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

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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Ukrainian Refugees (Accommodation)

Sarah Boyack (Labour) [S6F-01560] To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government is taking to ensure that refugees from Ukraine have suitable accommodation on arrival in Scotland.

Reply from the First Minister: With more than 21,500 arrivals from Ukraine with a Scottish sponsor, Scotland continues to provide sanctuary to more displaced people from Ukraine per head than any other part of the United Kingdom, and I thank people across Scotland for their efforts in achieving that.

Of course, our priority is to ensure that the immediate needs of those who arrive are met, but we are clear that we do not want anyone to spend more time than is

absolutely necessary in welcome accommodation. Although we are ensuring that we have that temporary welcome accommodation, which is safe and suitable, we are also taking a number of actions that are focused on providing sustainable longer-term accommodation for those who are here and those who are still arriving. That will include a new Scotland-led host recruitment campaign, which will launch at the end of the month.

Sarah Boyack: ... The First Minister will be aware of the acute housing crisis in Edinburgh. The current contract for MS Victoria is due to end in January 2023. Figures that have been published by the Scottish Government show that more than 1,200 people are currently on the ship, so how will the Scottish Government ensure that the capacity that is provided by the ship is retained? Will she urgently look to expand the criteria for the largely unspent £50 million housing fund for local authorities, to include purchasing property from the market and working with agents to retrofit buildings? Will the First Minister confirm continued funding for the city's welcome hub?

Reply from the First Minister: Yes, we will continue to provide support. These are very real issues, and Sarah Boyack is right to raise them. They are issues that all countries that have stepped up to help Ukrainians are facing right now. I was speaking with the Taoiseach at the British-Irish Council a couple of weeks ago, and I know that the Republic of Ireland is dealing with those issues too, as is the Welsh Government and the United Kingdom Government in respect of England.

It is right that we have welcomed as many Ukrainians as possible, and it is right that we now work through those challenges. I know that Neil Gray is keeping members and Parliament as a whole updated. The £50 million longer-term resettlement fund is important, and we will continue to look at the eligibility for that. It is helping us to bring void properties back into use. We are also investing heavily in our wider affordable housing programme and will continue to do so.

In relation to people who have been displaced from Ukraine, we will continue to work with the City of Edinburgh Council and local authorities across Scotland to ensure that that support can continue. I take the opportunity to put on record my thanks to local councils, which have done fantastic work on that.

These are not easy challenges for any Government to navigate, but we have a moral obligation to do so and we will continue to work hard to ensure that we are doing right by those from Ukraine who need our support, help and welcome.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14007&i=126914#ScotParIOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Visas: Fees and Surcharges

Jackie Dunbar (SNP) [S6W-12161] To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding removing the application fee and annual healthcare surcharge for graduate visa applicants in Scotland.

Reply from Neil Gray: The Scottish Government strongly opposes the immigration health surcharge (IHS) and believes it should be removed, despite receiving £20.8 million in Barnett consequentials from it in 2018. Increasing the surcharge to £624 in 2018, more than three times the cost, was morally wrong.

The Scottish Government remains deeply concerned that multiple unnecessary immigration charges could make Scotland a less attractive destination for skilled workers and international students and impact student retention rates on the Graduate visa. Scottish Ministers have, and will continue to push the UK Government for an immigration system that meets Scotland's needs.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-12161>

Ukraine Refugees: Super Sponsor Scheme

Sarah Boyack (Labour) [S6W-11879] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will list the locations of all of the accommodation that it has supported local authorities to use to accommodate people through its Super Sponsor Scheme.

Reply from Neil Gray: We regularly review our temporary accommodation in order to provide the best support to our Ukrainian guests and do not want people spending any longer than necessary in temporary accommodation. Disclosing this information may result in a significant risk to the health and safety of the individuals staying in these hotels. Therefore, we currently have no plans to disclose this information.

The Scottish Government publish regular Scotland-level data and information on people displaced by the war in Ukraine. The latest data, published, 20 October 2022, can be found on our website:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-in-scotland-statistics-october-2022/pages/welcome-accommodation/>

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11879>

The following ten questions all received the same answer

Former Hong Kong Residents living in Scotland: Safety

Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat) [S6W-12089] To ask the Scottish Government what assessment has been made of any threat to former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland from the Chinese police service that is reportedly operating in Glasgow.

Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat) [S6W-12090] To ask the Scottish Government what steps are being taken to ensure that former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Glasgow feel safe and protected, in light of the reported existence of a branch of the Chinese police service in the city.

Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat) [S6W-12093] To ask the Scottish Government what assessment has been made of the number of any former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland and may have been targeted by the Chinese police service, which is reportedly operating in Glasgow.

Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat) [S6W-12094] To ask the Scottish Government what contact it has had with former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland following reports of the existence of a branch of the Chinese police service in Glasgow.

Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat) [S6W-12096] To ask the Scottish Government whether it has met with former members of the Hong Kong community in Scotland to gain knowledge and understanding of their experiences since resettling in Scotland.

Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat) [S6W-12097] To ask the Scottish Government what assessment has been made of the number of any attacks that have taken place in Scotland on former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland by members of the Chinese Communist Party.

Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat) [S6W-12098] To ask the Scottish Government whether a policing assessment has been made of any threat to former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland from individuals acting in the interests of the Chinese state.

Jeremy Balfour (Conservative) [S6W-12172] To ask the Scottish Government whether it has met with former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland to discuss their experiences since moving to Scotland.

Jeremy Balfour (Conservative) [S6W-12173] To ask the Scottish Government what assessment has been made of the number of any attacks by members of the Chinese Communist Party on former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland.

Jeremy Balfour (Conservative) [S6W-12174] To ask the Scottish Government what assessment has been made of any threat to former Hong Kong residents who have

resettled in Scotland from the Chinese police service, which is reportedly operating from Glasgow.

Reply from Keith Brown: As the First Minister acknowledged in Parliament on 27 October, the allegations of the existence of such establishments are concerning and she made clear any foreign country that operates in Scotland must abide by Scottish law.

In your questions, you rightly use “reportedly”. As the FM also made clear in her answer, these are matters for the police to consider in terms of any investigation or action. Police Scotland has said they are currently reviewing these reports to assess any criminality in conjunction with local and national partners.

If anyone feels that they have been the victim of unlawful activity, they should report the matter to Police Scotland. Equally if anyone feels threatened, they should report the matter to Police Scotland.

Beyond that, it would not be appropriate for me to comment further. We have not engaged with the Chinese Consulate on this issue. This would not be appropriate while a Police review is underway.

You have asked what whether Scottish Government has met with former members of the Hong Kong community in Scotland to gain knowledge and understanding of their experiences since resettling in Scotland.

The Scottish Government is committed to upholding and advancing the rights of those that choose to make their life here in Scotland, including former Hong Kong residents.

The Scottish Government has worked closely with the UK Government, COSLA, Police Scotland and third sector partners to understand the needs and requirements of former Hong Kong residents to support their integration into our communities.

You ask what assessment has been made of the number of any attacks that have taken place in Scotland on former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland by members of the Chinese Communist Party.

You also ask whether a policing assessment has been made of any threat to former Hong Kong residents who have resettled in Scotland from individuals acting in the interests of the Chinese state. These are also matters for the police and it would not be appropriate for me to comment.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-12089>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-12090>

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<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-12093>

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<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-12174>

UK Parliament Debate

Asylum Seekers Contingency Accommodation: Belfast

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-22/debates/4FA43319-579E-4292-A19F-9653D1A55375/AsylumSeekersContingencyAccommodationBelfast>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Hotel Asylum Accommodation: Local Authority Consultation

Giles Watling (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will make a statement on consultation with local authorities as to the selection of hotels for contingency asylum accommodation.

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick): On my appointment by the Prime Minister three weeks ago, I was appraised of the critical situation at the Manston processing centre. Within days, the situation escalated further with a terrorist attack at Western Jet Foil that forced the transfer of hundreds of additional migrants to Manston. I urgently visited Western Jet Foil and Manston within days of my appointment to assess the situation for myself and to speak with frontline staff, during which time it became clear to me that very urgent action was required. Since then, the numbers at Manston have fallen from more than 4,000 to zero today. That would not have been possible without the work of dedicated officials across the Home Office—from the officials in cutters saving lives at sea, to the medical staff at Manston—and I put on record my sincere gratitude to them for the intense effort required to achieve that result.

To bring Manston to a sustainable footing and meet our legal and statutory duties to asylum seekers who would otherwise have been left destitute, we have had to procure additional contingency accommodation at extreme pace. In some instances, however, that has led to the Home Office and our providers failing to properly engage with local authorities and Members of Parliament. I have been clear that that is completely unacceptable and that it must change.

On Monday, a “Dear colleague” letter in my name was sent to outline a new set of minimum requirements for that engagement, backed by additional resources. This includes an email notification to local authorities and Members of Parliament no less than 24 hours prior to arrivals; a fulsome briefing on the relevant cohort, required support and dedicated point of contact; and an offer of a meeting with the local authority as soon as possible prior to arrival.

I have since met chief executives and leaders of local authorities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, among many other meetings, to improve our engagement. We discussed their concerns and outlined the changes that we intend to make together. I have also met our providers to convey my concerns and those conveyed to me by hon. Members on both sides of the House in recent weeks, and

to agree new standards of engagement and conduct from them.

These new standards will lead to a modest improvement, but I am clear that much more needs to be done, so this performance standard will be reviewed weekly with a view to improving service levels progressively as quickly as we can. In the medium term, we are committed to moving to a full dispersal accommodation model, which would be fairer and cheaper. We continue to pursue larger accommodation sites that are decent but not luxurious, because we want to make sure that those in our care are supported appropriately but that the UK is a less attractive destination for asylum shoppers and economic migrants. That is exactly what the Home Secretary and I intend to achieve.

Giles Watling: ... Last Sunday afternoon, the Home Office contacted my local authority by email to give it 24 hours' notice that it had selected a hotel to act as contingency asylum accommodation. That gave the excellent people at Tendring District Council no time to respond properly to the issue of services. It is an inadequate timeframe and shows how poor the comms from the Home Office have been ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... In respect of the hotel in Tendring, as I understand it, having spoken to officials this morning, a proposition was put to Tendring District Council to use a former care home in my hon. Friend's constituency, which would have accommodated a small number of asylum seekers. Short notice was given because it was to be a backstop accommodation option in the light of the extreme situation that we were contending with at Manston. On further inquiries, and prior to his inquiry to the Department and the calling of the urgent question, the proposition was dropped by the Home Office and there is no intention of proceeding with it.

