to provide them with homes?

Finally, the Prime Minister has accepted that councils should have access to the database of sponsors so they can be responsible for matching up refugees with sponsors who want to house them. Can the Minister confirm that this is actually going to happen? What urgent guidance and support in this area are being given to councils so they can provide this much-needed support?

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: ... The first question was about how we are making Ukrainians aware of our schemes. The answer to that is that now, through our work with the Polish authorities, when people pass into Polish territory, they will download a QR code, and that will give them all the information about our scheme, which is translated into their languages. Secondly, we are providing leaflets in Ukrainian that are distributed widely through NGOs as well as by our own staff. We are very conscious of this, and the noble Baroness makes a valid point.

We need to do more. But now we are basically sending a message to everybody through a phone messaging system. ...

... the noble Baroness asked about the implications for the 44 people who have been made homeless. This is not an excuse, but I should clarify that this is from the family programme, not the sponsor programme. It is the responsibility of local authorities to deal with them. It is not acceptable. Of course, they have the money to deal with homeless people, but they should not be homeless because they are on a family scheme. ...

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): ... [Can the minister look] at the way family units are being kept together in Lithuania when refugees arrive from Ukraine, and at whether we are doing the same here?

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: ... I am certainly happy to do what he suggests with the family units; that is a very good point. ...

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-31/debates/B0301485-643C-4308-87B6-C9A6659DA895/HomesForUkraineScheme>

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applications for visas under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been received and provided to Ukrainian refugees, and how many refugees have entered the UK since the scheme opened. ...

Reply from the Minister of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Home Office (Lord Harrington of Watford): ... I can confirm that more than 20,000 applications have been received for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and we will be providing further information in due course. ...

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff: My Lords, the lack of information is extremely worrying. We have an ethical obligation of non-abandonment, having given a commitment to stand with Ukraine and offer sanctuary. Do the Government recognise that the visa process is causing great distress to already-traumatised Ukrainians who have experienced cumulative losses, pervasive existential terror and mass bereavements and are now increasingly at risk? The process is also increasingly frustrating for the tens of thousands of Britons who want to welcome them into their homes and will provide a long-term commitment. Will the Government heed the call from major charities in the *Times* today to introduce a simplified emergency humanitarian process immediately?

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: I agree with much of the sentiment of what the noble Baroness said. As far as the visa process is concerned, the only purpose is to provide security checks for this country. As I have said on the record before, when I was given the job to do by the Prime Minister, that was the only constraint. It is my job to make sure that the visa process is speeded up, and in the last two weeks we have gone on to a system where those with Ukrainian passports can fill out the form and download the visa without having to go to a visa centre, which they did only two weeks ago.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, the Minister said there were 20,000 applications for visas. Can he say how many Ukrainians have actually arrived in this country under this scheme? It is heartening to see how full-hearted the response from the British public has been to it, but what is the position with very young children, newly born babies and those soon to be born? Will their parents need similar visa arrangements for them to come to this country?

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: The answer to the question on the babies is that children under five do not have passports or visas. The reason why there still have to be visits to visa application centres is our fear that very young children will be used to be trafficked over here, and we need evidence that typically

the mother—but sometimes the father—in question is in fact the rightful parent. We really do that as quickly and easily as we can. We cannot ignore the fact that there are people traffickers operating, and we have to do some due diligence. ...

The Lord Bishop of Worcester: My Lords, I pay tribute to the Minister for the enormous amount that he has done in a very short space of time. At the same time, however, I acknowledge the frustration that is felt and expressed by the noble Baroness, Lady Finlay, on the part of so many people. We have tried locally to convene people in the community, and enormous support is forthcoming, but there seems to be a problem with the process. One acknowledges the need for security checks, but I have heard a lot of times, anecdotally, about the complexity of the visa process and how difficult it is. Local government is waiting for guidance from the Government here.

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: It should not be my job always to agree with the questions that are asked but, in this case, I totally believe in the sentiment that the right reverend Prelate expressed. I am looking at every aspect of the visa process to speed it up. The Home Secretary and I have personally spent hours with officials, including at weekends, looking at ways that we can speed this up because, if the security checks are put in place—which they are—it seems to me that there is no reason why people applying on the internet, or indeed at a visa centre in the countries adjacent to Ukraine, should not be able to get a response really quickly to allow them to come here. I cannot stand here for a long time using the excuse that I am new to the job, but I promise the right reverend Prelate and noble Lords that this is an absolute top priority. ...

