



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

Contents

Immigration and Asylum	Other News
Community Relations	Bills in Progress
Equality	Consultations
Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination	Job Opportunities
Other Scottish Parliament and Government	Funding Opportunities
Other UK Parliament and Government	Events, Conferences, and Training
Cost of Living	Useful Links
Other New Publication	Back issues

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.

Please send information for inclusion in MEMO to MEMO@scojec.org and [click here](#) to be added to the mailing list.

The Scottish and UK Parliaments return from recess on 8 January 2024.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Debate

Ukrainians in Scotland

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15621&i=133279#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

United Kingdom-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership

Willie Coffey (SNP) [S6O-02911] To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it

has made of the potential impact that the United Kingdom-Rwanda migration and economic development partnership may have on its new Scots integration strategy.

The Minister for Equalities, Migration and Refugees (Emma Roddick): We have of course opposed the UK Government's repugnant plans to relocate people to third countries since the memorandum of understanding with Rwanda was announced in April 2022. Legislation that breaks our moral and international obligations further damages the UK's international reputation.

The Scottish ministers continue to challenge the UK Government on the issue, but we are committed to working with our partners at the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Refugee Council on refreshing the new Scots refugee strategy, partly to ensure that it helps to mitigate—where it can—the effects of the UK Government's damaging actions.

Willie Coffey: The Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill, which the Tories are passing at Westminster, is an extremely dangerous piece of legislation. It is needless, dehumanising and legally unsound. What communication has the minister had with her UK Government counterparts to underline how strongly the people of Scotland reject that appalling bill?

Reply from Emma Roddick: We have been clear and consistent in our strong opposition to the policy since it was announced, and we will continue to raise with UK ministers significant concerns about this cruel, ineffective and expensive policy and to reiterate our opposition in the light of the bill. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has stated that it does not consider the UK-Rwanda migration and economic development partnership to comply with the UK's international obligations. The UK Government must explain how it will ensure the welfare of extremely vulnerable people in any arrangement to transfer or relocate people who are seeking asylum and must be transparent about how much that is costing.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15627&i=133357#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-23639] To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to improve access to English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.

Reply from Graeme Dey: The Scottish Government's aim is to support high quality, relevant, appropriate and accessible ESOL provision that meets learner need. The Scottish Government's ESOL funding is currently provided through colleges as part of the grant allocated to the Scottish Funding Council. Colleges are instructed to work with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) to determine the level of need for provision and agree with partners how this need can be met.

In addition to this, I have announced an independent review of Community Learning and Development (CLD) which includes ESOL learning. The Independent Review of CLD offers a timely opportunity to better understand how we can ensure that proposed changes to the education and skills system has a focus on the most marginalised learners. Given the ongoing work to reform the education sector, and the intention of the review to provide recommendations on how CLD, including ESOL learning, can best fit within it, it makes sense to pause implementation of the adult learning strategy until such time as the future shape and strategic orientation of CLD is considered.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-23639>

The following two questions both received the same answer

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-23640] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will consider introducing an updated English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) Strategy for Scotland.

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-23641] To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the impact of the revised English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) Strategy for Scotland in 2015.

Reply from Graeme Dey: The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that everyone in Scotland whose first language is not English can contribute to Scotland's future and the society they live in. Having support to learn English is key for many refugees and people seeking asylum, enabling them to participate in learning in schools, colleges and universities; engage within communities; and pursue their employment goals.

Through consultation on the future of adult learning between September 2019 and February 2020, the Scottish Government engaged with over 700 ESOL learners and committed to undertake a review of the impact of 'Welcoming Our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015-2020' to produce recommendations on next steps for these specialisms within the context of the adult learning strategy.

On 5 December 2023, I announced an independent review of Community Learning and Development (CLD) which includes ESOL learning. The Independent Review of CLD offers a timely opportunity to better understand how we can ensure that proposed changes to the education and skills system has a focus on the most marginalised learners. Given the ongoing work to reform the education sector, and the intention of the review to provide recommendations on how CLD can best fit within it, it makes sense to pause implementation of the strategies until such time as the future shape and strategic orientation of CLD is considered.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-23640>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-23641>

The strategy referred to above can be read at

<https://education.gov.scot/media/luwaoezw/esolstrategy2015to2020.pdf>

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

Asylum: Deportation and Temporary Accommodation

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [6837] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 6 December 2023 on Signing of the Rwanda Treaty [HCWS101], what his timescale is for beginning relocation of asylum seekers to Rwanda; and what plans he has for accommodating asylum seekers who are not relocated to Rwanda in the next five years.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The process of relocating asylum seekers to Rwanda will begin after the Treaty and the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill comes into force after having progressed through Parliament. The Treaty has been laid before Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and the procedures under that Act must be complied with before the Treaty can be ratified and come into force.

Individuals whose asylum claims are declared inadmissible may be able to obtain

support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 if they would otherwise be destitute. Certain individuals may also be able to obtain support under sections 98 and 95 of this Act. Such support may include accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6837>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-12-06/hcws101>

The Treaty referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65705fd4746930000d4888dc/CS_Rwanda_1.2023_UK_Rwanda_Agreement_Asylum_Partnership_Protection_Refugees_Migrants.pdf

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Channel Migrants

Visas

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [6839] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of introducing a humanitarian travel visa on the level of small boat crossings.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: There is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge. Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, we are not bound to consider asylum claims from individuals overseas who might like to come here.

Those in need of immediate protection should take the fastest route to safety and claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. Individuals should not put their lives at risk by leaving manifestly safe countries with well-functioning asylum systems and make unnecessary and dangerous onward journeys to the UK.

The UK has a proud record of providing protection for those who need it. Our focus is on helping people directly from regions of conflict and instability, and we believe that our resettlement programmes are the best way to provide much needed support. Between 2015 and September 2023, over half a million people were offered safe and legal routes into the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6839>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

John Healey (Labour) [6725] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of (a) principals and (b) dependents have been relocated under Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme pathway (i) one and (ii) two each month since July 2022.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK has made an ambitious and generous commitment to help at-risk people in Afghanistan and, so far, we have brought around 24,600 people to safety, including thousands of people eligible for our Afghan schemes. We continue to honour our commitments to bring eligible Afghans to the UK.

The data published within the immigration system statistics release (month ending September 2023, published 23 November 2023) provides a breakdown of arrivals by quarter. The number of individuals resettled under the schemes is as follows: 9,699 individuals under ACRS Pathway 1, 70 individuals under ACRS Pathway 2 and 70 individuals under ACRS Pathway 3.

Afghan operational data is viewable at: [Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data](#)

Afghan operational data is released quarterly with the next publication due around the 22 February 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6725>

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

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [6391] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2023 to Question 4616 on Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations, what steps his Department is taking to verify whether Afghan applicants to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) served in (a) Commando Force 333 and (b) Afghanistan Territorial Force 444; and whether ARAP caseworkers have the required security clearance to conduct such checks.

Reply from James Heapey: Each application to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme is considered on a case-by-case basis against a set of criteria in our published policy. Our caseworkers assess all information and evidence provided by applicants, including anything submitted related to prior employment. In essence, eligibility decisions are made by examining each ARAP application on its individual merits.

All ARAP caseworkers have the required security clearance to process applications.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/6391>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-30/4616>

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

Refugees: Afghanistan

Stephen Timms (Labour) [6956] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan households who arrived in the UK under Operation Warm Welcome remain in interim hotels under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK has made one of the largest commitments of any country to support those impacted by events in Afghanistan.

The last publication of Afghan Resettlement Operational data released on the 30 September 2023 (updated on 23 November 2023) shows the following: 1,674 people, around half of whom are children, were living in interim accommodation (i.e., hotels/serviced accommodation) at the end of September 2023. This number changes frequently as those within interim move into settled accommodation.

For more information on individuals within interim accommodation, including nationality, age and sex breakdowns, see table Asy_D02 of the [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#). For data on those in accommodation by location, see the [regional and local authority immigration groups data tables](#).

We are unable to provide a running commentary on interim accommodation occupation. The next release of Afghan Operational Data is scheduled for around the 22 February 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/6956>

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

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

Refugees: Afghanistan

John Healey (Labour) [6726] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to Oral Statement from the Minister for Veteran Affairs of 13 December 2023 on Afghan Resettlement Update, Official Report, column 911, what estimate he has made of the number of people that will be housed in temporary accommodation in (a) December 2023, (b) January 2024 and (c) February 2024.

Reply from Felicity Buchan: The majority of Afghan families have been successfully moved out of bridging accommodation into longer-term accommodation. Less than 15% of households in bridging hotels at the end of March 2023 are owed a homelessness duty and in local authority temporary accommodation.

The Government has made £35 million of funding available for local authorities to provide increased support for Afghan households to move from hotels into settled accommodation.

There is also a similar package of support in place to help those who are due to arrive in the next few months. Government is supporting efforts to ensure households are matched, where possible, into accommodation ahead of their travel. Where this is not possible transitional accommodation will be provided for the short period of time until the property they are matched to is ready for them, or whilst they are waiting for a suitable match. The Government is working to ensure a sufficient pipeline of properties are available to local authorities to use to accommodate these families, before the transitional accommodation closes. Ultimately a small number may end up relying on local homelessness prevention and funding is provided to cover this eventuality.

We will continue to support the Afghan cohort into settled housing, including through the £450 million third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund which follows the first two rounds of £750 million. This funding will help ensure those local authorities which have been most generous in welcoming arrivals are not penalised with longer social housing waiting list.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6726>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-13/debates/46879841-9123-4D69-B504-96B66B66B503/AfghanResettlementUpdate>

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [6728] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Oral Statement from the Minister for Veteran Affairs of 13 December 2023 on Afghan Resettlement Update, Official Report, whether he plans for Afghans under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy to be housed in temporary hotel accommodation beyond 31 December 2023.

Reply from James Heapey: There are currently no Afghans in the UK eligible for the Afghan Resettlement and Assistance Policy scheme currently in hotel accommodation, and we have no plans to use hotels in the future.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6728>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-13/debates/46879841-9123-4D69-B504-96B66B66B503/AfghanResettlementUpdate>

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

John Healey (Labour) [6729] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Oral Statement from the Minister for Veteran Affairs of 13 December 2023 on Afghan Resettlement Update, Official Report, column 911, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) principals and (b) dependents under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy that will be housed in service accommodation in (i) December 2023, (ii) January 2024 and (iii) February 2024.

Reply from James Heapey: Based on current planning, we anticipate that over 1,000 ARAP eligible Afghans who have arrived in the UK since the resumption of flow in October 2023 will be housed in settled Service Family Accommodation properties by the end of February 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6729>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-13/debates/46879841-9123-4D69-B504-96B66B66B503/AfghanResettlementUpdate>

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

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

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

Immigration

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [6672] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish (a) net and (b) gross non-EU immigration figures by individual country of origin for each year since 2012.

Reply from John Glen: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. ...

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published its most recent estimates of long-term international migration to and from the United Kingdom on 23 November 2023¹. This includes estimates of gross immigration as well as estimates of net migration, which is the difference calculated between immigration and emigration. These estimates, which cover the period year ending (YE) June 2012 to YE June 2023, are available by broad nationality groups (non-EU, EU and British) and full breakdowns have not been produced by individual country of origin. However, analysis of the data for the YE June 2023 showed that, of the 968,000 total non-EU immigration into the UK, the top five non-EU nationalities were: Indian (253,000), Nigerian (141,000), Chinese (89,000), Pakistani (55,000) and Ukrainian (35,000). Census 2021 also provides insight on the country of birth of people who have arrived to live in the country. Table 1 shows the number of people with a non-EU country of birth who arrived in England and Wales in the year preceding Census 2021. This data was originally published alongside the article *The changing picture of long-term international migration, England and Wales: Census 2021* in January 2023².

Data from Census 2021 on the number of people with a non-EU country of birth who most recently arrived in the periods 2011 to 2013, 2014 to 2016, 2017 to 2019 and 2020 to 2021 is also available via the online Census custom dataset builder on the ONS website³ and has been included in Table 2.

Copies of Table 1 and Table 2 [are available at the link below]

The Home Office also produce breakdowns of visas issued to non-EU nationals by individual country in their *Immigration system statistics, year ending September 2023* quarterly release⁴.

Methods for producing long-term international migration estimates are in development as we continue our programme transforming population and migration statistics. As our methods develop, we will explore how we can provide additional detail to meet user needs, including individual nationality breakdowns as well as by age, sex and identifying which local authority an individual migrates to and from.

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2023/relateddata>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/thechangingpictureoflongterminternationalmigrationenglandandwales/census2021>

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/filters/e2ebceb8-4f03-4d47-96d9-5cc7676b7cde/dimensions>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-september-2023>

[Dataset – tables 1 and 2](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/6672>

Immigration: Personal Income

Deidre Brock (SNP) [7200] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has sought legal advice on the compatibility of the planned increase to the minimum income requirement with Article 8 of the Human Rights Act.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Full legal advice has been sought on the compatibility of the proposed increase to the Minimum Income Requirement element of the family immigration rules with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as enshrined in domestic legislation in the Human Rights Act 1998.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-15/7200>

Visas: Married People

Mark Logan (Conservative) [6049] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his oral statement of 4 December 2023 on Legal Migration, Official Report, columns 41-43, whether his Department considered regional differences in per capita income when setting the new income requirements for spousal visas.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Permission under the family route is not tied to a specific geographic area.