For information, had that proposition been taken forward, it would have been for a very small number of individuals. At the moment, there are 39 asylum seekers accommodated in my hon. Friend's constituency, 14 of whom are in hotels and 25 in dispersed accommodation. That accounts for 0.02% of the population of Tendring's local authority. I do not say that to diminish the legitimate concerns that he raises, but merely to provide context. If we are dealing with 40,000 individuals crossing the channel illegally, there will be a need for all local authorities in the country to work with the Home Office and to play their part. It is absolutely incumbent on the Home Office in return, however, to provide good standards of engagement so that we can ensure that the right accommodation is chosen in the right places. That is exactly what I intend to achieve. ...

Stephen Kinnock (Labour): ... In 2012, the Home Office was making 14 asylum decisions a month; it is now making just five. ...

With the average time to process an asylum claim standing at 449 days, the people smugglers see the backlog as a marketing opportunity—an open invite from this Conservative Government to those who want to melt away into the underground economy. All this catastrophic incompetence has led to the Minister scrambling around to find contingency hotel accommodation, resulting in what the Home Secretary described this morning as “poor communication” between central and local government.

Will the Minister therefore confirm whether he really feels that his undertaking to give local authorities as little as 24 hours' notice is reasonable? Did he recently pull out of two meetings with council leaders at short notice? What mechanisms is he using to monitor the performance of contractors and subcontractors? I have heard from councils where the public health team was not informed about serious health issues, including pregnancies, so does he accept that he is failing to give local authorities key health-related information? What progress is he making on tackling the crisis of unaccompanied children being placed in hotels— 222 have already gone missing—and will he apologise to the couples who have had to cancel their wedding receptions in hotels at extremely short notice as a result of this Government's chronic mismanagement?

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): I think we are all agreed in this House that it is important that the Home Office liaises in advance with local authorities, service providers, non-governmental organisations and local representatives. The Minister has made some commitments in that regard today, and we will obviously monitor closely how those are implemented and how they work. We should also be agreed, and I think we are close to being agreed, that hotels really should be a matter of last resort, rather than routine, so I have a couple of thoughts on how we get there.

First, on where the Home Office spends resources, I hate to say it—well, I do not mind saying it—but the £140 million spent on Rwanda is a complete waste of money. Could the Minister confirm that about 4,000 or 5,000 caseworkers could have been employed for that sort of sum? Let us not waste any more money on that at all. Will he also look at the tens of millions of pounds that contractors are now raking in in profit through that scheme, and seek to provide that money directly to local authorities to procure accommodation in their communities?

Secondly, on the backlog, as I have said before, there are thousands—tens of thousands—of Afghans and Syrians in the system who could be taken out of it with a quick decision. The inadmissibility procedure is a complete waste of time. It achieves nothing, and it clogs up 10,000 spaces.

Finally, we did hear confirmation today that decision makers are among the lowest-paid civil servants going, but they make life and death decisions. Surely that has to be looked at again, and they need to be paid properly.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for a number of valid concerns and suggestions that I will certainly bear in mind. It is important now that the Home Office tackles the quite serious operational issues it faces, one of which is obviously addressing the backlog of cases. We are going to do that by training the staff better, ensuring that they have the right leadership and ensuring that they can raise productivity by having a less bureaucratic system than the one we have today.

The hon. Gentleman is right to say that we need to disperse people throughout the United Kingdom in a fair and equitable manner. One of the challenges we face is the fact that, disproportionately, Scotland has not stepped up to this challenge. There are, I believe, only about 10 hotels in Scotland that are currently housing asylum seekers, for example, and the Scottish Government have not supported us in procuring others. Asylum seekers are primarily centred on the city of Glasgow, which has a very significant number of asylum seekers and a long history of accommodating them, but other cities and towns in Scotland need to do the same. If he would like to work with me to correct that imbalance, I would be delighted to do so. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-23/debates/C6D7EC55-29B3-451D-B9FC-0E858A6A921D/HotelAsylumAccommodationLocalAuthorityConsultation>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Asylum: Rwanda

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [86413] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take in response to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on her proposals to deport migrants who cross the Channel in small boats to Rwanda.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The European Court of Human Rights has not issued a final judgment in the relation to the UK's Migration and Economic Development

Partnership with Rwanda. In June 2022, the European Court of Human Rights granted last-minute interim measures which prohibited the removal of individuals set to be relocated to Rwanda on 14 June 2022. An interim measure remains in place until three weeks after the end of ongoing judicial review proceedings in the UK in relation to this policy. In making these interim measures, the European Court of Human Rights did not rule that the policy or removals were unlawful. There were three hearings in the ongoing judicial review proceedings in the UK courts in September and October. We are awaiting judgment in those cases.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/86413>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Channel Migrants

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Olivia Blake (Labour) [89922] To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Marine Accident Investigation Branch will conclude its inquiry into the 32 deaths in the Channel on the 24 November 2021.

Reply from Richard Holden: The MAIB anticipates that it will circulate its draft report of the investigation for consultation early in the New Year and aims to publish its final report later next year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-17/89922>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Olivia Blake (Labour) [89923] To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the French coastguard's call logs from 24 November 2021 relating to fatalities in the Channel; and if he will launch a public inquiry into that incident.

Reply from Richard Holden: The Marine Accident Investigation Branch announced on 3 February that they were commencing an investigation into the tragic events of 24 November 2021.

The Government has confirmed to the families that it is committed to ensuring that a full and thorough investigation is carried out into the tragic 24 November incident. We await the report from the MAIB's investigation to consider the scope and form of any further investigation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-17/89923>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Mark Logan (Conservative) [85031] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken with international partners to help reduce the number of migrant crossings across the English Channel.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Migrant crossings across the Channel are dangerous and unnecessary. This Government is determined to put the people smugglers out of business and make this route unviable.

We have agreed to a new joint strategy and operational plan with our French counterparts, for which the UK will provide up to €72.2 million this year, to drive forward our next phase of cooperation to tackle this issue. This will increase the number of French Officers with UK Officers being embedded with French counterparts. Our partnership with the French saw more than 23,000 crossings stopped in 2021 and has seen over 30,000 illegal crossings stopped so far this year.

As a Government, we have also introduced tough new penalties through the Nationality and Borders Act which introduces life sentences for those who facilitate

illegal entry. Additionally, we have agreed a ground-breaking partnership with Rwanda, and we remain committed to operationalising the scheme as soon as possible. We are committed to engaging with international partners, in particular Member States and the EU, on a 'whole of route' approach to addressing the challenges of, and risks posed by, irregular migration, including through an early meeting convening our near neighbours.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/85031>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Afghanistan

Brendan O'Hara (SNP) [88898] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Hazara Muslims have (a) applied for asylum in the UK, (b) been granted asylum in the UK and (c) reached the UK after being granted asylum through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Brendan O'Hara (SNP) [88899] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there has been an increase in the number of Afghan citizens claiming asylum in the UK since August 2021.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on asylum applications and initial decisions on asylum applications from Afghan nationals can be found in tables Asy_D01 and Asy_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbooks. The latest data relate to the year ending June 2022. Data for the year ending September 2022 will be published on 24 November 2022. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

The Home Office does not publish data on ethnicity or religion of asylum applicants.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/88898>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/88899>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas (Green) [86447] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals who applied from (a) Afghanistan (b) within the UK after coming to the UK via Operation Pitting have been resettled in the UK under pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme since June 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ACRS pathway 3 is intended to offer a route to safety for those in Afghanistan and the region. This pathway is FCDO led for the first year. We will offer up to 1500 places to eligible, at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni, including their eligible family members.

The FCDO have been assessing over 11,400 Expressions of Interest against the eligibility criteria for Pathway 3 in the order in which they were received. Some groups within the three cohorts will be prioritised for consideration because the role they performed or the project they worked on mean they are particularly at risk. The FCDO has begun notifying eligible individuals with advice on the next steps.

Work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals resettled under the ACRS and relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/86447>

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 Pathway 3, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme-pathway-3-eligibility-for-british-council-and-gardaworld-contractors-and-chevening-alumni>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [77550] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy are awaiting decision.

Reply from James Heapey: As of 3 November 2022 there are 72,269 applications awaiting a decision. We estimate the vast majority of these applicants to be ineligible.

HMG knows everyone who has worked with the British Armed Forces or partners, and MOD has access to this information. As such, we are prioritising finding those we know to be eligible and in need of our support.

We estimate there to be approximately 4,600 ARAP eligible Afghans (including dependants) to be relocated to the UK, of which around 1,620 have already received an offer letter. Of those who have been granted approximately 625 have already moved to safety in a third country. Not all those who are deemed eligible are expected to take up the offer of relocation having successfully settled elsewhere.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-02/77550>

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>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Thangam Debbonaire (Labour) [84906] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the average month of submission of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications that his Department began processing in November 2022.

Reply from James Heapey: Due to the way Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) applications are processed, it is not possible to provide a response to the question asked. Rather than being processed in the order in which they were received, new applications are triaged to separate out those that are clearly ineligible and those more likely to be eligible; which are then allocated to separate casework teams. This change, alongside a new casework system and uplift in resourcing, is allowing the ARAP Team to issue more decisions on applications per month than are being received and make progress on clearing the backlog of cases. That said, it is recognised that processing times within ARAP can vary considerably, dependent upon a number of factors including the complexity of the case, the need to conduct checks with other Government Departments, or the length of time it takes an applicant to respond to follow-up queries. However, having successfully relocated over 11,800 individuals under the ARAP scheme, the primary focus for the ARAP team is identifying and relocating the estimated remaining 4,600 eligible individuals (including dependents), using HMG employment records to target efforts.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84906>

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>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Thangam Debbonaire (Labour) [84907] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's target timeframe is to respond to written enquiries from applicants to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

Reply from James Heapey: All ARAP applications are reviewed on receipt and an immediate request for information is sent to each applicant to obtain more detail on their individual circumstances, including providing additional information, documentation or advising that they are at risk.

Individual updates are not generally provided in response to enquiries, in order to focus resource on our main effort of identifying and relocating the estimated remaining 4,600 individuals eligible for ARAP (including dependents), using HMG employment records to target efforts.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84907>

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>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Thangam Debbonaire (Labour) [84903] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, under what circumstances his Department would provide an update to (a) a Member of Parliament and (b) an applicant to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy on a live case under that policy.

Reply from James Heapey: All ARAP applications should be acknowledged at the point of submission. Applicant's may then be contacted to request additional information, before an eligibility decision is made. If found to be eligible, applicants will be asked for further information regarding their family members included in their application, for further required checks to be made. Unfortunately, it is not possible to advise the consistency with which these updates may occur, as the timeframes can vary considerably, due to numerous factors, including the level of complexity of the case.

Individual updates or responses outside of the above circumstances are not generally provided, in order to focus resource towards our main effort of identifying and relocating the estimated remaining 4,900 individuals eligible for ARAP (including dependents), using HMG employment records to target efforts.