To continue reading this lengthy question and answer session see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-28/debates/4911989B-007A-46E4-8267-F82D2E2AC1D8/HomesForUkraineScheme>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Immigration: Ukraine

Lord Truscott (Non-affiliated) [HL6584] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow Ukrainians living in the UK, regardless of their immigration status, the right to bring dependants or spouses into the UK.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: As set out in the Home Secretary's statement to the House on 1 March, a fee free, bespoke Ukraine Family Scheme has been introduced.

The route allows both the immediate family members (spouse, civil partner, durable partner, minor children) and extended family members (parent, grandparent, adult children, grandchildren, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, in laws and their immediate family) to join their relatives in the UK. The UK-based sponsoring relative must be a British citizen, a person who is present and settled in the UK (including those with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme), a person in the UK with refugee leave or with humanitarian protection or an EEA or Swiss national in the UK with limited leave under Appendix EU (pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme). This route was launched on 4 March.

Ukrainian nationals in the UK with temporary permission stay are not permitted to sponsor a relative under the Ukraine Family Scheme. However, on 18 March the Government launched the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, which enables individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to volunteer accommodation and provide a route to safety for Ukrainians, and their immediate family members, forced to escape their homeland. Ukrainian nationals' resident in the UK with at least six months' leave can qualify to sponsor under this scheme if they are able to offer suitable accommodation and pass security checks. Further information about

the Homes for Ukraine Scheme has been published here:

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

Ukrainian nationals in the UK who do not hold a valid immigration status will continue to be prohibited from sponsoring a spouse or dependant to enter the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-02/hl6584>

Information about the Ukrainian Family Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Lord Truscott (Non-affiliated) [HL7005] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to increase the amount payable to sponsors of Ukrainian refugees above £350 per calendar month, especially in the case of larger families or those with special needs.

Reply from Lord Harrington of Watford: The £350 monthly sum is intended as a 'Thank you' payment to those who respond to the scheme. Any extra support required for families with special needs will be met through provision to Local Authorities, rather than the Sponsor

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-15/hl7005>

Refugees: Ukraine

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative) [HL7012] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to encourage employers to provide employment for refugees from Ukraine.

Reply from Lord Callanan: Ukrainian refugees will have the right to work as soon as they arrive in the UK. The Government will provide refugees with resources to help them find a job, for example 'Find a Job' and Jobcentre Plus work coaches for those awarded Universal Credit.

The Department for Work and Pensions is working with employers and partners to support refugees with employment opportunities, including working alongside the Refugee Employment Network to support Ukrainian refugees to offer employment opportunities and training.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-16/hl7012>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL7065] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the backlog of applications for (1) asylum, or (2) temporary protection; and what assessment they have made of the effects these measures have had so far.

Asylum: Interviews

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL7066] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve the quality of the first substantive interview for asylum applicants.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Asylum decision makers receive extensive mandatory training and mentoring on considering asylum claims. We have a robust quality assurance strategy in place to ensure asylum caseworkers meet the standard expected of them, and to ensure compliance with the published policy.

Asylum Operations has an internal audit process which assesses the quality of interviews, decisions, and the application of Home Office policy. We have Senior Case Worker assessments as well as independent auditors from Central Operations who audit asylum cases and provide quarterly reports. The quality of asylum interviews and decisions are systematically assessed against a detailed audit framework drawn up in consultation with external partners, which includes checks on compliance with existing asylum policies, relevant case law and the

appropriate country of origin information reports.

To help reduce the backlog of applications for asylum or temporary protection we are investing in a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives which will speed up and simplify our processes, reduce the time people spend in the asylum system and decrease the number of people who are awaiting an interview or decision. These initiatives include conducting shorter, more focused interviews or omitting interviews where it is appropriate to do so, streamlining decision templates for grants and refusals and focusing on improving quality to ensure decisions are right first time. We have extensive recruitment and training plans in place, including career progression options to aid the retention of staff.

We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system. We are streamlining and digitising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making. Additionally, we have introduced specialist Decision Making Units, providing greater ownership and management of cohorts of asylum cases.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-17/hl7065>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-17/hl7066>

New Publications

Windrush Lessons Learned Review: progress update

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1065012/14.12_HO_Windrush_Lessons_Learned_Review_Accessible_6_.pdf

How Secure is Pre-Settled Status for EU Citizens After Brexit?