A requirement which varies by region could lead to inequalities within regions and make applications more complicated as people would be required to provide more evidence about their location.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/6049>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration>

Visas: Skilled Workers

Clive Betts (Labour) [6967] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date the new earnings threshold for skilled worker visa applications, including spousal and dependent applications, will come into effect; and whether it will apply to (a) existing applications, (b) renewals and (c) people already living in the UK.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Until the Immigration Rules are amended next Spring, the current salary and Minimum Income Requirement thresholds, and policies relating to dependants, remain in place and at the current levels. Those already in

the Skilled work route, and applications made before the rules change, will not be subject to the new £38,700 salary threshold when they change employment, extend, or settle.

Full details of transitional provisions will be set out in due course when further policy details will be announced.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/6967>

Occupied Territories: Visas

Rebecca Long Bailey (Labour) [6817] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, how visa applicants from the Occupied Palestinian Territories can contact HM Embassy Cairo for approval for exit at Rafah to facilitate (a) visa application interviews and (b) biometric processing at a visa application centre.

Reply from Andrew Mitchell: Visa Application Centres, where interviews and biometric processing take place, are open and operating in Egypt, in both Cairo and Alexandria, and an application can be started online at any time. British nationals travelling from Gaza to Egypt that require visas for their eligible dependents can apply online and then visit the Visa Application Centre in Cairo to provide their biometric details. In addition, existing UK visa holders who have a spouse/partner or a child aged 17 or under currently living in the UK and hold valid permission to enter or remain in the UK for longer than 6 months criteria can also contact the FCDO to request support to leave Gaza. Palestinians in Gaza who want to apply for a UK visa but are not a dependent of a British National are not currently eligible for our assistance. The FCDO Consular Contact Centre can be contacted on 020 7008 5000. Further advice on travelling to Egypt from Gaza is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6817>

Refugees: Homelessness

Rebecca Long Bailey (Labour) [6818] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the risk of homelessness for new refugees; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the move-on period before the withdrawal of Section 95 support.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Where an individual is given notice that their asylum claim has been granted, their appeal has been allowed or their asylum claim has been refused but they have been given leave to enter or remain, the prescribed period in legislation (or 'move on' period) is 28 days. There has been no change to the prescribed period. Individuals remain on asylum support, including accommodation, until the end of the 28 day period.

During this period, the Home Office provides individuals who have received a positive decision to their asylum claim with support through Migrant Help and/or their partner organisations. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. Individuals do not need to wait for their Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) to make a claim for Universal Credit and are encouraged to do so as early as possible if they require it. Messaging to individuals is being reviewed to encourage them to plan to move on from asylum support as soon as they have received their decision.

The Home Office are ensuring our cross government partners, such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. Additionally, the Home Office are working with DLUHC to ensure the right asylum decision data is

being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Accommodation providers are also working directly with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

The asylum accommodation estate is under huge strain and increasing the 'move on' period would exacerbate these pressures. There are no current plans to extend the period (of 28 days) for how long individuals remain on asylum support once they have had a grant of asylum. We are engaging the DWP and DLUHC to ensure individuals can move on from asylum support as smoothly as possible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6818>

Asylum: Applications

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [6497] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make it his policy to require that all asylum seekers must have a personal interview as part of the application process.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The criteria for when a substantive asylum interview can be omitted are contained in Paragraph 339NA of the Immigration Rules and include cases where we are able to take a positive decision on the basis of evidence available, or if the claimant is unfit or unable to be interviewed owing to enduring circumstances beyond their control. All asylum claimants are subject to a screening interview and mandatory security checks to confirm their identity and to link it to their biometric details for the purpose of immigration, security and criminality checks. These checks are critical to the delivery of a safe and secure immigration system.

The Home Office currently assesses it appropriate to generally omit personal interviews from nationals of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen, as well as from Sudan, specifically in relation to claims made on or after 28th June 2022, where sufficient evidence is available to confirm nationality and there are no other factors that would mean a personal interview was required, for example security or criminality concerns. Instead, an asylum questionnaire is provided to claimants to allow them to explain why they require protection status in the UK. Where further information is required after the questionnaire is returned, we will, where possible, conduct a targeted or shorter interview to obtain the necessary information from the claimant as quickly as possible.

Omitting personal interviews is not limited to the nationalities noted and can be done in-line with [paragraph 339NA of the Immigration Rules](#) on a case-by-case basis.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/6497>

Asylum: Community Relations

Rebecca Long Bailey (Labour) [6819] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to help asylum seekers to integrate into their local communities.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: This Government's priority is to focus our efforts and resources to support those who most need it. As not all of those who seek asylum are found to need international protection, integration resources are available to those granted permission to stay. Under the New Plan for Immigration, the Government committed to offering an enhanced integration package for refugees arriving through safe and legal routes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6819>

Asylum: Community Relations

Rebecca Long Bailey (Labour) [6820] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to directly consult with (a) asylum

seekers and (b) refugees to understand where more integration support may be required.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: All refugees and those granted protection in the UK should be able to fully integrate into life here and become self-sufficient, providing for themselves and their families, and contributing to the economy.

Refugees (those who have been granted asylum, humanitarian protection or temporary protection under the Immigration Rules), as well as individuals on our resettlement schemes with Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK; have access to mainstream benefits and services to enable their integration; and we are working across Government to ensure these services meet the needs of refugees.

Integration support is coordinated by local authorities, who are best placed to support the needs of those resettled in their area. The Home Office provides local authorities with a core tariff of £20,520 per person to cover resettlement and integration costs for those who arrive via refugee resettlement schemes, including the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This tariff can be used flexibly by the local authorities to meet the integration needs of the refugees they are supporting.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6820>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Employment

John Hayes (Conservative) [6710] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been granted permission to work since 2019.

John Hayes (Conservative) [6711] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been refused permission to work since 2019.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home office is unable to state how many asylum seekers have been granted and refused permission to work since 2019 as they do not record data on the number of asylum seekers who have been permitted to work in a reportable format.

Those who have claimed asylum in the UK and have had their asylum claim outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own, are able to apply for permission to work. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6710>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6711>

Asylum: Children

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [6027] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what safeguarding information his Department collects on unaccompanied children who are seeking asylum.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office collects information from individuals seeking asylum for the purpose of progressing asylum claims. When that information affects the type of accommodation an individual may require, that information is also recorded for the purposes of meeting our statutory obligation.

In respect of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, responsibility to accommodate them sits with the local authority and they are required to collate appropriate safeguarding information for each child in their care.

All unaccompanied asylum-seeking children receive a welfare interview on arrival in the UK.

Young people who were placed in emergency interim hotels which were operated by the Home Office had additional standard information collected from them to ensure that referrals or actions required due to any identified safeguarding

concerns or issues could be made, including notifying the relevant local authority. Young people in the hotels 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/6027>

Asylum: Children

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [6028] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to ensure that unaccompanied child asylum seekers are provided healthcare.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We maintain that the best place for these children to be accommodated is within local authority care. As part of the national transfer scheme, the receiving local authority must provide suitable support for all children being moved into their care, including health care, irrespective of the child's immigration status.

Asylum seekers have access to health and social care services from the point of arrival in the UK. 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.

All accommodation providers, including those who were responsible for the unaccompanied asylum seeking children hotels that were previously set up and run by the Home Office, have a contractual duty to assist people in accessing the health care they need.

The Home Office also operates a Safeguarding Hub to support vulnerable individuals in accessing these services. In addition, the Home Office contracts Migrant Help to provide advice and guidance to asylum seekers should they have an issue with their accommodation or support, and for signposting to health and welfare services. Asylum seekers can access Migrant Help 24/7, every day of the year by a freephone telephone number, via an online chat or completing an email enquiry form both of which can be accessed free of charge on the Migrant Help website. Interpreting and translation services are available through Migrant Help when the need arises for asylum seekers to raise any queries or concerns.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/6028>

Children: Asylum

Rebecca Long Bailey (Labour) [6821] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help support the mental health of children from (a) families seeking asylum and (b) refugee families in educational settings.

Reply from David Johnston: The government wants all children, regardless of their background or the challenges they face, to grow up happy, healthy and safe. While education settings are not specialist mental health support providers, schools and colleges have an important role to play in identifying and responding to mental health needs, whether by providing targeted pastoral support or ensuring referrals are made to external specialist support. The department has put in place a wide range of training and guidance to help education staff do so effectively.

The department's mental health and behaviour guidance supports education staff to identify children in need of extra mental health support. This includes information on how adverse childhood experiences, including loss or separation and traumatic incidents, can affect children's mental health, and on working with external agencies to put in place effective support. The guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

The department is offering every state school and college in England funding to

train a senior mental health lead, who can oversee an effective whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. This approach should include robust processes for identifying pupils or groups of pupils in need of further support, which may include children from refugee or asylum-seeking families.

To ensure more children and young people have access to early intervention support, the department is continuing to roll out mental health support teams to schools and colleges in England. These teams currently cover over 35% of pupils in schools and learners in further education and the department is extending coverage to at least 50% by April 2025.

Further information on these programmes and other sources of support to help schools and colleges promote and support mental health can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6821>

Asylum: Children

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [6030] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to ensure that local authorities have adequate resources to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in their care.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The safety and welfare of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is our utmost priority. We recognise that providing care placements for them is a national issue that requires participation from local authorities across the UK. We continue to work alongside other government departments, devolved administrations, and local authority representatives, to ensure this vulnerable group of children have timely access to the statutory placements that local authorities must provide.

Local authorities receive funding to support Children's Social Care through the Local Government Finance Settlement, and finance arrangements which apply to the devolved administrations. In addition, the Home Office also provides funding contributions to the costs incurred by local government in looking after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and former UASC care leavers.

The Home Office has also introduced our new Incentivised Funding Programme for 2023-24 which provides £6,000 for every unaccompanied child moved within 5 working days either from a UASC hotel, or from Kent County Council.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/6030>

Asylum: Children

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [6032] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what processes his Department has in place to help protect unaccompanied children seeking asylum who have been victims of (a) rape, (b) sexual assault and (c) sexual exploitation.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We maintain that the best place for these children to be accommodated is within local authority care where they can receive the most appropriate support based on their individual needs.

We had robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all young people who were temporarily accommodated in Home Office run hotels were safe and supported as we sought urgent placements with a local authority.

Young people were supported by team leaders and support workers who were on site 24 hours a day. Further care was provided in hotels by teams of social workers and nurses. All contingency sites had security staff on site 24/7 and providers liaised closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/6032>

Asylum: Children

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [6034] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to locate the unaccompanied children seeking asylum who have gone missing from their accommodation.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The wellbeing of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is our priority. We maintain that the best place for these children to be accommodated is within local authority care.

There are currently no unaccompanied children in hotels and unaccompanied children's hotel accommodation has been empty since 18 November 2023. Of the 7 hotels which were operational in 2022, 6 of those were closed permanently on 30 November 2023.

We take the safety of those in our care seriously. We have robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all young people in emergency interim hotels were safe and supported as we sought urgent placements with a local authority.

Police forces are responsible for locating missing children, in their region, in line with standard processes for any missing child in the UK.

When children who were provided with emergency Home Office accommodation went missing the MARS (Missing After Reasonable Steps) protocol was followed. The local authority works with multiple agencies to establish the young person's whereabouts and to ensure that they are safe.

Children staying in the Home Office hotels were supported by team leaders and support workers who were on site 24 hours a day. Further care was provided in hotels by teams of social workers and nurses. All contingency sites had security staff on site 24/7 and providers liaised closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/6034>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Children

Tahir Ali (Labour) [6910] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied children in temporary accommodation have been provided with healthcare support in the last 12 months.

Tahir Ali (Labour) [6911] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential trauma for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children of being housed in hotels.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We maintain that the best place for these children to be accommodated is within local authority care. As part of the national transfer scheme, the receiving local authority must provide suitable support for all children being moved into their care, including health care, irrespective of the child's immigration status.

Asylum seekers have access to health and social care services from the point of arrival in the UK. 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 Home Office also operates a Safeguarding Hub to support vulnerable individuals in accessing these services. In addition, the Home Office contracts Migrant Help to provide advice and guidance to asylum seekers should they have an issue with their accommodation or support, and for signposting to health and welfare services. Asylum seekers can access Migrant Help 24/7, every day of the year by a freephone telephone number, via an online chat, or completing an email enquiry form, both of which can be accessed free of charge on the Migrant Help website. Interpreting and translation services are available through Migrant Help when the need arises for asylum seekers to raise any queries or concerns.

The information you have requested of the Home Office is not held in a reportable format.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6910>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6911>

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Catherine West (Labour) [6858] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued on the formal process by which asylum seekers (a) are notified that they should leave hotels and (b) move to other Home Office-funded accommodation.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office has always been clear that use of hotels as temporary accommodation for asylum seekers was a short-term measure to ensure that we met our statutory obligation to accommodate asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute during a period of unprecedented numbers of small boat arrivals.

The closure of individual hotels and relocation of service users to alternative accommodation is being managed in accordance with established allocation of accommodation policy and processes.

Our accommodation providers will notify asylum seekers as early as possible of an upcoming hotel closure and will discuss the move with each individual and establish if there are any safeguarding, medical, or other personal circumstances which need to be considered.