That said, any enquiries received by the ARAP team will be provided with an automatic reply that should answer the vast majority of questions. All enquiries received are reviewed in order to identify where applicants are providing an update regarding their individual circumstances, including providing additional information, documentation or advising that they are at risk. In instances where a Member of Parliament has submitted an enquiry, this is forwarded on to the Ministerial Correspondence Unit to ensure an appropriate response is sent from the relevant Minister.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84903>

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>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [80716] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Leave Outside the Immigration Rules (LOTR) applications for additional family members under the Afghan relocation and assistance policy (ARAP) and ex-gratia scheme (EGS), which Department makes the decision on whether to grant LOTR applications under the

EGS scheme; how many such applications have been received in total under both schemes; and how many such applications under both schemes (a) have received a positive decision, (b) have received a negative decision and (c) were still pending on 7 November 2022.

Reply from James Heapey: When a principal applicant submits a Leave Outside the Immigration Rules (LOTR) application for additional family members, it is initially received by the Ministry of Defence. A decision on whether this application meets the eligibility requirements of the EGS/ARAP additional family member policy is made by the Ministry of Defence or referred to the relevant sponsoring Government department (dependent upon the role performed by the principal applicant with EGS/ARAP eligibility) to make that decision.

Those found to meet the eligibility requirements are then referred to the Home Office by the Ministry of Defence, who will perform additional checks (such as biometric enrolment and security) in order to make the final decision on the grant of LOTR.

Since August 2021, a total of 1,103 applications for additional family members have been received by the Ministry of Defence.

Of the above, decisions have been made in 401 cases across HM Government.

i) 107 applications have been found to be eligible, in whole or in part, and referred to the Home Office for grant of LOTR.

ii) 234 applications have been found to be ineligible by Defence and the Foreign Office.

iii) 70 applications are awaiting an eligibility decision with Defence and other Government departments. These are at various stages of the decision-making process and are being worked through on a case by case basis, by the relevant Government department, as quickly as practicable.

All casework decisions are taken against a clear framework of eligibility criteria. Timelines regarding LOTR eligibility decisions can vary considerably, dependent upon the complexity of the case, the need to conduct checks with other Government departments, or the length of time it takes for applicants to respond to follow-up queries.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80716>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Ukraine

Pupils: Ukraine

Duncan Baker (Conservative) [92368] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment of the adequacy of the steps taken to support children and young people from Ukraine adapt to UK schools; and whether her Department has any plans to review the requirement for Ukrainian pupils to take English and Maths' GCSE exams if they cannot show physical proof of having passed previous similar exams.

Reply from Nick Gibb: The Department is clear that the best place for all children to be educated is in school and that attending school will help newly arrived Ukrainian children integrate into the communities in which they are living. It is the experience and skill of local authorities and schools that provides the support and care necessary for these children as they adjust to their new lives in the UK.

Schools and colleges are responsible for deciding which qualifications they enter pupils for, based on what is in their best interests. Schools will want to carefully consider the individual circumstances of the students before deciding the appropriateness of an exam entry. Exam centres should make these decisions carefully on a case-by-case basis.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92368>

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

Skilled Workers: Commonwealth

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [87771] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help support high skilled immigration from Commonwealth countries.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Attracting the brightest and best from the Commonwealth and the wider world is a key feature of our global points-based immigration system.

We want the UK to be the preferred destination for global talent, such as scientists, engineers and academics, and we have reformed and expanded the Global Talent route to accommodate them.

We continue to enhance our offer for those looking to come to the UK to undertake high skilled employment, including those who demonstrate high potential at an early career stage through introducing routes such as the High Potential Individual route which opened for applications earlier this year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/87771>

Migrant Workers: Vacancies

Charlotte Nichols (Labour) [89050] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to make it easier for foreign citizens to work in the UK in sectors experiencing shortages of labour.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The points-based immigration system (PBS) was introduced in 2021 to ensure the UK attracts the best talent from around the world. For those roles which do not meet the skills threshold, there is the domestic labour market which includes UK workers and migrants with general work rights. We must see long-term solutions to labour and skills shortages delivered by employers through automation, improved training, hiring and better pay and working conditions. The Home Office keeps all immigration routes introduced under the points-based immigration system under review and regularly makes changes to the immigration rules accordingly.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/89050>

Migrant Workers

Owen Thompson (SNP) [88947] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to help reduce the up-front costs for (a) researchers and (b) innovators moving to work in the UK.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Government is improving its visa offer for overseas nationals coming here to work in research and innovation roles, and a number of visa routes are available for that purpose. We are removing the £50,000 minimum investment funds requirement for the Innovator route and exempting recruits under the new Scale-up route from the Immigration Skills Charge. We have increased the non-sponsorship options for the exceptionally qualified, including the Global Talent and the High Potential Individual routes. There are also other options to support temporary research mobility, including research-related permitted activities under the Visitor route and arrangements for temporary research assignments under the Government Authorised Exchange route.

Visa fees are set taking account of the charging powers provided by Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which include the ability to set fees based on the cost of processing the application, the benefits provided by a successful application and the wider cost of the Migration and Borders system. Full details are available via the following link

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/88947>

Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Dan Poulter (Conservative) [84865] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to expand (a) number of workers on and (b) the scope of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Government expanded the Seasonal Worker route to include the poultry sector on 18 October. This enables workers to come to the UK in the run up to Christmas to support the sector during the busy festive period.

The route has been extended until 2024, with 40,000 visas available for 2022, consisting of 38,000 for horticulture and 2,000 for the poultry sector. This will support our farmers as they adapt to changes in the UK labour market. The Government is keeping the position under close review.

Many roles in the poultry sector can also be recruited through the Skilled Worker route.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84865>

Undocumented Migrants: Prosecutions

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [88895] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted of a criminal offence under section 40 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Since the Nationality & Border Act became law, under section 40, there have been to date, 184 individuals charged (a) and 101 of that number, so far, convicted (b).

Please note that a number of individuals charged (a) will still be in the court process. The above information has been taken from local management information and is subject to change.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/88895>

Section 40 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/36/section/40/enacted>

Refugees

Jim Shannon (DUP) [86485] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to expand safe routes for refugees to travel to the UK.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The UK welcomes refugees and people in need of protection through a range of resettlement schemes. These include the UK Resettlement Scheme, Community Sponsorship, Mandate Resettlement Scheme, the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and the Afghanistan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

These schemes have provided safe and legal routes for tens of thousands of people to start new lives in the UK. We have resettled more than 27,000 refugees across all schemes since 2015 directly from regions of conflict and instability – around half of whom were children.

In addition to our refugee resettlement schemes, family reunion policy allows a spouse/partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. There are currently no plans to expand the existing safe and legal routes we already provide.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/86485>

Asylum: Location

Mark Logan (Conservative) [86633] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure that asylum seekers settling in England are shared evenly between parliamentary constituencies.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: On 13th April this year, it was announced that with immediate effect we would move to a model of full dispersal for asylum seekers to ensure a fairer distribution of asylum seekers across the UK. Full dispersal means that all local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales can be expected to participate in the new model. This approach will reduce relative pressures on those local authorities who accommodated asylum seekers prior to April 2022. We have been working collaboratively with LAs through our Strategic Migration Partnerships to generate regional plans that will support the implementation of full dispersal.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/86633>

The announcement referred to above can be read at column 26 of

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-04-19/debates/04A9FDC8-59F6-4CA9-BEBD-3B6F5850D707/GlobalMigrationChallenge>

Asylum: LGBT+ People

Jeremy Corbyn (Independent) [82157] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in the application of the new asylum assessment rules under the Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: This Government is committed to advancing the rights of individuals who are LGBT. The welfare and dignity of all claimants, including those who are LGBT, remains central to our decision-making processes.

One of the key objectives of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 is to increase the fairness and efficacy of our asylum system so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum. In September 2021, we published an Equality Impact Assessment for the policies being taken forward through the then Bill which included an assessment on potential impacts on people who may face persecution because of the protected characteristics of sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-08/82157>

The Equality Impact Assessment referred to above can be read at

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

Asylum

Jim Shannon (DUP) [86487] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of the inadmissibility process on (a) the speed of asylum decision making and (b) the provision of asylum accommodation and support.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: This system will not introduce significant delays either for individuals entering the asylum system, or the asylum system as a whole.

In recent years we have made progress in prioritising older claims, high harm cases, those cases with extreme vulnerability, children and new flow cases following the introduction of the Nationality & Borders Act, whilst those in receipt of support are a priority for caseworkers considering legacy cases.

The significant increase in dangerous journeys across the Channel is placing unprecedented strain on our asylum system and it has made it necessary to continue to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers. The use of hotels is a short-term solution and we are working hard with local authorities to find appropriate accommodation.

Statistics relating to supported asylum seekers temporarily residing in contingency accommodation are published here: [Asylum and resettlement datasets](#).

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in specific types of accommodation, or the number at specific stages of the asylum process. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost. Further information on the inadmissibility process can be here: [Inadmissibility: safe third country cases](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/86487>

Asylum: Legal Aid Scheme

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [90865] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment has she made of the adequacy of the (a) availability and (b) accessibility of legal advice for asylum seekers currently living in Home Office accommodation.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Asylum seekers housed in Home Office accommodation are signposted to obtain legal representation by Migrant Help. As part of their induction process, Migrant Help will provide asylum seekers with details of three legal representatives practising in the area they are accommodated in.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90865>

Schools: Asylum

Helen Hayes (Labour) [92293] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the ability of local authorities to provide school places for asylum-seeking children placed in Home Office procured accommodation.

Reply from Claire Coutinho: The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places sits with local authorities. The department provides capital funding through the Basic Need grant to support local authorities provide school places, based on their own forecast data.

The department engages with local authorities on a regular basis to review their plans for creating additional places and to consider alternatives where necessary. When local authorities are experiencing difficulties, including with new arrivals from overseas, the department supports them to find solutions as quickly as possible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92293>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Employment

Dan Carden (Labour) [93611] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions her Department has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential merits of allowing asylum seekers who have been waiting for over six months for a decision on their asylum claim to work in the UK.

Dan Carden (Labour) [93613] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of permitting asylum seekers to work on the attractiveness of the UK labour market to foreign workers.

Dan Carden (Labour) [93614] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the guidance by her Department entitled Permission to work and volunteering for asylum seekers, published on 28 October 2022, what the evidential basis is for saying that asylum seekers should be restricted from working to ensure a clear distinction between economic migration and asylum that discourages those who do not need protection from claiming asylum.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their

claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Following last year's review and in light of wider priorities to fix the broken asylum system, reduce pull factors, and ensure our policies do not encourage people to undercut the resident labour force, we have decided at this stage not to pursue any changes to the policy. Instead, we are focusing our resources on transforming the asylum system and making faster decisions. This will prevent people becoming stuck in the system for long periods of time and allow genuine refugees to integrate and contribute into society more quickly.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-22/93611>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-22/93613>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-22/93614>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1114501/Permission_to_work_and_volunteer.pdf

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Employment

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [84919] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will review the employment opportunities open to people seeking asylum.