<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/MigObs-Report-How-Secure-is-Pre-Settled-Status-for-EU-Citizens-After-Brexit.pdf>

Factsheet: Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1064145/Homes_for_Ukraine_A5_leaflet.pdf

Ukrainian refugees

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/ukrainian-refugees/>

Accommodation of asylum-seeking mothers and babies in Glasgow

<https://www.cypcs.org.uk/wpcypcs/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Mother-and-Baby-Unit-Report.pdf>

News: Ukraine

Over 1000 refugees from Ukraine apply to Scotland's super sponsor scheme

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/20018919.1000-refugees-ukraine-apply-scotlands-super-sponsor-scheme/>

Homes for Ukraine: Visas for 210 Ukrainians to flee to Scotland

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-60961600>

Ukraine-Russia: Ukrainian refugees forced to present to Scottish councils as homeless after hosting arrangements collapse

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/ukraine-russia-ukrainian-refugees-forced-to-present-to-scottish-councils-as-homeless-after-hosting-arrangements-collapse-3638220>

Ukraine-Russia: Welcome hubs for refugees set up in three regions of Scotland, minister says

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/ukraine-russia-welcome-hubs-for-refugees-set-up-in-three-regions-of-scotland-minister-says-3625383>

Ukraine-Russia: Homes for Ukraine scheme exploited by men offering shelter in return for sex, Scots charity warns

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/ukraine-russia-homes-for-ukraine-scheme-exploited-by-men-offering-shelter-in-return-for-sex-scots-charity-warns-3636557>

20,000 applications made to Homes for Ukraine scheme, minister finally reveals

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugee-scheme-homes-application-b2045738.html>

Homes for Ukraine: 2,700 visas issued, government reveals

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60926093>

'Woeful' 2,700 visas granted under new Ukrainian refugee sponsorship scheme

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-office-government-yvette-cooper-lisa-nandy-homes-b2047089.html>

Only 2,700 visas granted under UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/30/only-2700-visas-granted-under-uks-homes-for-ukraine-scheme>

UK's homes for Ukraine scheme approves just 2,700 visas

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/homes-for-ukraine-grants-just-2-700-visas-despite-28-000-offering-homes-p79nrwf8s>

Tories face criticism as only 10% of Homes for Ukraine scheme applications granted

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugee-scheme-homes-tory-government-b2047086.html>

Delays to Ukrainian refugee applications 'unacceptable', admits minister

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/03/30/home-office-red-tape-blamed-unacceptable-delays-ukrainian-refugee/>

Ukrainian refugees giving up on Britain because of 'hellish' red tape

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/29/ukrainian-refugees-giving-britain-red-tape/>

Ukraine refugees trying to get UK visas facing 'Kafkaesque' system, MPs told

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/31/ukraine-refugees-trying-to-get-uk-visas-facing-kafkasque-system-mps-told>

Homes for Ukraine: Official 'matching service' launched to link hosts with refugees

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-hosts-sponsorship-homes-matching-uk-b2048850.html>

Homes for Ukraine: UK matching scheme launches amid safety fears

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/01/uk-homes-for-ukraine-scheme-launches-amid-safeguarding-fears>

Ukrainian refugees registering as homeless in UK as councils 'scramble' to house them

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-homeless-councils-family-visa-home-office-uk-b2046311.html>

Glasgow charity says no Ukrainians they have helped have been given sponsor visas

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/20024582.glasgow-charity-says-no-ukrainians-helped-given-sponsor-visas/>

Charity: No Ukrainians we are helping have yet been given sponsor visas

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/charity-government-housing-parliament-ukraine-b2045028.html>

Ukrainian refugees on family visas locked out of housing plan and left homeless

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ukrainian-refugees-on-family-visas-locked-out-of-housing-plan-and-left-homeless-28ws6qInt>

Homes for Ukraine: These people did not ask for war

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-60932906>

Couple welcoming Ukrainian arrivals say refugees are just like their own family

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-uk-home-arrive-b2048233.html>

Ukrainians already in UK can apply to stay for three years under new scheme

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-scheme-home-office-uk-b2046496.html>

British schools find places for child refugees from Ukraine

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/british-schools-find-places-for-child-refugees-from-ukraine-2p2lktz35>

UK visa rules are 'to ensure Ukrainians don't come to Britain', say refugees

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/30/uk-visa-rules-are-to-ensure-ukrainians-dont-come-to-britain-say-refugees>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Windrush scandal: Anger at Home Office over compensation progress

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60943533>

Home Office has yet to change its culture after Windrush scandal - report

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/20034854.home-office-yet-change-culture-windrush-scandal--report/>