Asylum accommodation is generally provided on a 'no choice' basis and individuals will be moved to suitable alternative accommodation, which may be in a different location from their current hotel. Those whose personal circumstances necessitate accommodation in a particular location, will have their requests considered in accordance with existing published policies.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6858>

Bibby Stockholm

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op) [6871] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Maritime Coastguard Agency has made an assessment of the (a) accommodation standards and (b) staff accreditation on the Bibby Stockholm barge.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Bibby Stockholm has been subject to certification and regulatory inspection by the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency in order to fulfil its permitted purpose.

Accommodation providers ensure that guidance and training provided to staff regarding the identification and management of vulnerable asylum seekers with specific needs, or at risk asylum seekers, is kept up to date and aligns with best practice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6871>

Asylum: Deportation

John Hayes (Conservative) [6385] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people with rejected asylum applications were removed in each year since 2019.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The Home Office publishes data on asylum and returns in the '[Immigration System Statistics quarterly release](#)'. Data on initial decisions on asylum applications including refusals by date of refusal are published in table Asy_D02 of the '[Asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

Data on asylum-related returns by date of removal are published in table Ret_05 of

the [‘Returns summary tables’](#). The ‘contents’ sheet contains an overview of all available data on returns.

The latest data relate to the end of September 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/6385>

Human Trafficking: Eastern Europe

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [6796] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an estimate of the number of (a) women and (b) girls from Eastern Europe who were trafficked to the UK and subsequently (i) compelled and (ii) forced to commit criminal acts in each of the last five years.

Reply from Laura Farris: We do not routinely collect the required data to estimate the number of women and girls from Eastern Europe who were trafficked to the UK and were subsequently compelled or forced to commit criminal acts.

In 2022, 479 females were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) who reported criminal exploitation, either partly or wholly.

For adult victims of modern slavery who enter the NRM, the Home Office funds the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC), contracted to spend £379 million over 5 years, to provide specialist support through the provision of safehouse accommodation, support-worker contact and financial assistance.

In addition, between 2016 and March 2023, the Home Office has spent over £37 million through the Modern Slavery Fund to combat modern slavery overseas and reduce the threat of human trafficking to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6796>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Refugees: Notice Period for Home Office Accommodation

The Lord Bishop of London: To ask His Majesty’s Government whether they plan to ensure that refugees are given 28 days’ notice before they are required to leave their Home Office accommodation, having received documentation after being granted asylum or being given leave to enter or remain.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, the current practice is that individuals remain on asylum support and in asylum accommodation for 28 days from the point of the biometric residence permit being issued. This means that individuals have longer than 28 days’ notice after receiving their grant of leave to make onward arrangements.

The Lord Bishop of London: My Lords, last week during the Question from the noble Baroness, Lady Thornhill, the case was well made that the 28-day period is inadequate and should be extended to 56 days to allow universal credit and housing benefit to come through. However, many of those who support refugees are receiving increasing numbers of concerns that refugees are being given as few as seven days’ notice before being evicted, causing widespread homelessness and greater concern. Last week, I, along with 45 faith and belief leaders, wrote to the Minister for Illegal Migration and the Faith Minister about this. What data is the Home Office collecting that demonstrates that the 28-day notice period is being properly implemented? What action will it take to review it, given reported failures to do so?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I will go through the process: all individuals who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim can remain on support and in their accommodation for at least 28 days from when their decision is served. However, as I said in my earlier Answer, current practice is that individuals remain on that support and in accommodation for 28 days from the point

of the biometric residence permit being issued. That can be five to seven days after the asylum decision. This means that individuals have longer than the 28 days' notice after receiving their grant of leave to make onward arrangements. Confirmation of the exact date that an individual's support and accommodation are due to end will be issued in a notice-to-quit or notice-to-vacate letter from the individual's accommodation provider. This notice will be issued at least seven days before support and accommodation is due to end. There are at least three opportunities there where the asylum seeker, or the asylum claimant who has received a decision, will be notified. They have plenty of time.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour): My Lords, last week the Minister said that 28 days was "more than enough" and "perfectly generous". Has he read the research done over the years, which shows the hardship and heartache that that period causes to newly recognised refugees at the point where they should be delighted because they have got their status? If he has not read the research, please will he do so—and will he undertake to meet those organisations on the ground that know what it is like to have to try to find somewhere in 28 days?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, as I have tried to explain, it is more than 28 days. The underlying aspect of this is that we should be moving to 56 days; I am afraid that we simply do not agree. The asylum accommodation estate is under huge strain, as all noble Lords are aware. Increasing the move-on period would exacerbate those pressures. Therefore, there are no current plans to extend the prescribed period, which is long-standing in our legislation; but we engage with the Department for Work and Pensions and DLUHC on ensuring that individuals can move on as smoothly as possible. I have read some of the research—not all of it—and I will continue to do so.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): My Lords, I add my support to the modest proposal of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London. Asylum seekers given the right to remain must be given a realistic timeframe to move out of temporary Home Office accommodation, bearing in mind the trauma that they have suffered and their lack of familiarity with their new surroundings. Sikh teachings on the need to help such people echo Christian sentiment, which pointedly reminds us that Jesus and his family were themselves refugees in Egypt.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I will go through a little bit of what local authorities receive from the department. We work closely with DLUHC and regularly engage with the local authorities to ensure that they are supported. We of course recognise that the number of individuals in the system and the clearance of the asylum backlog is adding pressure to local authorities and their housing allocation capacity because of individuals presenting as homeless. I would also say to the noble Lord that all of the people being cleared in relation to the backlog have been in this country for a long time already.

Lord German (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the problem that the Minister has just alluded to is that local authorities are under enormous pressure when people arrive on their doorstep with a short period of time in which to find themselves appropriate housing. Given that the number of people reporting after the decision-making is now larger than it was, what extra assistance are the Government giving to local authorities, and to the voluntary sector, which is doing so much to help where it can?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, there are a number of things that we are doing. We have local authority liaison officers who provide a specific point of contact for local authorities, particularly for urgent discontinuation-related inquiries. There are significant improvements in train to ensure that local authorities receive early notification of those who are being granted and leaving Home Office accommodation and supporting those customers through the move-on process following a positive decision. Following notification of a service decision,

accommodation providers will notify local authorities within two days. We also share relevant data in the form of heat maps and various other macro data, if you will, to ensure effective planning.

Lord Coaker (Labour): My Lords, notwithstanding what the Minister has just told us, the reality for many refugees with newly granted status is that they are required to leave their accommodation, often within seven days from being given a notice to quit. That means they are forced to go to their local authorities and many of them are homeless or on the streets. That is the reality, and it is the result of government policy. All the Minister tells us is that everything is fine, but it is not. It needs sorting out.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The noble Lord is right that they get seven days from the notice to quit, but they get 28 days from the issue of the biometric residence permit, so it is not quite right.

Lord Dubs (Labour): My Lords, a little while ago I was talking to an organisation that looks after people who become homeless. It quoted a recent example of a refugee who could not find any accommodation in the time that he had and eventually had to sleep for a week at Euston station—having gone through all the trauma of being a refugee and all that that entailed—before this charity picked him up. That is not good enough.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I certainly regret the individual circumstances described by the noble Lord and, obviously, we would prefer that not to be the case.

Baroness Kramer (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I wonder if the Minister would actually answer the question from the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London. She made the point that sources—I assume they are sources that she respects—inform her that people have seven days in which to find alternative accommodation. Will the Minister look into the examples that she has raised? Surely everything he says means that he at least thinks 28 days is necessary.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Yes, I think 28 days is necessary, and of course I will look into those. As I say, everyone gets 28 days from the issue of the biometric residence permit.

Lord Watts (Labour): My Lords, the Government have made a right mess of this. They inherited a system that worked and have broken it. Is it not wrong for refugees to find themselves out on the streets? Have they not suffered enough? Should the Government not be making sure that no refugee is homeless?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I agree with the noble Lord in as much as no one should find themselves homeless. I also agree that the refugee system is obviously under enormous strain. I therefore look forward to the noble Lord's enthusiastic support for the Rwanda Bill when it arrives. ...

Baroness Watkins of Tavistock (Crossbench): My Lords, is the Minister confident that these refugees are made aware that the 28 days is commencing when they get their biometric assessment, or do they not realise that until they get the seven-day notice?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The noble Baroness asks me a good question. I am going to look into that, because I do not know. I assume that they are made aware of it, of course, but I have not been present when one of these notices is issued. I will find out.

Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Labour): My Lords, the most eloquent contribution to this short debate has been the silence of the Members on the Conservative Benches. Is it not a fact that, as was alluded to in the right reverend Prelate's question, getting into the system for benefits and the rest of it requires more than the length of time that we are talking about?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I say to the noble Lord that that is not the case. You can start to apply for things like universal credit before you receive the biometric residence permit. I appreciate that that is not perfect, but it is certainly enough time to get into the system.

Lord Pannick (Crossbench): My Lords, does the Minister agree that part of the problem

here is that asylum seekers are restricted in their ability to work until they receive their asylum status? Therefore, when they receive their asylum status, they have no resources that they can use in order to obtain accommodation.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The noble Lord makes an interesting point, and I will take that back to the department.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Labour): My Lords, I am glad to hear that the Minister will take that point back, but it is entirely salient and, if I may say so, I am surprised that he does not have a slightly more substantive answer. Does he also agree that one of the difficulties that many of these people face is that English is not by any means their first language and sometimes they do not have reasonable fluency in it after several years in this country? Does he accept that these additional challenges make the timeframes extremely difficult for people to manage?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I acknowledge that nothing in this particular space is easy, but there are many organisations that provide support to individuals to arrange their onward support. That includes Migrant Help, accommodation providers, DWP and jobcentres. I made the point earlier that most of the people we are talking about have been in this country for a very long time, and one would hope that they at least had some English.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-12-18/debates/12DBF82F-C01D-439F-BCB8-99020F433004/RefugeesNoticePeriodForHomeOfficeAccommodation>

Baroness Thornhill's question referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-12-13/debates/9A961BED-EF8F-442B-9A82-C3DDB699F966/RefugeesHomelessness#contribution-EAEEB54E-AAA5-4869-A821-10273A36740E>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Asylum: Rwanda

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL952] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the UK–Rwanda treaty for the provision of an asylum partnership aligns with the UK's international human rights commitments, including safeguarding the rights of asylum seekers.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The treaty was drafted with close care and attention by both the UK and Rwanda to ensure that the detailed approach and processes set out in detail in the treaty meet our international human rights commitments, including those under the Refugee Convention.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/hl952>

The Treaty referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65705fd474693000d4888dc/CS_Rwanda_1.2023_UK_Rwanda_Agreement_Asylum_Partnership_Protection_Refugees_Migrants.pdf

Asylum: Rwanda

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1173] To ask His Majesty's Government through which assessment mechanism or framework they have deemed Rwanda a safe country.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We had previously undertaken an analysis of the country situation, drawing on a wide range of publicly available evidence from a variety of reliable sources about Rwanda's asylum system and human rights situation. Evidence was also obtained from the FCDO and from visits undertaken by the team responsible for Country Policy and Information Notes (CPIN).

Information gathering was done in accordance with internationally established country-of-origin information research methods.

This was supplemented with updated evidence since summer 2022, including in respect of the strengthening of Rwanda's systems and the new treaty signed on 5 December. The treaty between the UK and Rwanda, alongside the evidence of changes in Rwanda, will enable Parliament to conclude that Rwanda is safe. The new Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill will provide Parliament with the opportunity to do so. Further information can be found in our published policy statement: [Safety of Rwanda \(Asylum and Immigration\) Bill: policy statement](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/hl1173>

Human Rights Act 1998

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Labour) [HL949] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to repeal the Human Rights Act 1998 to deliver their policy to remove certain migrants to Rwanda.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We are not repealing the Human Rights Act 1998. The Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill introduced on 7 December 2023 disapplies the relevant sections of the Human Rights Act 1998 from the key parts of the Bill. This is set out in Clause 3.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/hl949>

Asylum: Rwanda

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town (Labour) [HL819] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Bar Council and Law Society about the potential use of UK lawyers in Rwanda to advise on asylum claims.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Following the signing of the new Treaty between the UK and Rwanda, we are continuing to work to strengthen this Partnership. We are working with the Government of Rwanda to see where any UK expertise or support would be beneficial. More details on this will be set out in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/hl819>

The Treaty referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65705fd4746930000d4888dc/CS_Rwanda_1_2023_UK_Rwanda_Agreement_Asylum_Partnership_Protection_Refugees_Migrants.pdf

Asylum: Rwanda

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1228] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure the safety of any LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers who are transferred to Rwanda.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: There are binding provisions in the Rwanda Treaty which place obligations on the Government of Rwanda to provide, for those relocated under the Partnership, support and accommodation in line with international legal standards. Protection from discrimination is enshrined within the Rwandan constitution. Rwanda does not criminalise or discriminate against sexual orientation in either law or policy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1228>

The Treaty referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65705fd4746930000d4888dc/CS_Rwanda_1_2023_UK_Rwanda_Agreement_Asylum_Partnership_Protection_Refugees_Migrants.pdf

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Rwanda

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1225] To ask His Majesty's Government whether, in developing their policy of deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda, they made an assessment of the unemployment rate in that country, and if so, what it is.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1226] To ask His Majesty's Government whether, in developing their policy of deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda, they made an assessment of the health priorities in that country, and if so, what they are.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1229] To ask His Majesty's Government which other countries deem Rwanda to be a safe country for the purposes of asylum.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Our analysis of the country situation drew on a wide range of evidence gathered through both desk-based research and country visits. We collected information on economic indicators including the opportunities and support available to refugees seeking employment, together with information on Rwanda's health system, including its accessibility to refugees.