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [84920] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will review the one year limit for people seeking asylum being eligible to work.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL). A review into the policy was completed last year and the findings were announced on 8 December 2021. We have decided to retain our policy with no further changes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84919>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84920>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-12-08/hcws452>

Asylum: Employment

Chloe Smith (Conservative) [86436] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing asylum seekers to work while their applications are being processed.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List. Any further right to work could undermine legal routes and act as a pull factor to those seeking to come to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/86436>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Hotels

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [79307] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of the hotels that were being used for asylum

seeker accommodation on 1 September 2022 were no longer being used to house asylum seekers on (a) 1 October 2022 and (b) 1 November 2022.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [79308] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of the hotels being used for asylum seeker accommodation on 1 October 2022 were no longer being used to house asylum seekers on 1 November 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: On 1 September 2022 there were 264 hotels being used for asylum seeker accommodation, out of which all were in use on 3 October 2022 (earliest data set available for October 2022) and 1 was no longer in use on 1st November 2022.

On 3 October there were 291 hotels being used for asylum seeker accommodation, out of which 2 were no longer in use on 1 November 2022.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-04/79307>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-04/79308>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Rachael Maskell (Labour) [84914] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made with Cabinet colleagues of the cost to local authorities of providing (a) initial and (b) contingency accommodation to asylum seekers; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the funding provided to local authorities reflects this.

Rachael Maskell (Labour) [84916] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an estimate of the cost to (a) local authorities, (b) schools and (c) health services of hosting each (i) adult and (ii) child in (1) contingency accommodation and (2) initial accommodation.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Local authorities are key partners in enabling us to procure sufficient accommodation to end the use of hotel contingency.

All local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales became an asylum dispersal area by default on 13 April 2022. This shift to 'Full Dispersal' will increase the number of suitable properties that can be procured for destitute asylum seekers. The changes to asylum dispersal have been backed by extra government funding. More than £21million in un-ringfenced grant funding has been committed to make sure eligible LAs can provide wraparound support locally.

Our accommodation providers are experienced and have all the required policies and procedures in place around security, safeguarding, critical incident management and health and safety. We have also recently invested in ensuring these checks consider mental and wellbeing aspects of service users, and we are committed to working with all relevant providers to improve and build on the high service standards we expect.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84914>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84916>

Asylum: Housing

Navendu Mishra (Labour) [93704] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department routinely checks the conditions of properties used to house asylum seekers.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The welfare and safety of all vulnerable asylum seekers in our care is of the utmost importance to the Home Office, and we expect the highest standards from our accommodation providers. Our accommodation providers are contractually obliged to provide adequate accommodation and to

conduct regular quality assurance checks across the asylum estate. Robust compliance and governance protocols exist to ensure daily engagement is undertaken with our service providers by Home Office officials to ensure and assure that the providers' operational delivery and overall performance consistently meet the required standards. This is supplemented by weekly, monthly and quarterly governance meetings.

The Home Office also has a Contract Assurance team which conducts a range of activities to ensure accommodation providers deliver to the required standards. All contingency accommodation sites are inspected by the team. Dispersal accommodation is also inspected on an intelligence led basis. Properties are checked against the high standards set by the contract, and by the law and the licensing conditions set by local authorities. Providers are required to take immediate action to address any issues that are found.

Asylum seekers can also raise specific issues or concerns about their accommodation through the 24/7 Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) service operated via Migrant Help. Home Office officials also review the issues and feedback received via Migrant Help to help understand the health of the service and address any problems, for example, by targeting inspections of properties about which issues have been raised.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-22/93704>

Asylum: Hotels

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [87871] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of signing contracts to use hotels to house asylum seekers on the existing residents of those hotels.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The record numbers of individuals illegally crossing the Channel has impacted not only our ability to find suitable accommodation for people as quickly as is necessary to meet our statutory need, but also our engagement with MPs and Local Authorities.

As advised in my letter to MPs issued on 18th November we have taken immediate steps to rectify this and improve levels of engagement with key stakeholders around required hotel accommodation sites, to ensure colleagues are kept updated and better informed and to ensure we understand and act on any concerns appropriately and swiftly. These performance standards will be reviewed regularly and, wherever possible, service levels will be progressively raised. We also continue to work closely with local authorities on full asylum dispersal to ensure fairer distribution across the UK.

Using hotels to accommodate asylum seekers is not a long-term solution. Central to our focus is the impact on local communities, including access to public services, community cohesion and public order; delivering value for money for the taxpayer; and reducing pull factors to enter the UK illegally. It is against these criteria that we will consider further contingency accommodation options.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/87871>

The letter referred to above is not available online

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [88967] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether asylum accommodation providers are required to record the number of residents who are physically harmed within their properties.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [88968] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether asylum accommodation providers are required to inform her

Department of the number of residents who are physically harmed at their properties.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The safety and wellbeing of asylum seekers in our care is of paramount importance to the Home Office. We expect high standards from all of our providers, and we have a robust governance framework in place to manage service delivery of the Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts (AASC). The contracts stipulate that all incidents must be reported to the Home Office immediately by the accommodation providers.

We have also worked closely with providers and stakeholders to develop a safeguarding assurance framework which is available at [Asylum support contracts safeguarding framework](#).

The Asylum Support Contracts Safeguarding Framework is a supplementary document to others that are publicly available. The framework is designed to provide a high-level overview of the responsibilities of all parties and is to be read in conjunction with the safeguarding elements of the Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC) - Schedule 2 - and the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility Contract (AIRE) - [AIRE Contract](#). These contracts were designed with safeguarding of the individual at their heart.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/88967>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/88968>

Asylum: Hotels

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [88894] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contractual obligations hotels providing contingency accommodation for asylum seekers are under; and whether these obligations ensure unaccompanied asylum-seeking children do not go missing.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The safety and wellbeing of asylum seekers in our care is of paramount importance to the Home Office. We expect high standards from all of our providers, and we have a robust governance framework in place to manage service delivery of the Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts (AASC). Details of the AASC can be found at: [New asylum accommodation contracts awarded](#)

We have safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in hotels are as safe and supported as possible whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of social workers and nurses. Staff, including contractors, receive a number of briefings and guidance on how to safeguard children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/88894>

Asylum: Hotels

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [92348] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether residents in spot booking hotels are entitled to seek advice and treatment from general practitioners.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

Asylum seekers have access to health and social care services from the point of arrival in the UK and the Home Office and its contractors work closely with the NHS, Local Authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations to ensure that people can access the healthcare and support they need.

The asylum seekers accommodated in hotels by the Home Office have access to

Migrant Help, a voluntary sector organisation funded by the Home Office, and they can use the NHS free of charge.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92348>

Detention Centres: Manston

Diana Johnson (Labour) [87793] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November 2022 to Question 77331 on Detention Centres: Manston, what (a) qualifies as an exceptional circumstance and (b) is the maximum period of time she can extend the detention of a person in a holding room for.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: As set out in the published guidance on the Short-Term Holding Facility Rules 2018, it is not possible to give an exhaustive definition of exceptional circumstances. These would be circumstances which the Secretary of State (or those exercising the decision on her behalf) reasonably considers to be exceptional.

No maximum extension period is set out in the Short-Term Holding Facility Rules 2018, or guidance.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/87793>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-02/77331>

The Rules referred to above can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2018/409/contents/made>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Hotel Asylum Accommodation: Local Authority Consultation

[The answer previously given by the Minister in the House of Commons](#) was read in the House of Lords.

Lord Coaker (Labour): My Lords, with 127,026 asylum applications outstanding and only 4% of people who have arrived by small boat having had a decision, is it any wonder the system is in chaos? The Government are scrambling around looking for hotel accommodation as an emergency response without proper consultation with local authorities, sometimes giving them only 24 hours' notice of placing asylum seekers in their area. Is that not the case? Is it not also the case that, as a consequence, there are allegations of dirty, unsafe accommodation with, in one report, 500 rape alarms being issued? Most disgracefully of all, unaccompanied children are going missing, 222 so far. Where are they and how many more are there? It seems we cannot even protect our children.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Murray of Blidworth): My Lords, the noble Lord is entirely right that, of the small-boat arrivals in 2021, 96% are still awaiting an initial decision, as the Minister in the other place said. However, we made more than 14,500 decisions in the year to June 2021, concentrating on deciding older claims, high-harm cases, cases with extreme vulnerability, and children. ...

Clearly there has been difficulty in notifying local authorities. ... I am unsure whether he will have seen the "Dear colleague" letter ... notifying them ... that it will absolutely be the rule that they get at least 24 hours' notice, but it is hoped to be longer than that. I would be very grateful to hear from any noble Lords who are concerned by any hotels they may be aware of where due notice has not been given to the local authority and to the Member for the relevant constituency.

As to the point about unaccompanied children going missing from hotels, any child going missing is extremely serious, which is why we work closely with local

authorities and the police to operate a robust missing persons protocol to ensure that their whereabouts are known and that they are safe. We work to ensure that vulnerable children are provided with appropriate placements for their needs, and we have changed the national transfer scheme so that all local authorities with children's services must support young people. Home Office and contractor staff identify cohorts of young people considered at greater risk of going missing and, of course, risk assessments and safety plans are undertaken on arrival in mitigation of this risk.

Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the Minister knows that I have raised the health service provision for those at Manston and when they have been dispersed elsewhere. Today, I am hearing from local authorities and directors of public health locally that scabies is increasing. It is racing through the hotels where these asylum seekers have been sent. In some places, the rate is 70% because they do not have the clean clothes and linen necessary for the clothes that have mite infestation to be thoroughly washed. Worse, the Home Office and Clearsprings have refused to provide specialist creams at those hotels for asylum seekers to use. Even worse, because of the scheme under which those being dispersed from Manston come, the usual grant to GPs is not made available, which means there is no money locally, so asylum seekers can use only 111 or 999. Will the Minister agree to meet to discuss this as a matter of urgency? I appreciate that health is not in his brief, but there are some holes, particularly about health funding and stopping this mass infestation of scabies.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: ... I assure the noble Baroness that concern is paid to the health of those passing through Manston, and it is hoped that any conditions they suffer from at that time are treated, in particular with the topical creams that she suggests. I am concerned by what she said about what is happening with Clearsprings, but I am afraid that without a bit more detail, which I am sure she will provide, I cannot answer now, but I will do that. ...

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, will the Minister comment on the Home Secretary's evidence yesterday in the other place, where she seemed to suggest that the only way that many asylum seekers could claim asylum in the UK is on arrival in the UK? In other words, the only way for genuine refugees and asylum seekers to claim asylum is to pay people smugglers to cross the channel and then claim asylum in the UK. Is the Government's policy not feeding the business model of people smugglers rather than trying to dismantle it?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: No, it is absolutely to the contrary. Safe and legal routes, such as the ones we operate in Afghanistan, and in Iraq and Jordan in the past, were designed to provide an opportunity for genuine refugees to make asylum claims to come to the UK. The idea that people can promote their own claims over those of others and cross themselves into the country in order to claim asylum is simply not a sensible way of running an asylum system. It is clearly contrary to the public interest that those able to afford to pay people smugglers are able to come here and claim asylum. That is why the safe and legal routes are the only proper way of delivering asylum sanctuary.

Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat): It is now a month since the report that there were 222 unaccounted-for children, as the noble Lord Lord Coaker estimated. These children have come from a traumatic experience. How many, as of today, are unaccounted for in their location?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: I do not have that information to hand. The positive news, as I am sure the noble Lord will agree, is that there are still no people at Manston. Everyone has been transferred into hotel accommodation. As I say, those who are unaccompanied minors are cared for separately in specially provided accommodation with special support.

To read the question and answer session in full see

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Asylum: Children

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL3244] To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to receive the report on age assessment of asylum-seeking children from the expert panel they established; and whether this report will be published.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: In December 2021, the Chief Scientific Adviser at the Home Office set up an independent Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee to provide her with independent scientific and associated ethical advice, recommendations for best practice and advice relating to issues raised by key stakeholders on the implementation of scientific methods of age assessment.

We are continuing to work with the committee to finalise their report and considering their advice alongside other sources.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/hl3244>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Children

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL3310] To ask His Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied children went missing from Home Office commissioned hotel accommodation in each month in the period from April to October.

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL3311] To ask His Majesty's Government how many referrals to the National Referral Mechanism regarding unaccompanied children seeking asylum and placed in Home Office commissioned accommodation were made in each month from July to October.

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL3312] To ask His Majesty's Government how many serious incident notifications regarding unaccompanied children seeking asylum and placed in Home Office commissioned accommodation were made to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in the period from April to October.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: We take the welfare of those in our care extremely seriously. We have safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in emergency interim hotels are as safe and supported as possible whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of social workers and nurses.

The Home Office has no power to hold asylum seekers, including children, in hotels or any temporary accommodation if they wish to leave.

All Home Office staff and contractors engaging with asylum seekers are trained to adopt a risk-based approach towards potential indications of vulnerability and to refer relevant cases onto the Safeguarding Hub, a dedicated resource assigned to identifying and safeguarding vulnerable asylum seekers.

Safeguarding Hub staff advocate for an individual's needs with the statutory agencies to promote appropriate safeguarding interventions. The statutory agencies retain responsibility for all decisions on intervention activity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-09/hl3310>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-09/hl3311>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-09/hl3312>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee

Evidence session: Family migration

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/11588/html/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motions

Olivia Blake (Labour) [603] Anniversary of channel crossing deaths – That this House marks the first anniversary of the tragic death of 32 people in the Channel in the early hours of the morning of 24 November 2021; urges the Government to speed up the enquiry currently being carried out by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch; notes the harrowing new evidence which has come to light as part of the French investigation, suggesting that both the French and British authorities were aware of the boat in distress and of its position; further notes that despite logs showing numerous calls to French and UK authorities over the nine hour window, and that by 2.45am the boat was in British waters, no efforts appear to have been made to send help; and believes an urgent public enquiry must now be launched into these deaths to provide answers to the families of those who died and ensure all lessons are learnt and implemented to prevent further tragedies in the Channel.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60316>

Olivia Blake (Labour) [596] Safe passage for refugees – That this House commends the work of PCS and Care4Calais and the launch of their policy document Safe passage for refugees: humane alternative to the Rwanda policy; notes the key demands include the implementation of a safe passage visa scheme, greater investment in the Home Office and the reform of immigration detention centres; acknowledges the worrying increase in small boat crossings this year with numbers of individuals making this journey in 2022 expected to rise to over 60,000; deplores the hateful rhetoric against refugees which has continued to appear in many parts of the press and social media in recent months; is concerned that the Government's own policies and decisions are encouraging this rhetoric despite the UNHCR and Refugee Council confirming that most individuals making the treacherous journey are needing protection; and calls on the Government to urgently act to protect these vulnerable people who are fleeing humanitarian crises across the world and work with PCS and Care4Calais to create a system which will stop these dangerous small boat crossings and will instead support genuine asylum claims allowing individuals and families to arrive safely in the UK and begin their new lives in the UK

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60308>

The policy document referred to above can be read at

<https://care4calais.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Safe-Passage-Policy-Paper.pdf>

New Publications

Updated: Overview of the immigration system

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/overview-of-the-immigration-system>

Summary of latest statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/summary-of-latest-statistics>

Recent changes to visa numbers in Home Office data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/recent-changes-to-visa-numbers-in-home-office-data>

Statistics on Ukrainians in the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/statistics-on-ukrainians-in-the-uk>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors>

Why do people come to the UK? To work

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work>

Why do people come to the UK? To study

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-study>

Why do people come to the UK? For family reasons

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-for-family-reasons>

How many people do we grant protection to?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/how-many-people-do-we-grant-protection-to>

How many people continue their stay in the UK or apply to stay permanently?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/how-many-people-continue-their-stay-in-the-uk-or-apply-to-stay-permanently>

How many people are detained or returned?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned>

EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, September 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-september-2022/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-september-2022>

EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics tables, September 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119937/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-tables-28-august-2018-30-september-2022.ods

EU Settlement Scheme statistics local authority tables, September 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119938/eu-settlement-scheme-local-authority-tables-28-august-to-30-september-2022.ods

Irregular migration to the UK, year ending September 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-year-ending-september-2022/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-year-ending-september-2022>

Irregular migration to the UK data tables, year ending September 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1117119/irregular-migration-to-the-UK-data-tables-year-ending-september-2022.ods

Weekly number of migrants detected in small boats - 14 November to 20 November 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats-weekly-data/weekly-number-of-migrants-detected-in-small-boats-14-november-to-20-november-2022>

Updated: Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by country, upper and lower tier local authority

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority>

Updated: Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by age and sex of applicant

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-for-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-and-ukraine-family-scheme-visa-data-by-age-and-sex-of-applicant>

Visa holders entering the UK under the Ukraine Humanitarian Schemes, Follow-up Survey: 17 October to 4 November 2022

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/visaholdersenteringtheukundertheukrainehumanitarianschemes/17octoberto7november2022>

Data

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/visaholdersenteringtheukundertheukrainehumanitarianschemesfollowupsurvey/17octoberto7november2022/ukhrisfollowuppreferencetables221122.xlsx>

New Plan for Immigration: legal migration and border control

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-plan-for-immigration-legal-migration-and-border-control-strategy/new-plan-for-immigration-legal-migration-and-border-control-accessible>

Letter from Suella Braverman MP to Diana Johnson MP regarding the UK-France Partnership on Illegal Migration

<https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2022-0892/Letter from Home Secretary to HASC Chair.pdf>

UK-France joint statement: enhancing cooperation against illegal migration

<https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2022-0892/UK France Joint Statement illegal migration.pdf>

Safe passage for refugees: humane alternative to the Rwanda policy

<https://care4calais.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Safe-Passage-Policy-Paper.pdf>

A new consensus? How public opinion has warmed to immigration

<https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/a-new-consensus>

News

UK net migration hits all-time record at 504,000

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63743259>

Migration to UK rises to record 504,000 with Ukraine and Hong Kong schemes

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/24/uk-net-migration-figures-record-ons>

How world events have led to rising immigration

<https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2022/11/24/how-world-events-have-led-to-rising-immigration/>

UK visas: How does the points-based immigration system work?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-48785695>

We must wean economy off immigration, Labour leader to warn businesses

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-63707941>

Solve worker shortages with immigration - CBI boss

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-63697458>

Rishi Sunak considers restrictions on foreign students to curb migration

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63757889>

Concern for health of Ukrainians aboard Scotland's 'floating refugee camps'

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/27/concern-for-health-of-ukrainians-aboard-scotlands-floating-refugee-camps>

Ukrainians struggling to rent privately in UK, reveals ONS

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/22/ukrainians-struggling-to-rent-privately-in-uk-reveals-ons>

London marchers to call for safe asylum route for Afghan women

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/nov/26/london-marchers-to-call-for-safe-asylum-route-for-afghan-women>

Suella Braverman says people coming to UK illegally 'at fault' for processing chaos

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/23/suella-braverman-people-coming-uk-illegally-fault-processing-chaos>

Suella Braverman: Migrants to blame for Manston crisis

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-migrants-to-blame-for-manston-crisis-0hmrqmvrt>

Calais migrants: French rescuers failed to help sinking boat

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63728830>

Channel dinghy tragedy: investigation confirms boat was in UK waters

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/24/dinghy-that-capsized-in-channel-killing-27-had-reached-uk-waters-finds-report>

'We will demand justice': the vigil for those who died in the Channel tragedy

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/24/relatives-of-those-who-died-in-channel-tragedy-a-year-ago-call-for-justice-at-vigil>

Painful lessons about the duty of candour (more on the unlawful seizure of migrants' mobiles)

<https://ukhumanrightsblog.com/2022/11/21/painful-lessons-about-the-duty-of-candour-more-on-the-unlawful-seizure-of-migrants-mobiles/>

No Channel migrants deported to France under post-Brexit returns policy
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/no-channel-migrants-deported-to-france-under-post-brexit-returns-policy-mlk5ppfzs>

Tough asylum cases handled by new Home Office staff, say insiders
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63720698>

Tory MP calls for minister to go over asylum hotels
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-63734127>

Child asylum seekers detained as adults after UK Home Office 'alters birth dates'
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/27/child-asylum-seekers-detained-as-adults-after-uk-home-office-alters-birth-dates>

Manston processing centre empty after migrants placed in new accommodation
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63713074>

UK migrant crisis: Controversy-hit Kent migrant centre cleared and residents moved into hotels
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/uk-migrant-crisis-controversy-hit-kent-migrant-centre-cleared-and-residents-moved-into-hotels-3927516>

Manston migrant centre empty after 6,000 asylum seekers sent to hotels
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/11/22/manston-migrant-centre-empty-after-asylum-seekers-sent-hotels/>

Diphtheria cases rising among asylum seekers
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63771091>

Manston migrant's death may have been caused by diphtheria - Home Office
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63766770>

Manston asylum seekers with suspected diphtheria 'moved around UK' as cases rise
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/manston-asylum-seekers-diphtheria-hotels-b2233780.html>

Some asylum seekers in NI in 'prison-like' hotel conditions
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-63722681>

Most Albanian women given asylum, but only 13% of men
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/most-albanian-women-given-asylum-but-only-13-of-men-q7zdgmwjm>

Albanian migrant: 'I wish I'd never tried to enter the UK illegally'
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63673925>

Journey of an Albanian migrant: 'I thought I was saving my daughter — I nearly drowned her'
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/journey-of-an-albanian-migrant-i-thought-i-was-saving-my-daughter-i-nearly-drowned-her-zsxk0kjinw>

Creating 'hostile' environment for asylum seekers does not deter migrants

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/creating-hostile-environment-for-asylum-seekers-does-not-deter-migrants-0pmlp80qn>

How immigration policy is failing all

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2022/11/26/how-immigration-policy-failing/>

UK politicians would win swing voters with more open migration policy, study finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/23/uk-politicians-win-swing-voters-more-open-migration-policy-report-finds>

The 'forgotten' lives lost waiting for asylum in Britain

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seeker-deaths-uk-accomodation-b2233161.html>

Skegness: The seaside town at the centre of asylum debate

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-63663980>

How many Europeans applied to stay in Wales after Brexit?