UK still struggling to address Windrush scandal failings

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/home-office-ap-wendy-williams-windrush-priti-patel-b2048409.html>

Brexit legal status leaves two million people at risk of deportation

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-pre-settled-status-reapply-b2045942.html>

Over 28,000 migrant crossings in year – but the Army paints a picture of ‘success’

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/31/british-army-commissions-painting-showcase-monitoring-channel/>

Nearly 500 migrants intercepted crossing the Channel

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/french-english-channel-dover-kent-border-force-b2046196.html>

Migrant Channel crossings top 3,000 this month

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrant-channel-crossings-top-3-000-this-month-pxkptmh76>

‘Enormous opportunity’: Extend Homes for Ukraine scheme to include Afghan refugees, Tory MPs tell Michael Gove

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-afghan-sponsorship-scheme-uk-b2045796.html>

The UK government should set up a parallel Homes for Afghans plan

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/homes-ukraine-afghans-syrians-somalis-b2045802.html>

Asylum mums and babies housed in cramped bedsits

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-60939799>

Hundreds of lone child refugees still placed in ‘unacceptable’ hotels

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-refugees-hotels-home-office-ofsted-uk-b2047470.html>

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists calls for an urgent review of how UK Government cares for pregnant women within the asylum system

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/news/rcog-calls-for-an-urgent-review-of-how-uk-government-cares-for-pregnant-women-within-the-asylum-system/>

Stop charging migrant women for NHS maternity care, RCOG urges

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/mar/27/stop-charging-migrant-women-for-nhs-maternity-care-rcog-urges>

‘You’ve got friends’: Birmingham school scheme aims to ease refugee trauma

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/27/youve-got-friends-birmingham-school-scheme-aims-to-ease-refugee-trauma>

Edinburgh international festival to feature tales of refugees and migration

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2022/mar/30/edinburgh-international-festival-to-feature-tales-of-refugees-and-migration>

The Art of Refuge

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/the-art-of-refuge/>

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Equality

UK Parliament Debate

Support for Black Victims of Domestic Abuse

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-28/debates/D20803B5-4171-469A-BDD5-971CB74BE918/SupportForBlackVictimsOfDomesticAbuse>

New Publications

Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic plan: 2022 to 2025

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/about-us-strategic-plan-2022-2025.pdf>

Sporting Equals: Race Representation Index 2021

https://www.sportingequals.org.uk/cmsUploads/page/files/Sporting_Equals_2021_RRI_-1.pdf

News

Equality and Human Rights Commission urges fresh start with critics after UN body rejects requests to review its status

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/ehrc-urges-fresh-start-critics-after-un-body-rejects-requests-review-its-status>

Equality and Human Rights Commission publishes plan to address biggest equality and human rights challenges in today's Britain

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/ehrc-publishes-plan-address-biggest-equality-and-human-rights-challenges-today's>

UK sport's governing bodies fail to make grade in landmark race report

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2022/mar/28/uk-sports-governing-bodies-fail-to-make-grade-in-landmark-race-report>

Art school reviews life drawing classes amid complaints of too many white models

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/29/art-school-reviews-life-drawing-classes-amid-complaints-many/>

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Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

Racial Profiling (International Students)

Foyso Choudhury (Labour): What steps is the Scottish Government taking to ensure that international students are not subject to racial profiling when trying to access accommodation in Scotland?

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Nobody—neither students nor anybody else—should be the subject of racial profiling, and we would take a very dim view of any evidence that that was happening. I would be happy to hear more

of the information that lies behind the question, look into it if necessary and consider what action may be required as a result.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13679&i=124154#ScotParIOR>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Cabinet Office: Racial Discrimination

Ruth Jones (Labour) [147100] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to tackle alleged racial discrimination in his Department.

Reply from Heather Wheeler: A 'Respect and Inclusion review' for the Cabinet Office is currently underway. In the recent [Declaration on Government reform](#), Ministers and Permanent Secretaries committed to set a new standard for diversity and inclusion, including guaranteeing fairness at work and zero tolerance for Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.