The information was carefully selected in accordance with internationally established country-of-origin information research methods and includes content from a variety of reliable sources such as media outlets, governmental sources and local, national and international organisations.

I cannot comment on other international relations with Rwanda.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1225>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1226>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1229>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Channel Migrants

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1171] To ask His Majesty's Government what UK funding has been provided to local communities in France to mitigate the economic impact of illegal crossings of the English Channel.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The UK and France maintain a longstanding relationship on tackling illegal migration.

Since signing the Sandhurst Treaty in 2018 with France the UK has provided almost €500 million in funding to support our joint work to tackle small boats crossings.

UK funding supports French authorities to mitigate the impact of illegal crossings on local communities in northern France, for example by providing port security infrastructure and funding additional law enforcement personnel to manage the presence of migrants attempting to cross the Channel by small boat in the local area.

UK-France cooperation to tackle small boats has resulted in over 25,000 small boats crossings prevented so far this year, with overall small boats arrivals down by over a third compared to 2022.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/hl1171>

The Sandhurst Treaty, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-france-joint-action-plan-on-illegal-migration-across-the-channel/uk-france-joint-action-plan-on-illegal-migration-across-the-channel-in-small-boats-accessible-version>

People Smuggling: English Channel

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1168] To ask His Majesty's Government how many members of organised criminal gangs attempting to enable migrants to cross the English Channel illegally have been arrested.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office is committed to tackling organised immigration crime. Methods of irregular entry to the UK can be unsafe, dangerous and leave migrants open to exploitation by organised crime groups.

Since the start of the year (01 January 2023), Immigration Enforcement have arrested over 230 persons for people smuggling into the UK.

Since January 2023, the Home Office have undertaken over 200 OCG disruption activities, including 21 relating to small boat crossings.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/hl1168>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Ukraine

Visas: Ukraine

Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton (Conservative) [HL1215] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to allow Ukrainian refugees who are on three-year visas to extend those visas.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: In line with the situation in Ukraine, working closely with the Ukrainian Government, as well as our international counterparts, we keep the need for a possible extension of UK sanctuary, beyond March 2025, under consistent review. We are also mindful that permission will start to expire, for the first arrivals under our Ukrainian schemes, from March 2025, and their need for certainty beyond that point to help them to plan ahead, for example if remaining in the UK, entering into rental agreements and living here independently.

The UK Government stands with Ukraine and firmly believes that Ukraine will be safe again. When it's safe to do so, Ukraine will need the repatriation of its citizens to help recover and rebuild their economy and infrastructure. Our approach therefore has been to provide 36 months sanctuary under our Ukraine visas which are temporary and do not lead to settlement.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1215>

Refugees: Ukraine

Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton (Conservative) [HL1216] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic contribution of Ukrainian refugees who are on temporary visas.

Reply from Baroness Penn: The government has not made a specific assessment of the economic contribution of Ukrainian refugees on temporary visas, as it does not hold the necessary data to measure this.

Employment data is published on Ukrainian nationals in the UK, (this also includes Ukrainians not on any of the dedicated visa schemes) which can be found here:

[Analysis of Ukrainian nationals entering employment in the UK](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1216>

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

Immigration: Personal Income

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL987] To ask His Majesty's Government

what is the percentage of UK citizens who earn above £38,700; and whether it is an intended consequence of the plan to "cut migration levels and to curb abuse of the immigration system", as announced by the Home Secretary on 4 December, to allow only UK citizens who earn above the £38,700 threshold to marry a non-British spouse and to sponsor them to live in the UK from April 2024.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: At the current Minimum Income Requirement (MIR) level of £18,600, 75% of the UK working population (based on ASHE earnings data) meet the MIR level. At the higher MIR of £38,700 – the median salary level for those on the skilled worker route, and all else being constant, around 30% of the UK working population could meet the threshold based on earnings alone. The MIR will be increased in incremental stages to give predictability. In Spring 2024, we will raise the threshold to £29,000, that is the 25th percentile of earnings for jobs which are eligible for Skilled Worker visas, moving to the 40th percentile (currently £34,500) and finally the 50th percentile (currently £38,700 and the level at which the general skilled worker threshold is set) in the final stage of implementation.

Family life must not be established here at the taxpayer's expense and family migrants must be able to integrate if they are to play a full part in British life. The MIR has not been increased for over a decade and no longer reflects the level of income required by a family to ensure they are self-sufficient and do not need to rely on public funds. It is intended that this change will contribute to reducing net migration when it is introduced in spring 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/hl987>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration>

Visas: Married People

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL982] To ask His Majesty's Government how many UK citizens have a foreign spouse whom they have sponsored to live in the UK under the current family visa system; what is the number of foreign spouses living in the UK on family visas expressed as a percentage of net migration in the most recent annual figures available; and what is the estimated cost to the public of foreign spouses of UK citizens living in the UK on family visas.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The number of UK citizens that have a foreign spouse whom they have sponsored to live in the UK under the current family visa system, the number of foreign spouses living in the UK on family visas expressed as a percentage of net migration in the most recent annual figures available and the estimated cost to the public of foreign spouses of UK citizens living in the UK on family visas does not form part of any current transparency data or migration statistics and is not published.

Transparency data is published quarterly on Gov.uk and includes data on the number of visas issued on family routes, although this does not necessarily equate to foreign spouses living in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/hl982>

The transparency data referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-september-2023/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-for-family-reasons>

Visas: Families

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL1112] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 5 December (HL Deb col 1464),

whether the family test was applied before the decision was made to raise the minimum income threshold for family visas to £38,700; and if so, whether they will now publish the outcome; or if it was not applied, why.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Family Test ([The Family Test](#)) helps ensure that the impacts on family relationships and functioning, both positive and negative, are recognised in the process of policy development, and helps inform the policy decisions made by Ministers. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to explicitly undertake a Family Test for all policy changes, as with all policy development the impact on families was considered as part of the development of changes to the minimum income requirement, and will continue to be as we work through the further policy details which will be announced in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/hl1112>

The remarks referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-12-05/debates/06EF92B6-C3F1-44B4-93A3-B0F9213FC5BD/LegalMigration#contribution-42445399-FC93-4AE1-90AF-D643AB77337A>

Visas: Families

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL950] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the compliance of the proposed £38,700 income requirement for applications to bring dependents to the UK with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The family Immigration Rules contain a provision for exceptional circumstances, including a breach of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, where there would be unjustifiably harsh consequences for the applicant, their partner, a relevant child, or another family member if their application were to be refused.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/hl950>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Visas: Families

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL1137] To ask His Majesty's Government, with regard to their proposals to increase the minimum income requirement for a spouse or partner visa to £38,700, what fee will be payable on the initial and subsequent applications for a spouse or partner on a 10-year route to settlement, and what immigration health charge will be due.

Visas: Married People

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL1139] To ask His Majesty's Government what fees they intend to charge in connection with the increased minimum income requirement for a spouse or partner visa, in particular (1) what fee will be payable on the initial and subsequent applications for a spouse or partner on a 10-year route to settlement, and (2) what immigration health charge will be due.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: There will be no changes to the fees payable for any visa applications or the health surcharge as a result of the minimum income requirement changes announced by the Home Secretary.

For those applying on a spouse or partner visa, the current application fees of £1,846 for entry clearance, £1,048 for Limited Leave to Remain and £2,885 for Indefinite Leave to Remain will remain the same.

Subject to the passage of the necessary legislation, the Immigration Health Surcharge will increase to £1,035 per year for migrants applying on the partner visa route.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/hl1137>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/hl1139>

The following six questions all received the same answer

Visas: Skilled Workers

Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL1019] To ask His Majesty's Government whether there will be an alternative salary threshold for (1) recent graduates, (2) PhD holders, and (3) academics, following the planned increase to the salary threshold for skilled overseas workers.

Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL1020] To ask His Majesty's Government when in the spring the increase to the salary threshold for skilled overseas workers will come into effect; and whether a consultation will take place.

Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL1021] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the announcement of an increase to the salary threshold for skilled overseas workers, whether the salary threshold will be higher for those seeking indefinite leave to remain.

Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL1022] To ask His Majesty's Government what impact the planned increase to the salary threshold for skilled overseas workers will have on graduate programmes due to commence in September 2024.

Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL1023] To ask His Majesty's Government whether the increase to the salary threshold for skilled overseas workers (1) will only apply to cases submitted after the threshold introduction date, or (2) will apply to cases that have been submitted but have not yet been considered.

Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL1024] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the announcement of an increase to the salary threshold for skilled overseas workers, whether the salary threshold will be higher for people with children who are not British citizens.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Our Points Based System enables the Government to prioritise the skills and talent we need to help our economy grow and support our NHS, while encouraging investment in, and protecting, our own resident workforce. In arriving at this package of measures, we have been mindful of the need to balance the impacts on economic growth and the needs of the labour market. The Graduate route remains the best opportunity for international graduates from UK universities to find a job in the UK labour market, including through graduate programmes.

In due course, the Government will provide further details on the implementation of these measures (including on salaries and transitional arrangements), which are due to come in to force by Spring 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/hl1019>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/hl1020>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/hl1021>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/hl1022>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/hl1023>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/hl1024>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Visas: British National (Overseas)

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL1090] To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the position of British National (Overseas) visa applicants who remain in Hong Kong while their application is considered.

Asylum: Hong Kong

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL1091] To ask His Majesty's Government what

recent assessment they have made of the number of asylum seekers from Hong Kong who have switched to British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa routes, and the way in which such applications have been handled, since they decided to allow adult children of BN(O) status holders to apply independently of their parent.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Those who apply to the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route from overseas should not travel to the UK until they have received a decision on their application. Most individuals who hold a BN(O) or Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport will be able to apply to the BN(O) route without needing to attend a visa application centre by using the UK Chip Checker smartphone application.

In most cases, a person with a pending asylum claim can make an application to the BN(O) route, but all applications will need to meet the relevant requirements to be granted, including the suitability requirements. The Home Office is aware of the issues some individuals have faced when switching into the BN(O) route since it was amended to allow adult children of BN(O) status holders who were born after the handover of Hong Kong to apply independently of their parent, and we are looking into these cases.

Recent published data shows that in Quarter 2 of 2023, 98.58% of leave to enter cases and 98.35% of leave to remain cases classed as straightforward were decided within the service standard of 12 weeks.

This can be found at the following link: [Visas and citizenship data: Q3 2023](#).

The Home Office does not currently hold any publishable data on the longest outstanding case.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/hl1090>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/hl1091>

Information about the BN(O) visa, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa>

Visas: British National (Overseas)

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL1038] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to take steps to reduce the limited leave to remain period from five years to three years on the British National (Overseas) visa scheme for Hong Kongers, considering the finding of the Welcoming Committee for Hong Kongers in its report From HK to UK: Hong Kongers' new lives in Britain, published in November, that 99 per cent of Hong Kongers who hold a British National (Overseas) visa intend to apply for British citizenship.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route is a generous offer, reflecting the UK's moral and historic commitment to those people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the UK, by obtaining BN(O) status before Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997.

After five years in the UK, those on the route can choose whether to apply for indefinite leave to remain, and after obtaining that will be eligible to apply for British citizenship, generally after a further 12 months' residence. The Government currently has no plans to change the way we grant permission on the BN(O) route.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-11/hl1038>

Information about the BN(O) visa, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/HK-to-UK-summary.Nov23.Final_.pdf

Visas: Armed Forces

Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton (Conservative) [HL941] To ask His Majesty's Government whether the recent proposed increase of the minimum income threshold to £38,700 for a family visa will apply to (1) serving members of the Brigade of Gurkhas, and (2) other serving foreign and commonwealth members of the armed forces.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: It is the government's intention to increase the minimum income required for British citizens and those settled in the UK (including serving members of HM Armed Forces who are exempt from immigration control and those applying for settlement upon discharge, at the same as their family member) who want their family members to join them. This reinforces that all those who want to work and live here must be able to support themselves, are contributing to the economy, and are not burdening the state.

The fees and policies that apply to the dependants of members of HM Armed Forces are closely aligned with those that apply to the dependants of other British citizens and settled persons under the standard family immigration rules, although they do recognise the unique position of Armed Forces family members.