<https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/how-many-europeans-applied-to-stay-in-wales-after-brexite/>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Ethnic Groups and Migrants: Digital Technology

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL3264] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the voluntary and community sector to (1) support access, and (2) provide digital skills, for (a) migrant communities, and (b) ethnic minorities.

Reply from Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The voluntary and community sector plays a vital role in supporting people across the country in their everyday lives. We recognise that digital skills and access are increasingly required to participate fully in society, and that digital exclusion makes it more difficult for people to use essential services.

To support access, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport continues to encourage operators to offer social tariffs, which provide low-cost mobile and broadband services for people on Universal Credit as well as other means-tested benefits. We continue to work closely with Ofcom, consumer groups, and the sector to raise awareness of these low-cost offers. For those unable to own a device with internet access, public libraries play an important role in providing access to the internet, with trained staff and volunteers to support users. The Department for Education's Digital Entitlement allows for adults with no or low digital skills (below level 1) to study for Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQs) for free.

The size of the challenge, however, means that we cannot tackle the digital divide on our own. The involvement of the voluntary and community sector is crucial, and support can be most effective where providers are able to tailor their support to local needs.

DCMS will continue to engage with the sector and across Government on this topic.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/hl3264>

News

A community forgotten – limited progress in providing culturally appropriate sites for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Wales

<https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/a-community-forgotten-limited-progress-in-providing-culturally-appropriate-sites-for-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-communities-in-wales/>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Police: Racial Discrimination

Ruth Jones (Labour) [87975] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle racism in police forces in England and Wales.

Reply from Chris Philp: The government published the Inclusive Britain strategy which sets out a series of actions across policing to improve transparency, accountability, and effectiveness across recruitment, police training and use of police powers.

Reforms to the police complaints and discipline systems, introduced by the Government in 2020, strengthened the independent police “watchdog” - the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) – which plays a vital role in investigating the most serious and sensitive allegations. By law, all allegations of misconduct aggravated by discrimination, must be referred to the IOPC by forces.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/87975>

Inclusive Britain, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-britain-action-plan-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/inclusive-britain-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>

New Publication

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/7211/independent-culture-review-of-lfb-report953f61809024e20c7505a869af1f416c56530867cb99fb946ac81475cfd8cb38.pdf>

News

Cabinet minister rejects national misogyny and racism inquiry

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-63773545>

Birmingham Labour’s BAME officer quits over review into racism row

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/nov/25/birmingham-labour-bame-officer-quits-review-racism-row>

BBC staff 'request inquiry into misogyny and racism'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/11/26/bbc-staff-request-inquiry-misogyny-racism/>

London Fire Brigade institutionally misogynist and racist - report

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-63749444>

London firefighters face sack over bullying and racist behaviour

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-63767823>

London Fire Brigade 'institutionally racist and misogynist', says damning report

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/11/25/london-fire-bridge-institutionally-racist-misogynist-says-damning/>

Culture of racism, bullying and misogyny revealed in London Fire Brigade

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/culture-of-racism-bullying-and-misogyny-revealed-in-london-fire-brigade-kzpk2kpm8>

Gwent Police: Three officers suspended in racist message probe

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-63742970>

Gwent Police: Family of racism probe policemen no trust in force

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-63703621>

Campaigners to gather in Glasgow for anti-racism march

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23151410.campaigners-gather-glasgow-anti-racism-march/>

Sheku Bayoh's family facing 'despicable' racism, says inquiry chair

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/22/sheku-bayoh-family-facing-despicable-racism-says-inquiry-chair>

Sheku Bayoh's sister received abuse after speaking at death inquiry

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-63676265>

Sheku Bayoh's family facing 'despicable' racism, says inquiry chair

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/22/sheku-bayoh-family-facing-despicable-racism-says-inquiry-chair>

Stop 'siege-heiling Nazis' attending rock festival in our town, police told

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/stop-siege-heiling-nazis-attending-rock-festival-in-our-town-police-told-jq3cl69bm>

Football supporter found guilty of sending racist and offensive email to Gareth Southgate

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/yorkshire-and-humberside/news/football-supporter-found-guilty-sending-racist-and-offensive>

Quitongo loses race discrimination case against Airdrieonians

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-63742745>

Equality and Human Rights Commission Statement on Rico Quitongo's race discrimination case

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/statement-rico-quitongo's-race-discrimination-case>

TOP

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Releases

Recorded crime below pre-pandemic levels

<https://www.gov.scot/news/recorded-crime-below-pre-pandemic-levels/>

Recorded Crime in Scotland, year ending September 2022

<https://www.gov.scot/news/recorded-crime-in-scotland-year-ending-september-2022/>

New Publications

Recorded Crime in Scotland, year ending September 2022

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-year-ending-september-2022/>

Attitudes to Family Formation in Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/attitudes-family-formation-scotland/documents/>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Males Convicted under Joint Enterprise: Black and other Ethnic Groups

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [902344] If [the Minister] will make an estimate of the number and proportion of males convicted under joint enterprise who were (a) Black and (b) from other ethnic groups. ...

Reply from the Minister of State, Ministry of Justice (Edward Argar): ... Data is collated on the ethnicity of defendants who are prosecuted and convicted of a criminal offence, but not on whether that crime was part of joint enterprise. We are, however, considering whether such data could be collected as part of the Common Platform programme. The Common Platform aims, as Members will have heard, to provide a single case management system that will enable the sharing of evidence and case information across the criminal justice system.

Kate Osamor: Members have been hearing for nearly a decade that the data will be released soon, but nothing ever comes of it. What possible excuse can there be for not being open about which prisoners have been convicted under this discredited and biased doctrine and which have not? It is that the data would clearly show how joint enterprise has been used to target black people disproportionately, particularly young black men.

Reply from Edward Argar: On the hon. Lady's first point, we are unable at this stage to give a firm timescale for that data because capturing data on joint enterprise will depend on the level of change needed to the Common Platform and on the cost and work required to develop, test and implement it. On her broader point, the Government recognise that convictions based on joint enterprise appear from some studies to affect black, Asian and minority ethnic groups disproportionately. However, I assure her that the Crown Prosecution Service can only apply the law when making decisions, and race or ethnicity should play no part in any such decision making. We recognise the importance of the law of joint enterprise, and the consequences it can have for defendants and their families as

well as for victims and their families.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-22/debates/E12FC2F1-4C56-415B-91E6-D314A37053CE/MalesConvictedUnderJointEnterpriseBlackAndOtherEthnicGroups>

TOP

Supreme Court Judgement: Scottish Independence Referendum

Supreme Court

Reference by the Lord Advocate of devolution issues under paragraph 34 of Schedule 6 to the Scotland Act 1998

Press Release

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/press-summary/uksc-2022-0098.html>

Full Judgement

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2022-0098-judgment.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Independence Referendum (Supreme Court Ruling)

Douglas Ross (Conservative): ... To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the UK Supreme Court's ruling on the legality of an independence referendum bill.

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture (Angus Robertson): ... the Supreme Court has decided that, under the devolution settlement, a referendum on the question "Should Scotland be an independent country?" is a matter that is reserved to the Westminster Parliament. That means that, without an agreement between the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments and the Scottish and UK Parliaments, a section 30 order or a UK act to change the Scottish Parliament's powers, the Scottish Parliament cannot pass the laws that are required to hold a referendum to give effect to the mandate that people in Scotland gave it and to give us a choice about our future.

The Scottish Government accepts and respects that judgment. The Supreme Court was not asked to decide, and cannot decide, whether the Scottish Parliament should have the power to hold an independence referendum. Its job is to set out what the law is—in this case, the devolution settlement in the Scotland Act 1998—and that is what it has done.

The judgment makes it clear how the UK constitution gives the UK Government a veto over the right of people in Scotland to choose. The Supreme Court said in paragraph 81 of its judgment:

"A clear outcome, whichever way the question was answered, would possess the authority, in a constitution and political culture founded upon democracy, of a democratic expression of the view of the Scottish electorate."

This is what the constitutional arrangements deny us: "a democratic expression of the view of the Scottish electorate."

Why does that matter? The Supreme Court tells us that the question is "whether Scotland should cease to be subject to the sovereignty of the Parliament of the United Kingdom".

So, the reason why the Scottish electorate does not get its chance to offer "a democratic expression" is because it would impinge on Westminster sovereignty if

its views were known. That tells us what is truly left of promises that were made that the UK would operate as “a partnership of equals” and that we lived in “a voluntary union of nations”.

No matter how the people of Scotland vote or how often they elect Parliaments that support a referendum or support independence, they cannot be told “No” by the UK Prime Minister. That cannot be right, and there are few stronger or more powerful arguments for independence than that. In a voluntary union, one part does not have to rely on the agreement of another before it is allowed to even think about leaving. ...

Douglas Ross: I noted that the cabinet secretary quoted paragraph 81 of the ruling and not paragraph 82, in which the judges said that they were absolutely “in no doubt as to the answer” to the question that they were considering. ...

I welcome the Supreme Court’s clear and unanimous judgment. It is one that we must all respect. ...

We now have an opportunity to focus on the big challenges that Scotland faces right now: strikes, the global cost of living crisis, and a winter storm in our national health service. I ask the cabinet secretary this: will the SNP Government ditch its referendum obsession and get back to tackling those crucial issues for individuals, families and communities right across Scotland?

Reply from Angus Robertson: The inconvenient truth for Douglas Ross is that last year’s Scottish Parliament election decided the principle and the electorate decided the mandate ... which was for parties that are in favour of an independence referendum. ...

The position of the Scottish Government remains the same as what the First Minister announced to Parliament on 28 June. Nothing has changed in that respect. We would prefer the UK and Scottish Governments to agree to a section 30 order under the Scotland Act 1998 to allow a legal and constitutional referendum to go ahead. That is what the people have voted for. It is for the Scottish Conservatives to explain why they are blocking and denying democracy.

Douglas Ross: It is for the cabinet secretary to explain his misleading claim, because actually a majority of votes in the Scottish Parliament election were for parties that support our remaining part of the United Kingdom—more than for parties that support separation. ...

Stuart McMillan (SNP): ... This Parliament has the biggest majority for an independence revolution that there has ever been in the history of devolution. What does the UK Government’s refusal to respect that mandate say about its view of this Parliament and decisions that are made by the people of Scotland?