Our position at the centre of government - delivering against an ambitious agenda - means we have a responsibility to get this right. The review will have a particular focus on race and disability where our data shows scope for improvement.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-25/147100>

News

Man accused of racism by Sarwar to stand for Scottish Labour

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/20037502.man-accused-racism-sarwar-stand-scottish-labour/>

Man accused of racism by Sarwar to stand for Labour

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/man-accused-of-racism-by-sarwar-to-stand-for-labour-wvlrt22j8>

Child Q: Council leader urges Met Police to admit racism as force changes strip-search policy

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-q-met-police-racism-hackney-b2049393.html>

Met police urged to admit racism after strip-search of black girl in Hackney

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/apr/01/met-police-urged-to-admit-racism-after-strip-search-of-black-girl-in-hackney>

Nadhim Zahawi: Children aren't snowflakes, so let them read books with the 'N-word'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/04/01/nadhim-zahawi-children-arent-snowflakes-let-read-books-n-word/>

Zahawi says pupils should be allowed to read books containing racial slurs

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/nadhim-zahawi-education-secretary-government-saddam-hussein-british-b2049408.html>

To cut N-word from To Kill a Mockingbird's West End run would be wrong, says writer

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/27/cut-n-word-kill-mockingbirds-west-end-run-would-wrong-says-writer/>

To Kill a Mockingbird teaches us about defying the mob. Let's not try to cancel it
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/what-to-read/kill-mockingbird-teaches-us-defying-mob-not-try-cancel/>

NUS in fresh anti-Semitism row after contentious tweets from new president resurface
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/29/nus-fresh-anti-semitism-row-contentious-tweets-new-president/>

Students' fears over NUS chief's 'antisemitic' post
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/students-fears-over-nus-chiefs-antisemitic-post-776mvkx3>

Whistleblower accuses YouTube of allowing anti-Semitic content including videos calling Jews 'pigs'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/31/whistleblower-accuses-youtube-allowing-anti-semitic-content/>

Allotments 'rife with racism and bullying' as gardeners lose the plot
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/04/01/should-great-mental-health-allotments-rife-racism-bullying/>

Marcus Rashford: Teenager jailed for racist abuse of England footballer after Euro 2020 final
<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/marcus-rashford-twitter-abuse-england-euro-2020-penalty-b2047218.html>

Man, 19, jailed for racially abusing Marcus Rashford on Twitter
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/30/man-19-jailed-for-racially-abusing-marcus-rashford-on-twitter>

Teenager jailed for sending racist tweet to Marcus Rashford after Euro 2020 final
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/teenager-jailed-for-sending-racist-tweet-to-marcus-rashford-after-euro-2020-final-c555jwjm2>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Release

First Minister's Ramadan message
<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1510210673317494784>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

Press Release

Prime Minister's Ramadan message
<https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1509968803286949890>

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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 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 Publications

Coronavirus (COVID-19): daily data for Scotland

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19): trends in daily data

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement – 30 March 2022

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fm-statement-parliament-march-30-2022/>

UK Government Press Release

Government sets out next steps for living with COVID

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-next-steps-for-living-with-covid>

UK Government Publications

The R value and growth rate

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

Guidance: COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 [England]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>

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Scotland's Census

** new or updated this week

**** All census forms must be submitted by 1 May 2022 ****

Scotland's Census 2022

<https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/taking-part-in-the-2022-census/scotland-s-census-2022/>

Complete Scotland's Census now

<https://www.census.gov.scot/>

MEMO+ Scotland's Census 2022

https://www.scojec.org/memo+/2022/22iii_scotlands_census_2022.pdf

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. Getting the right things out, starts with filling it in

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC2plmy827c>

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. What am I filling in and why does it matter?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8AjE_2z2Kq

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. What exactly is Census Day?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypmk4F3rLhs>

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. What do I need to know about filling it in?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8e_Kza2XpM

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. Am I legally required to fill it in?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZm1By8Al2g>

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. Can I get help filling it in?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsF1UZBeXqY>

Video: How to complete your census online

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TQA9yKSpfA>

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Other News

Supporting Muslim colleagues during Ramadan

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/supporting-muslim-colleagues-during-ramadan-0>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

**** Scottish Local Government Elections (Candidacy Rights of Foreign Nationals) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/scottish-local-government-elections-candidacy-rights-of-foreign-nationals-bill>

Stage 1 Debate

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13672&i=124080#ScotParlOR>

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>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/46110/documents/1724>

**** Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Government Response to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee's Eighth Report

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9407/documents/161164/default/>

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill (closing date 16 May 2022)

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/ehrcj/gender-recognition-reform-bill/consult_view/

Free early education for disadvantaged 2-year-olds: eligibility for NRPF

(closing date 20 May 2022)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/2-year-old-early-education-entitlement-team/free-early-education-for-disadvantaged-2-year-olds/>