Until the Immigration Rules are amended the MIR level remains the same. The Government will set out any transitional provisions associated with the increase in the minimum income requirement in due course. Any applications already submitted will be considered in line with the existing policy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/hl941>

Visas: Ministers of Religion

The Lord Bishop of Norwich [HL991] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Statement by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs on legal migration on 4 December (HC Deb cols 41–43), what changes, if any, will be made to the existing Tier 2 Minister of Religion visa category.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The changes announced by the Home Secretary did not include any amendments to the T2 Minister of Religion route. There are no plans to make any changes to the route at this time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/hl991>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration>

Visas: Ministers of Religion

The Lord Bishop of Norwich [HL992] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Statement by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs on legal migration on 4 December (HC Deb cols 41–43), whether raising the minimum income for family visas to £38,700 will apply to ministers of religion with qualifying family dependants, including spouses and fiancées, who are foreign nationals residing overseas.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Those sponsoring applicants on the partner and child family route are required to meet the Minimum Income Requirement. At present there are no exceptions for specific jobs or professions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/hl992>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration>

Asylum: Children

Baroness Butler-Sloss (Crossbench) [HL808] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings in the report by the Children's Commissioner

Unaccompanied children in need of care, published 16 November, on the level of safeguarding for unaccompanied children who arrived by boat and were placed in hotels since 2021; and what steps they intend to take to ensure such children are properly safeguarded.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Children's Commissioners' report on '*Unaccompanied children in need of care*' was published on 29th November. The Home Office are reviewing the report and will respond directly to the Children's Commissioner in due course.

Hotel accommodation was an emergency response to Kent's position on newly arriving unaccompanied children in July 2021. The high number of UASC arriving via small boats also placed significant pressure on the National Transfer Scheme (NTS), which resulted in the use of hotels continuing for longer than our short-term ambition. Out of necessity, the Home Office have accommodated UASC on an emergency and temporary basis while placements with local authorities have been vigorously pursued.

Those who have been accommodated in hotels are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further support is provided on site by teams of social workers and nurses. Staff, including contractors, receive a number of briefings and guidance on how to safeguard children. All children receive a welfare interview; this includes a series of questions specifically designed to understand whether there are any potential indicators of trafficking or particular safeguarding issues.

The High Court recently ruled that the routine and systematic use of hotels to accommodate UASC is unlawful. We are working at pace with Kent County Council, other government departments, and local authorities across the UK, to ensure suitable local authority placements are provided for UASC urgently and sustainably. The High Court has upheld that local authorities have a statutory duty to care for all children including UASC. Local authorities are also under a mandated obligation to comply with the National Transfer Scheme. The Home Office have always maintained that the best place for UASC to be accommodated is within a local authority.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/hl808>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2023/11/Unaccompanied-children-in-need-of-care-PDF.pdf>

The High Court ruling referred to above can be read at

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ECPAT-v-Kent-Council-judgment-270723.pdf>

Asylum: Children

The Lord Bishop of Leicester [HL979] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made a decision about whether the power under the Illegal Migration Act 2023 for the Home Office to accommodate children will come into force; and if so, when.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Illegal Migration Act received Royal Assent on 20 July 2023. The Act seeks to ensure the only way to come to the UK for protection will be through safe and legal routes and will take power out of the hands of the criminal gangs and protect vulnerable people, including children. Following the High Court ECPAT judgment and Supreme Court judgment on Rwanda, the Government is carefully reflecting on commencement of the powers in the Act, including those relating to the accommodation and transfer of unaccompanied children.

These powers have not yet been commenced and a decision will be made in due

course. The Act does not change a local authority's statutory obligations to children from the date of arrival and that the best place for an unaccompanied child is in the care of a local authority. This is something the Government was consistently clear about during the Illegal Migration Act's passage through Parliament.

We are working at pace with Kent County Council, other government departments and local authorities across the UK to ensure suitable local authority placements are provided for unaccompanied asylum seeking children urgently and sustainably.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/hl979>

The High Court ruling referred to above can be read at

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ECPAT-v-Kent-Council-judgment-270723.pdf>

The Supreme Court ruling referred to above can be read at

<https://www.baillii.org/uk/cases/UKSC/2023/42.html>

Asylum: MOD Wethersfield

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL870] To ask His Majesty's Government how many residents of MDP Wethersfield are able to pass freely to and from the site; what is the schedule of the minibus service available; and what assessment they have made of the amount of time residents are able to be away from the site each day based on that schedule.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Those living at the site will be able to come and go freely and can therefore spend as much time as they would like offsite in any given day. A formal register will be kept at the front gate so that we know who is on and off-site. There is no curfew, but asylum seekers are expected to be back on site by 11pm, with those who do not return being contacted to ascertain their whereabouts.

To minimise the impact on the local services, and to ensure the orderly flow of people onto and off the site, a regular transport service is in place to take users to larger local towns.

This has been developed following consultation with key stakeholders in the Multi Agency Forum (MAF).

If off-site services are needed, transport services will be available by the Home Office's provider.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-05/hl870>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Bibby Stockholm

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL1231] To ask His Majesty's Government what the daily cost per person will be if 504 asylum seekers are accommodated on the Bibby Stockholm barge.

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL1232] To ask His Majesty's Government how many people are being accommodated on the Bibby Stockholm barge at present, and what is the cost per person to accommodate them.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The capacity of the Bibby Stockholm is around 500 people. The number of asylum seekers onboard the vessel at any one time is likely to vary due to a number of factors.

Numbers will increase in a phased approach as part of a carefully structured plan. We are conscious of the need to manage arrivals in a way that local services can support.

Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential. Therefore, the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available

at: [Home Office Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115442/2022-2023-annual-report-and-accounts.pdf).
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1231>
and
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1232>

Asylum: Bibby Stockholm

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL1227] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the mental health needs of the residents on the Bibby Stockholm.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We will assess individuals' suitability to reside at Portland and will only accommodate single adult males who are considered suitable to reside there.

Each person's suitability will be assessed at regular intervals and if they are no longer suitable for any reason, they will be moved to alternative accommodation. Accommodation providers ensure that guidance and training provided to staff regarding the identification and management of vulnerable asylum seekers with specific needs, or at risk asylum seekers, is kept up to date and aligns with best practice.

All accommodated on the vessel have 24/7 access to the Migrant Help independent helpline for any concerns that they wish to raise. In conjunction with this, they will have free access to laptops and mobile phones to maintain contact with legal advisors, friends, and family.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/hl1227>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Migrants: Detainees

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL869] To ask His Majesty's Government, following the Community Engagement Pilot series, what consideration they have given to alternatives to immigration detention, especially for those with medical needs.

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL871] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the UNHCR, Evaluation of the Refugee and Migrant Advice Service's Alternative to Detention Pilot, published 23 August; and what plans they have to use its findings to inform ministerial decision-making in regard to the development and implementation of alternatives to migrant detention in the UK.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: UNHCR's independent evaluations of the Community Engagement Pilot series found no definitive evidence that community-based case management focused alternatives to immigration detention led to the quicker resolution of individual cases nor represented better value for money. Given that these key tests for the pilots were not met, we have no plans to progress any further community-based case management focused alternatives to immigration detention.

The published Home Office response to the evaluation of the Refugee and Migrant Advice Service pilot can be found within the evaluation report at Appendix C.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-05/hl869>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-05/hl871>

The UNHCR evaluation referred to above can be read at

<https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/evaluation-rmas-alternative-to-detention-pilot.pdf>

Detainees: Medical Examinations

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL868] To ask His Majesty's Government how often reports submitted under (1) Rule 32 of the Short-term Holding Facility Rules 2018, and (2) Rule

35 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001, are audited by Home Office officials.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: All reports submitted under Rule 32 of the Short-term Holding Facility Rules 2018, and Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001 are reviewed and responded to by a single Home Office Team, separate from the case working teams. On receipt, all reports are triaged by a Senior Executive Officer to ensure they are legible, the information is clear, and all relevant sections of the template have been completed. If this is not the case, the issues will be set out in writing and the Medical Professional asked to review and respond to the request for clarification of existing information or for additional information.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-05/hl868>

The Short-term Holding Facility Rules, referred to above, can be read at

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

The Detention Centre Rules 2001, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2001/238/contents/made>

Asylum: Deportation

Lord Balfe (Conservative) [HL1248] To ask His Majesty's Government, following reports that international aid from Sweden will soon depend on whether the recipient country accepts the repatriation of its citizens, such as asylum seekers and migrants deemed a security risk, what assessment they have made of the case for adopting a similar policy for the United Kingdom.

Reply from Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) is provided with the primary purpose of contributing to reduction in poverty. Allocation decisions are informed by a range of modelling and information sources, including absolute poverty, humanitarian need, geopolitical prioritisation and the ability of a country to self-finance its own development. The recently published White Paper on International Development makes clear that the UK will prioritise its ODA where it is most needed and most effective.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-18/hl1248>

The White Paper referred to above can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6560874b0c7ec8000d95bdcf/international-development-in-a-contested-world-ending-extreme-poverty-and-tackling-climate-change.pdf>

UK Parliament Home Affairs Committee

Evidence session: Migration and Asylum

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/14013/html/>

UK Parliament Health and Social Care Committee

Evidence session: Social care: changes to legal migration measures

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/14040/html/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [235] **Life in the UK test** – That this House recognises the importance of the Life in the UK test for applicants and their concern that if something goes wrong they may face severe delays to their settlement, the risk of deportation, the loss of their livelihood and separation from their families; notes with

concern that the Government has failed to publish details of adjustments and alternatives to the test for those unable to complete it due to long term mental or physical health conditions; is dismayed by reports of lost evidence and delays to applications and further that the Home Office does not record data relating to requests for exemptions; expresses distinct unease that the Home Office may not be able to monitor its compliance with equalities duties without such information; regrets that the Government has failed to address the concerns in the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee report dated 28 June 2022; and urges the Government to review the functioning of the Life in the UK test, consider means of making the test fully accessible to disabled candidates, publish a range of reasonable adjustments available to candidates who need them and urgently monitor and report on the extent of processing delays and errors for applicants requiring adaptations and take steps to address them.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61716>

The House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee did not produce a report of their inquiry into the Life in the UK Test. However, they did write to the Minister about their findings on 28 June 2022. Their letter can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/22850/documents/167769/default/>

Press Releases

Legacy backlog cleared as plan to stop the boats delivers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/legacy-backlog-cleared-as-plan-to-stop-the-boats-delivers>

Tough government action on student visas comes into effect

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tough-government-action-on-student-visas-comes-into-effect>

Global Refugee Forum 2023: UK statement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/global-refugee-forum-2023-uk-statement>

New Publications

Legal migration statement: estimated immigration impacts

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/legal-migration-statement-estimated-immigration-impacts/legal-migration-statement-estimated-immigration-impacts-accessible>

Fact sheet on net migration measures – further detail

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fact-sheet-on-net-migration-measures-further-detail>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Changes to legal migration rules for family and work visas in 2024

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9920/>

Guidance: Windrush Compensation Scheme: State Pension solution

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-state-pension-solution/windrush-compensation-scheme-state-pension-solution>

Windrush Compensation Scheme data: November 2023

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6595298380a3bb00d9d0689/WCS+data+-+November+2023.ods>

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>

Statistics relating to the Illegal Migration Act: data tables to December 2023

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/658ebf5f01760d000d5cf922/statistics-relating-to-the-illegal-migration-act-data-tables-to-dec-2023.ods>

Additional statistics relating to Illegal Migration (December 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-relating-to-the-illegal-migration-bill/additional-statistics-relating-to-illegal-migration-december-2023>

Updated: Migrants detected crossing the English Channel in small boats – last 7 days

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats-last-7-days>

Updated: Diphtheria: cases among asylum seekers in England, monthly data tables

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/diphtheria-cases-among-asylum-seekers-in-england-2022/diphtheria-cases-among-asylum-seekers-in-england-weekly-data-tables>

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Rwanda processed 0.5% of asylum claims in six months

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rwanda-processed-05-percent-of-asylum-claims-in-six-months-587v8hxt>

Sunak provokes Tory rebellion by rushing through Rwanda Bill by end of month

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/01/03/rishi-sunak-tory-rebellion-rwanda-bill-end-of-month/>

Top legal adviser told Sunak his Rwanda flights bill may not work

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/sunak-rwanda-bill-stop-boats-b2471221.html>

'Intensely problematic': how Sunak's lawyers warned him on Rwanda

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/intensely-problematic-how-sunaks-lawyers-warned-him-on-rwanda-033pdxs9v>

Home Office warns that European court intervention is 'critical' threat to Rwanda plan

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/01/06/rwanda-plan-rishi-sunak-eu-court-block-flights-ongoing-risk/>

Rishi Sunak had significant doubt over Rwanda plan, papers suggest

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-67897560>

Sunak forced to defend Rwanda plan after leak suggested he harboured significant doubts

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-defend-rwanda-leak-b2474508.html>

Rishi Sunak had doubts about Rwanda scheme as chancellor, report says

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/jan/06/rishi-sunak-had-doubts-about-rwanda-scheme-as-chancellor-reports-say>

The Rwanda plan is a cruel policy pursued by a prime minister who knows it will not work
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/rwanda-policy-cruel-rishi-sunak-immigration-b2474300.html>

Labour considers processing asylum seekers overseas
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67822631>

News: Channel Migrants

Channel migrants: Crossings fell in 2023, government figures show
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-67856720>

Channel migrant crossings fall by a third but 'expected to rise in 2024'
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-crossings-channel-rishi-sunak-b2471726.html>

Channel migrant crossings could hit 35,000 this year despite 'stop the boats' pledge
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/01/02/channel-migrant-crossings-could-hit-35000-this-year/>

Rishi Sunak refuses to back James Cleverly on target of stopping all small boat crossings this year
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-james-cleverly-asylum-backlog-b2472180.html>

Tide turns for Channel smugglers but the migrant crossings go on
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-67763798>