Reply from Angus Robertson: To be honest, it is difficult to understand why a UK Government, having established the principle of respecting that a referendum should take place when a majority in favour of it is elected to the Scottish Parliament—which is exactly what happened after the 2011 Scottish Parliament election—should now depart from that precedent. I can come to only one conclusion, which is that it is scared—scared of losing the referendum. ...

Sarah Boyack (Labour): It was right for the Lord Advocate to refer this question to the Supreme Court, and it is welcome that we have the legal clarity on the matter that the Scottish Government sought. I also put on record my thanks to the court for its speedy work in considering the case. It is crucial that we now focus on the problems that our country faces, from soaring bills to the crisis in our NHS. ...

Reply from Angus Robertson: ... I am quite taken by a quote that I have here from a colleague of Sarah Boyack’s ... Anas Sarwar. He said: “it should be the people of Scotland that decide when the next referendum is.”

That issue was debated last year in the Scottish Parliament election, and it was the defining issue of the election. Look around the chamber and see who is here—the

parties that stood on a manifesto commitment to hold a referendum won the election. The party that opposed referendums lost the election. What a bizarre situation it is for Opposition parties to tell the governing parties that they should not do what they were elected to do. ...

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

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14005&i=126869#ScotParlOR>

Independence Referendum (Supreme Court Decision)

Stephanie Callaghan (SNP) [S6F-01564] To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the Supreme Court decision regarding legislating on an independence referendum.

Reply from the First Minister: Although I am of course disappointed by it, I respect and accept the Supreme Court's judgment on the Lord Advocate's reference regarding the Scottish Parliament's powers to legislate for an independence referendum. However, the denial of democracy by Westminster parties demonstrates beyond any doubt that the notion of the United Kingdom as a voluntary partnership of nations is not now a reality, if it ever was.

It of course remains open to the UK Government to respect democracy and reach an agreement with the Scottish Government for a lawful, constitutional and democratic referendum. However, regardless of attempts by Westminster to block democracy, I will always work to ensure that Scotland's voice is heard and that the future of Scotland is always in Scotland's hands.

Stephanie Callaghan: Yesterday's ruling has profound implications for the UK and Scotland's democracy, and in particular, as the First Minister says, for the notion of the UK being a voluntary partnership of nations. If the UK Government wants to evidence that it is a voluntary union, all that it has to do is to stop standing in the way of democracy, come to the table and reach an agreement with the Scottish Government on holding a legal referendum. Why does the First Minister think that it is continuing to shy away from doing so?

Reply from the First Minister: It is quite simple: unionist Westminster politicians want to silence Scotland's voice, because they are scared of what Scotland might say. Any politician who was confident of their case and of being able to persuade others of their case would not be trying to block democracy; they would be embracing it. ...

Any partnership in which one partner needs the consent of another to choose its future is not voluntary or even a partnership.

Within the UK right now, it is the case that England could decide to become independent, but Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland supposedly cannot. That is not a partnership—it is not voluntary and it is not equal. However, Scotland's voice will not be silenced. Scotland's future is up to the people of Scotland, and that will always be the case.

Jim Fairlie (SNP): ... this Scottish Parliament has the biggest-ever majority for an independence referendum in the history of devolution, but it has been blocked from enacting that mandate. Can the First Minister inform the Parliament whether she has had any indication from the UK Government as to how the people of Scotland can exercise their democratic right and have a choice in their future?

Reply from the First Minister: The mandate for an independence referendum in this Parliament is undeniable. There is a clear majority for that and, on any other measure of democracy in any other country, we would not have politicians seeking to deny that. I stand ready to discuss the issue with the UK Government at any time, but I fully anticipate that its democracy denial will continue, at least in the short term, because it is scared of the outcome of a democratic process. ...

It is not democratic and it is not sustainable. Let us have a proper process and let the people of Scotland decide our own future.

Craig Hoy (Conservative): When asked by Glenn Campbell, during a BBC debate two days before the Holyrood election, what voters who want Nicola Sturgeon as First Minister but do not want independence should do, the First Minister confidently said: “They should vote for me”. Why are her colleagues now claiming that those voters support independence? ...

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14007&i=126913#ScotParlOR>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Scottish Referendum Legislation: Supreme Court Decision

Ian Blackford (SNP): To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the decision of the Supreme Court and the rights of the Scottish Parliament to call for an independence referendum.

Reply from the Secretary of State for Scotland (Alister Jack): ... The UK Supreme Court has today determined that it is outside the powers of the Scottish Parliament to hold an independence referendum, and I respect the Court’s clear and definitive ruling on this matter. The Scottish Government’s Lord Advocate referred this question to the Supreme Court, which has today given its judgment, and the UK Government’s position has always been clear: that it would be outside the Scottish Parliament’s competence to legislate for a referendum on Scottish independence because it is a matter wholly reserved to the United Kingdom Parliament.

We welcome the Court’s unanimous and unequivocal ruling, which supports the United Kingdom Government’s long-standing position on this matter. People want to see the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government focus on issues that matter to them, not on constitutional division. People across Scotland rightly want and expect to see both their Governments—the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government—working together with a relentless focus on the issues that matter to them, their families and their communities.

The Prime Minister has been very clear, and has demonstrated since day one, that it is our duty to work constructively with the Scottish Government. We fully respect the devolution settlement and we want to work together with the Scottish Government on vital areas such as tackling the cost of living, growing our economy and leading the international response to Russia’s illegal war in Ukraine.

At this time of unprecedented challenges, the benefits of being part of the United Kingdom have never been more apparent. The United Kingdom Government are providing the Scottish Government with a record block grant settlement of £41 billion per year over the next three years, and the people in Scotland are benefiting from unprecedented cost of living support announced by this Prime Minister and our Chancellor. It is important now that we move on from constitutional issues, to focus on tackling our shared challenges. I therefore welcome the Supreme Court’s judgment, and I call on the Scottish Government to set aside these divisive constitutional issues so that we can work together, focusing all of our attention and resources on the key issues that matter to the people of Scotland.

The United Kingdom Government are proud of their role as the custodian of the devolution settlement. The United Kingdom is one of the most successful political and economic unions in the world. By promoting and protecting its combined strengths, we are building on hundreds of years of partnership and shared history.

I will conclude by saying that when we work together as one United Kingdom, we are safer, stronger and more prosperous.

Ian Blackford: ... It is right that the UK Government answer questions today, and answer them quickly, because this morning the Supreme Court dealt with a question of law; there is now a massive question of democracy. Some of the Westminster parties are already wildly celebrating this morning's decision, but I think it is safe to say that their thoughtless triumphalism will not last very long, because this judgment raises profound and deeply uncomfortable questions about the basis of the future of the United Kingdom.

The biggest question of all is how the Prime Minister can ever again repeat the myth that the United Kingdom is a voluntary union of nations. ...

... will he urgently amend the Scotland Act 1998 to ensure that the Scottish people have the right to choose our own future? If he fails to do that, is he deliberately choosing to deny democracy, because a so-called partnership in which one partner is denied the right to choose a different future, or even to ask itself the question, cannot be described in any way as a voluntary partnership, or even a partnership at all?

Today's decision casts focus on the democratic decisions of the Scottish people. Since 2014, the Scottish National party has won eight elections in a row. We have secured multiple mandates. The question is: how many times do people in Scotland have to vote for a referendum before they get it? ...

Reply from Alister Jack: This idea that a mandate was delivered in 2021 in the Holyrood elections is completely misleading. ... Let us be clear: in the 2021 Holyrood elections—the so-called mandate—less than one third of the Scottish electorate voted for the SNP. ...

Ian Murray (Labour): I begin by thanking the Supreme Court for examining this case in detail, for reaching a unanimous decision and for doing so in a speedy manner. I also thank the Scottish Lord Advocate for referring this case to the Supreme Court. She was right not to allow it to be launched in the Scottish Parliament before seeking legal clarity on this matter, and we are all in a better place now for that clarity having been put forward. The Supreme Court's ruling is absolutely clear and concise.

The Leader of the SNP has just accused those who are against independence of "triumphalism". Nothing could be further from the truth. We are deeply disappointed and angry that the politics in Scotland is paralysed by this constitutional grievance. It is now time for all of us in Scottish politics to focus on the problems facing our country, from rocketing bills to the crisis in the NHS, and I wish the SNP had such passion for doing that. I fear that that will not happen after the First Minister announced that she will turn the next general election into a de facto referendum. ...

David Mundell (Conservative): My constituents will not be celebrating this outcome, but they will be deeply relieved that, with all the other issues that they face, they are not going to be facing a hugely divisive independence referendum next October. In my constituency, people cannot access an NHS dentist. They cannot access a GP. They can hardly get an ambulance to come out, and our local hospital was overwhelmed two weeks ago. On that basis, does my right hon. Friend agree that this is the time to move on and focus on the issues that really matter to our constituents in Scotland? ...

Reply from Alister Jack: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right ... The Scottish Government must focus on the people's priorities. ...

Kirsten Oswald (SNP): Democracy denial is not a good look. We have had repeated non-answers and repeated assertions from those on the Tory Benches today that they somehow know better than the people of Scotland what they want. Now we have an extraordinary suggestion from the Secretary of State that we somehow do not have a mandate. None of those things is correct and none of those things deals with the crux of the issue. This is a fundamental issue of democracy and whether this really is a voluntary Union. Is the Secretary of State going to stand up for democracy or not?

Reply from Alister Jack: I do stand up for democracy. As I have said, in the

Holyrood elections last year less than one third of Scots voted for the Scottish National party, and current polling shows that less than one third of Scots want another independence referendum.

Iain Stewart (Conservative): Now that we have clarity from the Supreme Court, I urge my right hon. Friend to redouble his efforts to work with the Scottish Government and local authorities in Scotland to deliver on the issues that matter to people. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-23/debates/CC72D2CE-6495-4A79-8798-74E0B48BE97F/ScottishReferendumLegislationSupremeCourtDecision>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Scottish Referendum Legislation: Supreme Court Judgement

The answer previously given by the Minister in the House of Commons was read in the House of Lords.

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Labour): ... in Scotland there are wide and acute concerns about the health service, education and the economy—concerns shared across the whole of the UK—so it continues to disappoint that independence remains the SNP’s top priority, rather than an absolute focus on improving public services and changing lives now. However, does the Minister acknowledge that there has been a failure by this Government to illustrate clearly why the case for independence is built on myths and false hope? Will he accept, as we do on these Benches, that a strong commitment to the union goes hand in hand with effective and practical devolution?