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

**** closes next week!**

Workplace Equality Fund

Closing date for applications: 11 April 2022

Scottish Government funding to support employers in identifying, addressing, and diminishing longstanding barriers facing particular priority groups in entering and progressing within the labour market. The central goal of the fund is to incentivise and support collaborative projects that aspire to reduce employment inequalities and cultivate positive, fair, and inclusive workplace practices, with the intention of improving employment opportunities and progression policies within Scottish workplaces; particularly for the identified priority groups, improving knowledge, skills, and practices with respect to addressing employment inequalities; thereby engendering significant improvement for priority groups, and create and maintain an inclusive working environment through employees and employers working in partnership. For information and to apply see

<https://equalityadvice.scot/>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Windrush Compensation Scheme

5 April 2022 (online, 11.00–1.00)

UK Government event to provide information on who may be eligible for the Windrush Compensation Scheme, what kinds of losses and impacts it covers and how to apply. For information see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-engagement-events>

**** this week!**

Three mottos to guide our approach to equality, diversity & inclusion

7 April 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30)

Interfaith Scotland course considering diversity in its widest sense, considering three models which provide insight on our experience of difference. We consider: the role of the dominant identity and the idea of 'human neutral', why some people ignore or deny the disadvantages that others experience; and how to respond to misunderstandings or offence. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3u7pba3b> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** this week, next week, and the week after!**

Ukraine Family Scheme: Your Rights

Thursday 7 April 2022 (online, 3.00)

Thursday 14 April 2022 (online, 10.00)

Tuesday 19 April 2022 (online, 2.00)

Thursday 28 April 2022 (online, 10.00)

Scottish Refugee Council session to provide essential information on rights, how to access essential services and meet people's immediate needs, including information about immigration status and documentation, housing, benefits, accessing urgent health care, schools, and English language classes. For information see

<https://forms.office.com/r/tAvaazU0k7>

**** in two weeks!**

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>

Supporting Refugee Integration

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>

Debiasing our systems, debiasing ourselves – an introduction to tackling unconscious bias

3 May 2022 (online, 10.00–1.00)

Interfaith Scotland course exploring the evidence of unconscious bias and methods for reducing its impact on our decisions, behaviour and processes. The session will also describe the steps that we can take to become more aware of potential bias and how to reduce its impact on our interactions with colleagues, service users and others. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y67cy5x8> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Working with People from Diverse Religious Backgrounds

9 June 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30)

Interfaith Scotland course on improving our confidence in discussing and responding to the religion and belief of those we work with. We learn about the core beliefs and cultural practices of the main faiths, and the individual needs that may arise from a person's faith or belief identity. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/ye2ntnpv> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement

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>

Advantage is invisible – understanding unintentional discrimination

6 July 2022 (online, 1.30–3.30)

Interfaith Scotland course exploring why discrimination is common even when our intentions are to work fairly with all staff and service users. The role of the dominant identity in shaping our working culture and practices will be discussed, and we will consider the persistent pattern that advantage tends to be hidden from those that have it. For

information see <https://tinyurl.com/2d5zwe9> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Interpreting culture – improving cross-cultural communication

11 August 2022 (online, 11.00–1.00)

Interfaith Scotland course on cultural diversity. Our cultural background has a profound influence on each of us. It shapes our behaviour, values and beliefs. It even affects our thought processes and how we perceive the world. In this course we explore how culture forms a lens through which we interpret each other's behaviour and learn how to improve our inter-cultural communication. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yckbt9hs> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Our lives are ruled by the stories we tell ourselves – how interpretation shapes interaction

13 September 2022 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Interfaith Scotland course exploring the impact of our inner narratives - our meaning-making - on our interactions and relationships. We will consider ways we can become more aware of our readings as they form, and more cautious about their accuracy. We will also discuss tools for more authentic conversations. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/m63kxvrm> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Working with Interpreters

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 bilingual 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>

Introduction to Working with Religious Diversity

26 October 2022 (online, 10.30–12.30)

Interfaith Scotland short course where delegates will improve their confidence in discussing and responding to the religion and belief of those they work with. We explore guiding principles behind working with religion and belief diversity. Then we take a closer look at the core beliefs and cultural practices of Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p88vnps> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Intention versus impact – exploring challenges around group labels and unintended offence

6 December 2022 (online, 1.30–3.30)

Interfaith Scotland short course exploring the language used to describe groups of people, particularly in relation to Protected Characteristics like race, disability, religion and belief. We also consider how we can respond to unintended interpretations, confusion or offence by exploring the difference between the speaker's intention and the impact on the listener. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/k9hz52pk> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

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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>

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 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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