Cameron warns of 'destructive' potential of small boats issue
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/david-cameron-lord-foreign-office-rwanda-mps-b2468926.html>

French report criticises UK effort on small boats
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67883084>

News: Ukraine

Ukraine: Scottish Government accused of 'betrayal' after cutting refugee support funding
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/ukraine-scottish-government-accused-of-betrayal-after-cutting-refugee-support-funding-4467281>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

How are the visa rules changing and how many people come to the UK?
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48785695>

New £38,700 visa rule will be introduced in early 2025, says Rishi Sunak
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67801167>

Ministers row back on salary threshold for family visa

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-67794032>

Ministers climb down on plans to make Brits earn £38,000 to bring their spouse to UK

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/spouse-visa-uk-new-visa-rules-earnings-b2468233.html>

Immigration statistics row kicks off general election year

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/jan/02/immigration-statistics-row-kicks-off-general-election-year>

EU is impotent on the migrant crisis, says Robert Jenrick

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/21/eu-impotent-on-the-migrant-crisis-says-jenrick/>

Britain grants asylum to greater percentage of migrants than most of Europe

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/01/05/britain-granting-asylum-to-greater-percentage-of-migrants/>

UK asylum backlog cleared, says PM, but critics disagree

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67860254>

Rishi Sunak claims to have cleared asylum backlog

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/asylum-small-boats-system-glitch-rl8qlw8w6>

Rishi Sunak's claim to have cleared the asylum backlog labelled 'misleading' by factchecker

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rishi-sunak-asylum-backlog-fact-check-b2473124.html>

James Cleverly insists older asylum case backlog dealt with

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-67860254>

Cleverly says UK asylum backlog cleared as almost 100,000 wait for decision

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/02/james-cleverly-uk-asylum-backlog>

James Cleverly: Impossible to say when asylum backlog will be cleared

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/uk-asylum-seeker-backlog-james-cleverly-rishi-sunak-h76l00nkr>

Government's asylum figures show uncleared backlog

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-67863380>

Thousands of 'legacy' asylum cases awaiting decisions despite Sunak's pledge

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/01/thousands-of-legacy-asylum-cases-awaiting-decisions-despite-sunaks-pledge>

Statistics watchdog to examine government asylum backlog claims

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67876860>

When is an asylum backlog not a backlog? When Rishi Sunak says he has 'cleared it'

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/02/asylum-backlog-rishi-sunak-home-office>

Net migration likely to rise before next election

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/net-migration-likely-to-rise-before-next-election-7zfvnm96>

Labour considering Rwanda alternative for migrant plan

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-plan-labour-migrants-starmer-b2469385.html>

Starmer under fire from Momentum over interest in 'offshoring' asylum seekers

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/12/26/keir-starmer-labour-momentum-asylum-seekers-offshoring/>

Labour warned against 'dancing to Tory tune' by offshoring asylum claims

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/26/labour-warned-against-dancing-to-tory-tune-by-offshoring-asylum-claims>

Labour plots 'watertight' alternative to Rwanda migrant plan

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/labour-plots-watertight-alternative-to-rwanda-migrant-plan-bb7m9srzx>

Home Office reverses policy on UK hostel evictions after surge in refugee homelessness

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/21/home-office-reverses-policy-on-uk-hostel-evictions-after-surge-in-refugee-homelessness>

Home Office forced to pause evictions of refugees from hotels at Christmas

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/24/home-office-evictions-refugees-hotels-pause>

Refugees: two months to find a home is not too much to ask

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/17/the-guardian-view-on-refugees-two-months-to-find-a-home-is-not-too-much-to-ask>

Sunak government quietly deletes damning report on Bibby Stockholm barge

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/sunak-asylum-seekers-bibby-stockholm-boats-b2470894.html>

Bibby Stockholm: No suspicions over migrant's barge death - coroner

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-67793614>

Home Office admits Bibby Stockholm policy is discriminatory

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bibby-stockholm-policy-is-discriminatory-home-office-admits-npxz7p3ms>

Number of asylum seekers removed from UK drops by half

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/01/02/rishi-sunak-latest-news-james-cleverly-asylum-small-boats/>

'We are the talk of the town': the refugee-led Glasgow charity helping women caught up in asylum system

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/jan/07/we-are-the-talk-of-the-town-the-refugee-led-glasgow-charity-helping-women-caught-up-in-asylum-system>

Tony Blair urged 'radical' measures to cut asylum, archive papers reveal

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67827016>

Rwanda-style asylum plan was 'nuclear option' for Blair in 2003, records reveal

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/29/tony-blair-rwanda-style-asylum-plan-2003>

Blair looked at sending migrants to Isle of Mull

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/blair-government-considered-sending-illegal-migrants-to-isle-of-mull-5k65sx903>

Tony Blair considered sending asylum seekers to a camp on the Isle of Mull, documents reveal

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tony-blair-labour-asylum-echr-b2470463.html>

Blair government wanted to house asylum seekers in camp on Isle of Mull

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/29/tony-blair-government-house-asylum-seekers-isle-of-mull/>

Roza Salih calls for asylum seekers to be given right to work

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/viewpoint/24025935.roza-salih-calls-asylum-seekers-given-right-work/>

'Britain gave me safety, now as a doctor I can give back': the charity helping refugees requalify to practise in the UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/dec/24/britain-gave-me-safety-now-as-a-doctor-i-can-give-back-the-charity-helping-refugees-requalify-to-practise-in-the-uk>

'I'll be back' vows immigrant deported from UK for fifth time

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/22/immigrant-to-be-deported-for-fifth-time-changing-names/>.

TOP

Community Relations

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Police: Community Relations

Lord Godson (Conservative) [HL1055] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to provide further advice to the Metropolitan Police and other territorial police forces as to the selection of, and relationships with, strategic partners, with a view to ensuring diversity in approach but excluding partnerships with those who have expressed extremist views, following recent reports concerning two members of the London Muslim Communities Forum.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Police operate independently from the Home Office. The Prevent Duty Guidance (2023) provides recommendations to police on what to consider when conducting due diligence and ensuring they have an understanding of associated risks.

The Government does not tolerate those who spread divisive and harmful narratives and efforts to counter extremism span a broad range of Government and law enforcement activity and we must persist in our efforts to challenge extremist narratives, disrupt the activity of radicalising groups, and directly tackle the causes of radicalisation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-11/hl1055>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales-accessible>

News

Why I'm not offended when people ask me where I'm 'really' from...

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/racism-immigrants-people-colour-offended-white-b2461570.html>

Amid the Gaza crisis, faiths are reaching out to each other

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/amid-the-gaza-crisis-faiths-are-reaching-out-to-each-other-zkql3lr9s>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Young Offender Institutions: Ethnic Groups

Janet Daby (Labour) [7119] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 13 December 2023 to Question 5310 on Young Offender Institutions: Isolation, how many and what proportion of children and young people who were separated for more than seven days were from an ethnic minority background.

Reply from Edward Argar: The information requested relating to children and young people separated for more than seven days who have speech and language difficulties, or are identified as neurodivergent, is not collected centrally and could not be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

In the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 294 separations of more than seven days involved children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding children and young people from white minority backgrounds). This equates to 67 percent of the total number of separations of more than seven days (excluding those whose ethnicity is not known).

The Youth Custody Service recognises the potential negative impact of children not being able to mix and interact with their peers, which is why children are only separated as a last resort – to manage the risk to or from other children, and after alternative interventions have been exhausted. Dynamic assessment of risk factors also determines the duration of the separation period. Any separation must be regularly reviewed and may only be in place for as long as is necessary to manage the risk to the child or others. As part of its efforts to ensure that separation is managed as effectively as possible, the Youth Custody Service is reviewing its [guidance on 'Minimising and Managing Use of Separation and Isolation in the Youth Estate Framework'](#), which was published in April 2022.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/7119>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-05/5310>

News

Mainstreaming Race in Scottish Parliament's Committees

<https://www.crer.org.uk/blog/mainstreaming-race-in-scottish-parliaments-committees>

Sam Allison: Why has it taken 15 years for another black Premier League ref?

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/67815639>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Islamophobia in Scotland

Foyso Choudhury (Labour) [S6W-23522] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on what action it has taken to date to implement the recommendations of the Report of the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia, in light of it being more than two years since the report was published.

Reply from Siobhian Brown: The Scottish Government welcomed the publication of 'Scotland's Islamophobia' – the report into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Tackling Islamophobia, and will continue to carefully consider the recommendations made.

The report shines a light on some serious issues faced by our Muslim communities in Scotland and we are committed to ensuring that Islamophobia is not tolerated. The Scottish Government is funding and working closely with organisations working to tackle racist and religious intolerance, as well as improve the lives of minority ethnic and religious communities in Scotland.

I have committed to attend a meeting with the CPG in early 2024 to discuss interventions to tackle Islamophobia in Scotland, including the recommendations within the CPG report 'Scotland's Islamophobia'.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-23522>

"Scotland's Islamophobia", referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/gbhdity3rnpix09/Islamophobia-public-inquiry-report-1.pdf>

Education: Islamophobia

Foyso Choudhury (Labour) [S6W-23363] To ask the Scottish Government what action it has taken to improve the reporting and recording of Islamophobia in schools, colleges and universities.

Reply from Jenny Gilruth: The Scottish Government is clear there is no place for Islamophobia or racism in our schools, colleges or universities. Discrimination or prejudice of any kind is unacceptable and must be addressed quickly whenever it arises.

A consistent and uniform approach to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in schools was introduced in 2019. Guidance for local authorities and schools on recording and monitoring bullying incidents was produced to support the approach. The Bullying and Equalities Module on SEEMiS, the schools management information system, was updated to reflect the new approach. The list of characteristics that can be reported on within SEEMiS includes incidents where

race or religion was a factor.

Our Behaviour in Scottish Schools research, which published on 28 November 2023, provides information on the frequency with which staff are dealing with racist incidents towards pupils or themselves. Our work on Racism and Racist Incidents, which is part of the Anti Racism in Education Programme, will provide further guidance for schools on recording and monitoring racist incidents, including incidents of Islamophobia.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published a report earlier this year, which asks higher and further education institutions to address the most pressing persistent inequalities in the tertiary education system, including islamophobia, by contributing to a set of National Equality Outcomes (NEOs). We expect higher and further education institutions to prioritise, and demonstrate progress against these NEOs, in line with their reporting requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Additionally, in 2021-22, the Scottish Government supported the Fearless Glasgow collaborative in a pilot on the use of Report and Support, an online reporting system for incidents of islamophobia, gender-based violence and other issues, which is now in use at a number of universities across the UK.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-23363>

SEEMiS is not publicly available online.

"Behaviour in Scottish schools", referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/behaviour-scottish-schools-research-report-2023/>

Information about the Anti Racism in Education Programme referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/race-equality-and-anti-racism-in-education-programme-stakeholder-network-group/>

The SFC/EHRC report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.sfc.ac.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?IID=24042&SID=9443>

Information about Fearless Glasgow, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/universitynews/2019-fearlessglasgow>

Information about Report and Support, referred to above, can be read at

<https://reportandsupport.gcu.ac.uk/>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Educational Institutions: Discrimination

Stephen Morgan (Labour) [6529] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to respond to reports of increases in the number of incidents of antisemitism and Islamophobia in (a) schools, (b) universities and (c) other educational settings.

Reply from Damian Hinds: It has been deeply concerning to see the rises both in antisemitism and in Islamophobia since the 7 October terrorist attacks against Israel. All education settings have a legal duty of care to safeguard and protect the welfare of all children and students; and must have regard to equalities legislation and comply with relevant provisions under the Equality Act 2010.

Every school and further education provider, including independent and faith schools, should actively promote the shared values, including mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. The department has published advice on promoting these values and made resources available on challenging antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate at:

<https://www.educateagainsthate.com/>.

The department has also published the Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance, which directs schools to organisations who can provide support with tackling bullying related to race, religion and nationality. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

The department is providing over £3 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2024 to five anti-bullying organisations, which includes projects to tackle hate-related bullying on the basis of race and faith.

In the Autumn Statement, on 22 November 2023, the government has announced a further £7 million of funding over the next three years to help tackle antisemitism in education, and to ensure support is in place for schools, colleges, and universities to understand, recognise and deal with antisemitism effectively.

In universities the department is working to introduce a Tackling Antisemitism Quality Seal, which will be awarded to providers who've shown leadership and excellent practice in their approach to antisemitism. A five-point plan has been set out that both the department and university leaders should take to strengthen our support for Jewish students. The plan is available at:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>

The department also welcomes guidance produced by Universities UK, which focuses on tackling anti-Muslim hatred available at:

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/tackling-islamophobia-and-anti-muslim>

The department continues to engage both with Jewish and with Muslim groups, including the Union of Jewish Students and Tell MAMA, and is actively assessing incidents affecting both communities. Where there are serious concerns, departmental officials have reached out to providers to understand what actions have been taken.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/6529>

The Autumn Statement, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2023/autumn-statement-2023-html>

Antisemitism: Hate Crime

Nicola Richards (Conservative) [6947] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the polling by the Campaign Against Antisemitism, published on 27 November 2023, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the finding that 16% of British Jews think that the police treat anti-Semitic hate crime like other forms of hate crime.

Reply from Laura Farris: We have a robust legislative framework to respond to hate crimes which target race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and transgender identity.