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office (Lord Offord of Garvel): My Lords, the UK Government note and respect the unanimous ruling by the Supreme Court that the Scottish Government do not have legislative competence to hold a referendum. The people of Scotland want both our Governments to concentrate all our attention and resources on the issues that matter most to them. ... As the Prime Minister has made clear, we will continue to work constructively with the Scottish Government on tackling all the challenges that we share and face.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Labour Co-op): My Lords, is the Minister aware that the First Minister of Scotland has said that, although it is now clear that there is not going to be a referendum, she will continue to spend British taxpayers’ money on Civil Service and other preparations for this non-existent referendum? ...

Reply from Lord Offord of Garvel: The noble Lord will be aware that under the devolution settlement the UK Government do not prescribe to the Scottish Government how to spend the money sent north of the border. That allows the Scottish Government to make grown-up decisions on their own behalf and on behalf of the people of Scotland. The judgment of the Supreme Court has given us helpful clarity on the difference, which we all knew about, between reserved matters and devolved matters. The constitution is therefore clearly reserved, while the spending of £20 million in that area is a matter for the Scottish Government. ...

Lord Bruce of Bennachie (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the outcome of the Supreme Court judgment was predictable and inevitable. It has been a distraction and a complete waste of time and Scottish taxpayers’ money ... Will the Minister consider in any future referendum setting out the conditions and criteria by which a referendum would be triggered and conducted, so that people know the circumstances and do not have to suffer this never-ending push? Does he agree that for the SNP to complain about democracy is to forget that they have betrayed the people of Scotland, who have twice voted for devolution and never voted for independence?

Reply from Lord Offord of Garvel: ... There is no need to be talking about another

referendum. The Supreme Court has made it very clear that there is no avenue for that within the Scottish Government. More importantly, there is no appetite now. When the referendum was held in 2014, there was consensus across both Parliaments, all parties and civil society that the referendum should be held. Some 3.6 million Scots voted, 2 million of whom voted to stay in the UK while 1.6 million voted to leave. That is a decisive result and, given that since that time the SNP has consistently polled only in the region of 1.3 million to 1.4 million votes, it has no more than one-third of the population who want to pursue a separatist agenda, in which case there is no need for us to consider another referendum. ...

The Scottish Government have been dominated by the Scottish National Party for eight elections in a row. They have done that on the basis of 1.3 million to 1.4 million votes, and under that they have a legitimate mandate to govern ... we know that UK Governments can effectively govern on a mandate of 35% to 40% of the vote. No one is disputing that that is a mandate to govern, but it is not a mandate to break up a country. Where there continues to be no more than one-third of popular support to break up the UK, there is no need for us to pursue the case. ...

Lord Wigley (Plaid Cymru): My Lords, I may be the only Member of this House who will take the view that I am about to. In view of the court case and the right to hold a referendum having been confirmed as being here, and in view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of elected Scottish MPs support having a referendum, will the Minister publish a document clarifying the way in which such a referendum can be held or is he going to maintain an everlasting veto on the aspirations of the people of Scotland?

Reply from Lord Offord of Garvel: The SNP does not have a majority in Holyrood and therefore cannot say that it has a majority. ... the SNP's own prospectus for government was not based on independence; it was based on, apparently, being able to run Scotland better. On that basis, there is no need, given yesterday's judgment, for any further tinkering on the subject.

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-11-24/debates/B9D12A5F-531E-4A14-8CF1-F316327F3CAB/ScottishReferendumLegislationSupremeCourtJudgement>

Publications

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing: UK Supreme Court: Reference by the Lord Advocate of devolution issues

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2022/11/23/uk-supreme-court-reference-by-the-lord-advocate-of-devolution-issues/>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Supreme Court judgment on Scottish independence referendum

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/supreme-court-judgment-on-scottish-independence-referendum/>

News

Scottish government loses indyref2 court case

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-63727562>

What does the Supreme Court decision mean for indyref2?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-63704822>

Next election will be independence vote - Nicola Sturgeon

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-63730653>

Nicola Sturgeon to push ahead with plans for 'de facto' referendum

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23144414.nicola-sturgeon-push-ahead-plans-de-facto-referendum/>

Scottish independence: Nicola Sturgeon vows to push ahead with 'de facto' referendum plans

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-independence-nicola-sturgeon-vows-to-push-ahead-with-de-facto-referendum-plans-3929289>

Scottish independence: What is a de facto referendum?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-63742281>

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Cost of Living

Scottish Government Website

Help during the cost of living crisis

Most households are concerned about the cost of living, with worries about issues such as rent and mortgages, food and utility bills, energy costs, and debt.

In response, the Scottish Government has launched a new website that provides information to help people access support with

- Energy and Bills
- Benefits and Income
- Children and Families
- Debt and Money
- Health and Wellbeing

Your local council might be able to help if you need urgent help with money, food or fuel – contact the council for information.

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/>

Publications

Make sure you receive the support you are entitled to

<https://tinyurl.com/39nxcykj>

Make sure you get all the support and advice you can [Easy Read]

<https://tinyurl.com/4nxkdf8z>

Rising cost of living in the UK

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9428/CBP-9428.pdf>

Cost of living and higher education students, England: 24 October to 7 November 2022

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/bulletins/costoflivingandhighereducationstudentsengland/24octoberto7november2022>

News

Cost-of-living support should be 'more targeted' for vulnerable – Tesco chief

<https://www.independent.co.uk/business/costofliving-support-should-be-more-targeted-for-vulnerable-tesco-chief-b2233038.html>

Cost of living: Energy suppliers failing vulnerable customers - Ofgem

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-63704037>

Winter energy bill support to cost taxpayers £630 per household

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/11/24/winter-energy-bill-support-cost-taxpayers-630-per-household/>

Cost of living crisis hitting England's most deprived areas hardest, ONS says

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/nov/25/cost-of-living-crisis-hitting-england-most-deprived-area-hardest-spending-less-food-ons-survey>

'I'm knackered': people forced to take second jobs amid cost of living crisis

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/nov/23/im-knackered-people-forced-to-take-second-jobs-amid-cost-of-living-crisis>

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Other New Publications

New animation reassures female abuse victims they are not alone

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2022/november/new-animation-reassures-female-abuse-victims-they-are-not-alone/>

Fostering and adoption 2021–22 A statistical bulletin

<https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/6907/Fostering%20and%20adoption%20stats%202021-22.pdf>

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Other News

Glasgow Central station launches multi-faith area

<https://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/news/glasgow-central-station-launches-multi-faith-area>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

**** Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

Stage 2 consideration of amendments, Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/EHRCJ-22-11-2022?meeting=14006&iob=126890>

UK Parliament

Asylum Seekers (Accommodation Eviction Procedures) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3257>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3263>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3304>

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3264>

Human Trafficking (Child Protection) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3248>

Human Trafficking (Sentencing) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3249>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3282>

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0121/amend/onlinesafety_rm_rep_1128.pdf

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3164>

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Consultations

**** new or updated this week**

Let's Talk Scottish Education (closing date 5 December 2022)

<https://consult.gov.scot/national-discussion-scottish-education/>

Human Rights of Asylum Seekers in the UK (closing date 15 December 2022)
<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/2967/>

Possible changes to the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) Rules and the Upper Tribunal Rules arising from Nationality and Borders Act 2022 (applies in England and Wales only) (closing date 19 January 2023)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/possible-changes-to-the-first-tier-tribunal-immigration-and-asylum-chamber-rules-and-the-upper-tribunal-rules-arising-from-nationality-and-borders-a>

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Job Opportunities

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

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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

The Household Hardship Fund

Please note: *The Household Hardship Fund has been paused. This is because it has now received applications worth more than the £1 million currently available. The fund is paused, rather than closed, as it is hoped to have more funding available in the new year. If you have already begun an application on the system, you can still complete and submit it until Wednesday 30 November at 12 noon, but new applications should not be started.*

National Lottery Community Fund and Corra Foundation funding to provide small grants to charities and community groups across Scotland who can pass the funding on directly to families and individuals on low incomes. Groups can apply for up to £5,000 to provide families and individuals with cash or vouchers to meet pressing needs such as food, fuel, household items or clothing. For information and to apply see

<https://www.corra.scot/grants/household-hardship-fund/>

Reaching New Scots Fund

Closing date for applications: 18 December 2022

The Reaching New Scots Fund is designed and managed by people from refugee backgrounds in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, and is open to groups and organisations across Scotland that are run by New Scots or offer support to refugees and people seeking asylum. The fund aims to support smaller charities and not for profit groups that are often underfunded, and will therefore only accept applications from organisations with an average annual income of less than £250,000. For information and to apply see <https://tinyurl.com/5ch4pj3d>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Taking an Anti-Racist Approach to Tackling Women's Workplace Inequality
1 December 2022 (online, 10.00–11.30)

Close the Gap launch of guidance on taking an anti-racist approach to tackling gender inequality at work, including racism and sexism in the workplace, the barriers faced by racially minoritised women, and how to take an anti-racist approach to tackling gender inequality in your organisation. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/5e59y8xd>

**** this week!**

Izzat, Aye?: Let's talk about "Honour

1 December 2022 (Glasgow, 6.00–8.30)

Amina event around honour-based abuse as part of the 16 Days of Activism 2022. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3ubeaxtm>

Building Support for Protecting Human Rights

6 December 2022 (online, 9.30–12.00)

Human rights Consortium Scotland workshop about threats and opportunities around human rights in Scotland and the UK, including: What do we need to do to build active support and understanding of human rights in Scotland? And How do we cement support for the Human Rights Act, and get even more support to put all our rights in law? For information see <https://tinyurl.com/mvppwpt2>

**** Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement**

6 and 7 December 2022 (Glasgow, 1.00–4.30)

Scottish Refugee Council course 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/rwr5cujc>

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. The course will 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

**** Using OSCR Online to submit your annual return**

7 December 2022 (online, 1.00–2.00)

Office of the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR) webinar to explain why they ask for annual information, the recent changes to OSCR Online, and how to use the system to submit an online annual return. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y68n7wd4>

Lifecycle of a charity - when is the right time to wind up?

7 December 2022 (online, 1.00–2.00)

SCVO webinar looking at how to recognise when it's the right time to wind up and dissolve a charity. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2kvfvda7>

The role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in tackling racism

8 December 2022 (Glasgow, 9.30–11.30)

BEMIS consultation event to inform Hate Crime strategy in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2xzj4pch>

A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach – The Basics

9 December 2022 (online, 10.00–3.30)

13 January 2023 (online, 10.00–3.30)

THRE course about human rights and equalities - what are they, and why do they matter? What a human rights and equalities first approach is and why it is relevant to you and your organisation, and how we can start a conversation and talk constructively about human rights and equalities. For information about the November event see <https://tinyurl.com/ywajmvbp>, for the December event see <https://tinyurl.com/32sxxrfd>, and for the January event see <https://tinyurl.com/mpnfcddp>

Re-forming the Curriculum: Education as part of tackling hate crime

14 December 2022 (online, 9.30–11.30)

BEMIS consultation event to inform Hate Crime strategy in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yckjvme8>

Supporting Refugee Integration

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>

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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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*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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