Whilst the police are operationally independent and work in line with the College of Policing's operational guidance to respond to hate crime, we expect the police to fully investigate these abhorrent offences and work with the CPS to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. We are supporting the police by providing them with the resources they need, including having recruited 20,000 additional police officers by March 2023.

The Government regularly engages with Jewish community stakeholders to ensure that we are doing everything we can to tackle antisemitism in the UK and protect the safety and security of the Jewish community. The Government's Jewish Community Protective Security (JCPS) Grant provides protective security measures at Jewish community sites including education facilities and many synagogues. In response to increased incidents of antisemitism in the UK as a

result of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, the Prime Minister announced additional funding of £3 million to provide additional security at Jewish schools, synagogues and other Jewish community sites. This brings total protective security funding for the Jewish Community to £18 million in 2023/24. This level will be maintained at £18 million for 2024/25.

The Government is also providing £7 million over the next three years to ensure that more support is in place for schools and universities to understand, recognise and tackle antisemitism.

Since 7 October, forces across the country have increased neighbourhood patrols to provide reassurance to local communities. Police have also conducted thousands of visits to Jewish sites, including synagogues and faith schools. Forces have made a number of arrests linked to antisemitic and other forms of hate crime in the UK – including the Metropolitan Police Service which has made 134 arrests linked to hate crimes as of 1 December. The MPS also have a specific Hanukkah policing plan to provide assurance to the Jewish community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6947>

The Campaign Against Antisemitism findings referred to above can be read at <https://antisemitism.org/almost-70-of-british-jews-are-hiding-their-identity-and-almost-half-have-considered-leaving-britain-since-7th-october-new-caa-polling-shows/>

The operational guidance referred to above can be read at <https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/hate-crime>

Information about the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-ramps-up-security-measures-to-protect-jewish-communities>

and

<https://cst.org.uk/security/government-grant>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-support-to-keep-british-jewish-communities-safe>

Antisemitism

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [5972] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will issue guidance to the police on (a) identifying and (b) tackling anti-Semitic hate crime; and what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that Jewish communities are protected during Hanukkah celebrations.

Reply from Laura Farris: The police are operationally independent and work in line with the College of Policing's operational guidance to respond to hate crime; we expect them to enforce the law where appropriate to protect communities and maintain public order. We are supporting the police by providing them with the resources they need, including having recruited 20,000 additional police officers by March 2023.

Since 7 October, police with Jewish and Muslim populations have increased community engagement and neighbourhood patrols to provide reassurance. Forces – including the Metropolitan Police Service – have dedicated plans in place for Hanukkah celebrations.

The Jewish Community Protective Security (JCPS) Grant provides protective security measures at Jewish community sites including education facilities and many synagogues.

In response to increased incidents of antisemitism in the UK, as a result of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, the Prime Minister has announced additional funding of £3 million to provide additional security at Jewish schools, synagogues

and other Jewish community sites. This brings total protective security funding for the Jewish Community to £18 million in 2023/24. This level will be maintained at £18 million for 2024/25.

The Government is also providing £7 million over the next three years to ensure that more support is in place for schools and universities to tackle antisemitism.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/5972>

The College of Policing guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/hate-crime>

Information about the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-ramps-up-security-measures-to-protect-jewish-communities>

and

<https://cst.org.uk/security/government-grant>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-support-to-keep-british-jewish-communities-safe>

Information about the £7 million to tackle antisemitism, referred to above, can be read in the Autumn Statement at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2023/autumn-statement-2023-html>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Hate Crime: Sikhs

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [7098] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of hate crime against the Sikh community in the last 10 years; and what steps he is taking to tackle such crime.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [7100] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is taking steps to support Sikh communities in tackling (a) threats and (b) other hate crimes.

Police: Community Relations

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [7099] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether police forces are taking steps to increase Sikh community (a) engagement with and (b) trust in police handling of security concerns raised by such communities.

Hate Crime

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [7101] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of his Department's policies in preventing (a) hate crime and (b) other discrimination against members of (i) the Sikh community and (ii) other minority communities.

Reply from Lee Rowley: Hatred towards Sikhs is completely abhorrent and has no place in our society. No one should ever be a victim of hatred because of their race or religion and the Government continues to work with police and community partners to monitor and combat it. In 2023/24, the Home Office is providing £3.5 million for protecting places of worship, including for gurdwaras.

More broadly, we continue to look across Government at how best we can tackle all forms of religious hatred.

Questions relating to policing are a matter for the Home Department.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/7098>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/7100>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/7099>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-14/7101>

Mental Health Services: Racial Discrimination

Abena Oppong-Asare (Labour) [5126] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to reduce racial inequalities in the use of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: We are continuing to pilot models of Culturally Appropriate Advocacy, investing up to £1.5 million to provide tailored support people from ethnic minorities to better understand their rights when they are detained under the Mental Health Act.

The Patient and Carers Race Equality Framework was published by NHS England in October 2023. Rolling this out will support mental health trusts to improve access, experience and outcomes and reduce disparities for people from ethnic minority backgrounds. All mental health trusts will be required to have a framework in place by March 2025.

Between 1 December 2018 and 31 March 2023, there were 218,219 detentions under the Mental Health Act. It is important to note that the number of detentions is not the same as the number of people detained as some people might have been detained more than once during the period.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/5126>

The Framework referred to above can be read at

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/advancing-mental-health-equalities/pcref/>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Social Services: Racial Discrimination

Baroness Garden of Frognal (Liberal Democrat) [HL1053] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to meet representatives of with Barnardo's to discuss how local authorities can work with partners to prevent the over-criminalisation of Black children in the care system.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The department considers charity sector colleagues to be key stakeholders in work taking place across the department, including on children's social care reform, as outlined in 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'. The department regularly engages with the Chief Executive and Policy Leads from Barnardo's on children's social care policy, as well as their counterparts at Action for Children, The Children's Society, National Children's Bureau and NSPCC. The charity sector is also represented in a variety of reference groups on specific aspects of children's social care policy.

The majority of children in care do not have any interaction with the criminal justice system. Offending rates for children in care are now at 2%, down from 5% in 2015. The department has a national protocol in place on reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of looked after children and care leavers and is taking action on risk factors that can lead to criminal behaviour including through the department's work to improve school attendance.

The department continues to work urgently across government and with local authorities to ensure that all vulnerable children, no matter their age or circumstances, are kept safe and receive the support they need.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-11/hl1053>

Stable Homes, Built on Love, referred to above, can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650966a322a783001343e844/Children_s_Social_Care_Stable_Homes_Built_on_Love_consultation_response.pdf

Universities: Antisemitism

Lord Turnberg (Labour) [HL959] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of antisemitic incidents in universities, and what steps they are taking in response to such incidents.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The department is deeply concerned about the sharp rise in antisemitic incidents and this government takes antisemitism extremely seriously. The department continues to liaise closely with Community Security Trust who provide regular updates on the number of antisemitic incidents reported in higher education (HE) since 7 October.

The Secretary of State and the Minister for Skills wrote to all schools, colleges and universities on 11 October, urging them to respond swiftly to hate-related incidents and actively reassure Jewish students that they can study without fear of harassment or intimidation. The Minister for Skills wrote again to Vice Chancellors on 16th November, further emphasising the use of disciplinary measures and the importance of police engagement, as well as the suspension of student visas where the student is a foreign national. This was one of the key actions set out in the five-point plan for tackling antisemitism in HE, which was published on 5 November. Details of the plan can be accessed at:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>

A key element of the plan is the development and implementation of a Quality Seal, which is a framework of measures that will allow universities to demonstrate support for Jewish students and staff. The Quality Seal will be based on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and will allow universities to demonstrate tangible evidence of its adoption and integration into their policies and practice.

The department continues to remind providers of their obligations under the prevent duty, where they should be working to prevent people from being drawn into or supporting terrorism. There is an online 'Reporting Extremism' form where members of the public can raise concerns to the department directly. Where concerns have arisen, departmental officials have reached out to relevant providers to ensure that appropriate action has been taken, including reporting issues to the police where appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/hl959>

The 11 October letter referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/GillianKeegan/status/1712461243267829960>

The 16 November letter referred to above is not available online.

The definition of antisemitism referred to above can be read at

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

The reporting form referred to above can be read at

<https://report-extremism.education.gov.uk/>

Universities: Anti-semitism

Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown (DUP) [HL1162] To ask His Majesty's Government what further steps they are taking to tackle anti-Semitism in universities.

Reply from Baroness Barran: This government takes antisemitism extremely

seriously. The department is deeply concerned about the growth in antisemitic incidents on campus since the 7 October terrorist attacks against Israel. That is why, on 22 November, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in his Autumn Statement an additional £7 million over 3 years to tackle antisemitism in education.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, wrote to all schools, colleges and universities on 11 October, urging them to respond swiftly to hate-related incidents and actively reassure Jewish students that they can study without fear of harassment or intimidation. The department wrote again to Vice Chancellors on 16 November, further emphasising the use of disciplinary measures and the importance of police engagement, as well as the suspension of student visas where the student is a foreign national. This was one of the key actions set out in the five-point plan for tackling antisemitism in higher education, which was published on 5 November 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/hl1162>

The Autumn Statement, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2023/autumn-statement-2023-html>

The 11 October letter referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/GillianKeegan/status/1712461243267829960>

The 16 November letter referred to above is not available online.

The five-point plan referred to above can be read at

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>

Universities: Antisemitism

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL1263] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of the responses by the University and College Union and relevant university authorities to complaints by students of anti-Semitism and violence perpetrated by fellow students and staff.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The department is deeply concerned about the growth in antisemitic incidents on campus since the 7 October terrorist attacks against Israel and this government takes antisemitism extremely seriously. Departmental officials have assessed evidence of antisemitism and racial hatred linked to incidents at English universities. There is an online "Reporting Extremism" page from where members of the public can raise concerns to the department directly. Where concerns have arisen, officials have reached out to relevant universities to understand what actions they have taken, including reporting issues to the police where appropriate.

The department is also concerned to see antisemitic motions being passed at some universities. The department urges universities to crack down on inflammatory, politically motivated displays of support for a proscribed terrorist organisation, and on demonstrations which make Jewish staff and students feel unsafe.

My right hon. Friend, The Secretary of State for Education and my right hon. Friend, the Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education (HE), wrote to all schools, colleges and universities on 11 October, urging them to respond swiftly to hate-related incidents and actively reassure Jewish students that they can study without fear of harassment or intimidation. Minister Halfon wrote again to Vice Chancellors on 16 November, further emphasising the use of disciplinary measures and the importance of police engagement, as well as the suspension of student visas where the student is a foreign national and requested that the universities

review its policies and procedures to ensure that they remain fit for purpose at this challenging time. This was one of the key actions set out in the five-point plan for tackling antisemitism in HE, which was published on 5 November. A link to more information can be found here:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-18/hl1263>

The reporting form referred to above can be read at

<https://report-extremism.education.gov.uk/>

The 11 October letter referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/GillianKeegan/status/1712461243267829960>

The 16 November letter referred to above is not available online.

Medicine: Antisemitism

Lord Turnberg (Labour) [HL960] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to combat antisemitism (1) in medical schools, and (2) amongst medical professionals.

Reply from Lord Markham: We are deeply concerned about the rise in antisemitic incidents since 7 October 2023. That is why on 22 November 2023, the Chancellor announced in his Autumn Statement an additional £7 million over three years to tackle antisemitism in education.

The Secretary of State for Education and the Minister for Skills wrote to all schools, colleges, and universities on 11 October 2023, urging them to respond swiftly to hate-related incidents and actively reassure Jewish students that they can study without fear of harassment or intimidation. The Minister for Skills wrote again to Vice Chancellors on 16 November 2023, further emphasising the use of disciplinary measures and the importance of police engagement, as well as the suspension of student visas where the student is a foreign national. This was one of the key actions in the five-point plan for tackling antisemitism in higher education, *How we're protecting Jewish students on university campuses*, which was published on GOV.UK on 5 November 2023 in an online-only format.

On 3 November 2023, the former Secretary of State for Health and Social Care wrote to healthcare regulators, including the General Medical Council (GMC), which is the independent regulator of all medical professionals practising in the United Kingdom, to emphasise that there can be no place in our healthcare professions for those espousing racism or extremism. The letter asked the regulators what action they are taking, in the context of a rise in incidents of an antisemitic nature and of individuals expressing support for proscribed terrorist organisations.

All doctors must meet the expected standards set out in *Good medical practice*, the GMC's framework of professional standards. These standards make clear that all doctors must treat patients and colleagues fairly and without discrimination. The GMC has a zero-tolerance approach to racism. Failure to uphold and adhere to the principles within these standards and related guidance may put a doctor's registration with the GMC at risk. A copy of these standards is attached.

[GMC Standards](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/hl960>

The Autumn Statement, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2023/autumn-statement-2023-html>

The 11 October letter referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/GillianKeegan/status/1712461243267829960>

The 3rd and 16th November letters referred to above are not available online.

The five-point plan referred to above can be read at

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>

Press Releases

Man sentenced for sharing extremist material from banned terror group online

<https://www.copfs.gov.uk/about-copfs/news/23-12-man-sentenced-for-sharing-extremist-material-from-banned-terror-group-online/>

Man sentenced for shouting antisemitic abuse

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/london-north/news/man-sentenced-shouting-antisemitic-abuse>

New Publication

Antisemitic Discourse Report 2022

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/2/6/Discourse%20Report%202022.pdf>

News

Five ways to mark Holocaust Memorial Day at your workplace

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/news/hmdt-blog-five-ways-to-mark-hmd-at-your-workplace/>

Free resources for Holocaust Memorial Day

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/>

MP suspended for using racist slur claims anti-racism course on expenses

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-mp-neil-coyle-racism-expenses-b2466521.html>

Allegations of antisemitism against MP dropped

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3gye5337k7o>

Police record rise in religious hate crimes after Israel-Gaza war

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67836607>

Sharp rise in religious hate crimes recorded by UK's police forces in weeks following Israel-Hamas war

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/antisemitic-hate-crime-uk-police-hamas-israel-war-b2470694.html>

Many police forces in UK recorded rise in antisemitic offences after start of Israel-Gaza war

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2023/dec/29/many-police-forces-in-uk-recorded-rise-in-antisemitic-offences-after-start-of-israel-gaza-war>

Antisemitic hate crimes soar since start of Israel-Hamas war

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/antisemitic-hate-crime-jewish-israel-hamas-war-2023-jr909thwp>

Big rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes on public transport since start of Israel-Hamas conflict
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/29/big-rise-anti-semitic-hate-crimes-public-transport/>

Tell MAMA recorded 1,432 anti-Muslim cases between Oct 7 and Dec 13
<https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-recorded-1432-anti-muslim-cases-between-oct-7-and-dec-13/>

Antisemitic Discourse Report 2022
<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/12/22/antisemitic-discourse-report-2022>

Young Britons exposed to online radicalisation following Hamas attack
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67884785>

Fire chief quits after report condemns sexual harassment and racism in service
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/itv-news-wales-black-lives-matter-cardiff-italy-b2472672.html>

I've been stopped and searched by the police since I was 16
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/police-stop-and-search-racism-6xl9grbsn>

Police investigate antisemitic attacks in north London
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/police-investigate-antisemitic-attacks-in-north-london-qpqbxbq8>

'My father felt protected from racism once he joined the RAF'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/christmas/2024/01/02/colin-mcfarlane-racism-raf-benevolent-fund-charity-appeal/>

Stephen Fry to tackle antisemitism in Channel 4's alternative Christmas message
<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/stephen-fry-christmas-message-b2465969.html>

Antisemitism and Holocaust denial are rife, just look at Stephen Fry's X trolls
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/24/antisemitism-holocaust-denial-stephen-fry-alternative-christmas-message-channel-4-x-trolls>

TOP

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Scottish Parliament Motion

Clare Adamson (SNP) [S6M-11684] 75th Anniversary of the Diocese of Motherwell
– That the Parliament marks the 75th Anniversary of the Diocese of Motherwell; understands that the diocese was erected as a Suffragan See of the Archdiocese of Glasgow by the Apostolic Constitution Maxime interest of 25 May 1947; notes that the Diocese of Motherwell encompasses a total of 74 churches and 59 parishes, divided up into six deaneries, ministering to an estimated Catholic population of 161,851; further notes that, since the founding of the diocese in 1947, five Bishops have served the Diocese of Motherwell, namely Bishop Edward Wilson Douglas, Bishop James Donald Scanlan, Bishop Francis Thomson, Bishop Joseph Devine and Bishop Joseph Anthony Toal, who is currently serving as the Bishop of Motherwell; recognises that the diocesan mission statement is "Working together for Christ - The Diocese of Motherwell seeks, by

the power of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be Christ's Church, living and caring for one another and spreading the good news of the Lord's healing and redeeming power", and wishes the clergy, and all the faithful of the diocese, all the best in marking the 75th anniversary of the diocese, and for the future.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11684>

Press Releases

First Minister's New Year Message [video]

<https://twitter.com/scotgov/status/1741444092607840489>

First Minister's Christmas Message [video]

<https://twitter.com/scotgov/status/1738831879573225638>

Equalities Minister's Winter Solstice Message

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFairer/status/1737835773557354674>

2024-25 Scottish Budget unveiled

<https://www.gov.scot/news/2024-25-scottish-budget-unveiled/>

Scottish Budget 2024 to 2025: equality and fairer Scotland statement

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-fairer-scotland-budget-statement-2024-2025/>

Income tax to raise £18.8 billion

<https://www.gov.scot/news/income-tax-to-raise-gbp-18-8-billion/>

Scottish Budget 2024 to 2025: Deputy First Minister statement

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-budget-2024-25-deputy-first-minister-statement/>

New Publications

Scottish Budget: 2024 to 2025

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-budget-2024-25/>

Scottish Budget: 2024-25 Infographic

<https://bprcdn.parliament.scot/published/2023/12/19/ee849244-5a32-4de9-9d47-072daeea7fc0/SB%2023-46i.pdf>

News

Scottish budget: Key points from Shona Robison's speech

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-67759183>

Scottish Budget: Higher earners to pay more income tax

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-67759418>

High earners in Scotland to pay £3,000 more in tax than elsewhere in UK

<https://www.independent.co.uk/business/high-earners-in-scotland-to-pay-ps3-000-more-in-tax-than-elsewhere-in-uk-b2466693.html>

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Marriage

John McNally (SNP) [5595] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the prevalence of arranged marriages in the UK.

Reply from Laura Farris: The Government has not made a recent assessment on the prevalence of arranged marriages in the UK.

In an arranged marriage the families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner, but the marriage is entered into freely by both parties.

This is in contrast to a forced marriage, where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into the marriage.

It is also a forced marriage when anything is done to make someone marry before they turn 18, even if there is no pressure or abuse.

More information on forced marriage can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5595>

Press Releases

Prime Minister's New Year's message [video]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-ministers-new-years-message-31-december-2023>

Prime Minister's Christmas Message [video]

<https://twitter.com/RishiSunak/status/1738853712104214923>

New Publications

Jewish identity, England and Wales: Census 2021

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/jewishidentityenglandandwales/census2021>

House of Lords Library Briefing: Quality of religious education in schools in England

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/quality-of-religious-education-in-schools-in-england/>

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/>

Scottish Government Press Release

Winter Heating Payments begin

<https://www.gov.scot/news/winter-heating-payments-begin/>

News

UK inflation falls sharply as fuel prices drop

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-67769782>

Interest rate rises ‘made households better off in 2023’

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/interest-rate-rise-savings-mortgage-resolution-foundation-sw53p2xrw>

Household energy price rise of 5% comes into force

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-67785266>

Energy bill price hike takes effect as record numbers struggle with debt

<https://www.independent.co.uk/business/energy-bill-price-hike-takes-effect-as-record-numbers-struggle-with-debt-b2471670.html>

Cost of living Scotland: Homes go dark to save energy costs, with new year price cap increase ahead

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/cost-of-living-scotland-homes-go-dark-to-save-energy-costs-with-new-year-price-cap-increase-ahead-4455730>

Households issued urgent 48-hour warning as energy bills to rise by £94

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/energy-bills-rise-ofgem-meter-readings-b2471190.html>

TUC warns of “debt timebomb” with households facing a £1,400 rise in credit card and loan debt in 2024

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-warns-debt-timebomb-households-facing-ps1400-rise-credit-card-and-loan-debt-2024>

House prices to fall and rents to rise in 2024, forecasts suggest

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-67750565>

UK house prices fall by 1.8% during year amid higher mortgage costs

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/29/uk-house-prices-fall-during-year-amid-higher-mortgage-costs>

10,000 homeowners are at risk of becoming ‘mortgage prisoners’

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/property/mortgages/10000-homeowners-at-risk-as-negative-equity-time-bomb-looms/>

Food clubs are a lifeline for families struggling with inflation

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/christmas-appeal-food-clubs-are-a-lifeline-for-families-f8r0dlhqb>

TOP

Other New Publication

Scottish Third Sector Tracker First Phase: waves one to six

<https://storage.googleapis.com/scvo-documents-evidence/069P1000003fqvPIAQ-Third-Sector%20Tracker%20W1-6%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

TOP

Other News

National Youth Work Awards

deadline for nominations: 26 January 2024

<https://www.youthlink.scot/awards/>

Charities face staff and volunteer crisis

<https://scvo.scot/p/87690/2024/01/04/charities-face-staff-and-volunteer-crisis>

Finances proving biggest challenge to charities as rising costs bite

<https://scvo.scot/p/87687/2024/01/04/finances-proving-biggest-challenge-to-charities-as-rising-costs-bite>

The State of Volunteering in 2023: Trends and Challenges

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/news/research-evaluation-blog/the-state-of-volunteering-in-2023>

Non-white Britain is more diverse than ever

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/non-white-britain-is-more-diverse-than-ever-db3bf6bcl>

Community chips in to fund Scotland's newest mosque

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/community-chips-in-to-fund-scotlands-newest-mosque-knx30bm0c>

UK counselling body apologises for dropping article about Jewish trauma

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/jan/05/uk-counselling-body-apologises-over-dropped-article-about-jewish-trauma>

Pulling Jewish trauma article was wrong, therapy journal says

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pulling-jewish-trauma-article-was-wrong-therapy-journal-says-03lbh3r93>

Magazine removes article about Jewish trauma over backlash fears

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/magazine-removes-article-about-jewish-trauma-over-backlash-fears-9qfv10xnq>

Don't dismiss the once-a-year mob: they embody our national religion

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/dont-dismiss-the-once-a-year-mob-they-embody-our-national-religion-z67gdrm70>

King's Christmas message: Charles focuses on shared values in time of conflict

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67819758>

King pays tribute to 'selfless' volunteers in Christmas address

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24011094.king-pays-tribute-selfless-volunteers-christmas-address/>

King speaks of faith, hope and service in our troubled world during Christmas Day broadcast

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/people/king-speaks-of-faith-hope-and-service-in-our-troubled-world-during-christmas-day-broadcast-4457780>

A gentile reminder of incredible British Jews

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-gentile-reminder-of-incredible-british-jews-78m93vgsf>

TOP

Bills in Progress

** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

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

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

Scottish Government: Section 35 judicial review

<https://www.gov.scot/news/section-35-judicial-review/>

Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/police-ethics-conduct-and-scrutiny-scotland-bill>

UK Parliament

Asylum Application (Entry to the United Kingdom) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3530>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3627>

The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 [Draft]

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/9780348253191/contents>

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3618/stages>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3649>

Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3540>

Amendment paper

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0038/amend/rwanda_rm_cwh_1220.pdf

**** Immigration and Nationality Fees (Exemption for NHS Clinical Staff) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3660>

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0138/230138.pdf>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents>

Workforce Information (Ethnicity) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3522>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated this week

Democracy Matters (closing date 28 February 2024)

<https://consult.gov.scot/local-government-and-communities/democracy-matters/>

Your Police 2023-2024 (closing date 31 March 2023)

<https://consult.scotland.police.uk/strategy-insight-and-innovation/your-police-2023-2024/>

ITV/Tell MAMA survey on mosque safety in the UK (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/V7V5B6L>

TOP

Job Opportunities

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

TOP

Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Democracy Matters Community Engagement Fund 2023/24

Closing date: 26 January 2024

Scottish Government funding of up to £300 (possibility of higher funding to assist with accessibility) to support organisations and groups to host conversations and gather the views of people across Scotland on how we can create a system of inclusive local democracy. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/4ds8r9h2>

Cost-of-Living Support Scotland

Application deadline not stated

National Lottery funding from £10,001 to £75,000 for projects to help support individuals, families and communities currently experiencing hardship as a result of the cost-of-living increases. The programme aims to fund activity that reduces the impact of, or prevents financial insecurity so that people have more resilience and are more able to identify ways to deal with the impact of increased cost of living in their lives, are able to shape activity in their community to address the increased cost-of-living, and have more access to support and services that will help them to deal with the increased cost of living. For information and to apply see

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/cost-of-living-support-fund>

TOP

Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** Edinburgh Reads multi-access audiobook for Holocaust Memorial Day**

22-31 January 2024 (online for all Edinburgh Libraries membership card holders)
Edinburgh Libraries will have an "Edinburgh Reads" unlimited access audiobook, "Night", by Elie Wiesel, available on their Libby platform (www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libby) to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/mttw68md>

Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre School's Holocaust Memorial Day Event 2024

23 January 2024 (Glasgow, 10.00–1.30)

Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre event for secondary school pupils, providing an opportunity to hear people whose parents were survivors of the Holocaust, and who made a life in Scotland. For information see <https://sjhc.org.uk/news/hmd2024/>

**** Book Discussion for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024**

23 January 2024 (online, 7.00–9.00)

Aberdeen Interfaith Association book discussion to mark Holocaust Memorial Day – "Jane Haining, A life of love and courage" by Mary Miller. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/adt2t95j>

**** Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 UK Ceremony Curated Moments**

27 January 2024 (online, 7.30)

UK National commemoration for Holocaust Memorial Day. To register see <https://tinyurl.com/2yu8wmjx>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

14 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course to find out about fundamental issues of housing, homelessness and welfare entitlements of EEA nationals and look at how service users might prepare themselves for an economy in recession and cost of living spiralling. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

15 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course explore how the asylum system works from the perspective of a claimant and the process involved in making a claim for asylum. The course also explores the journeys and barriers faced by both refugees and asylum seekers reaching and building a new life in Scotland and their respective entitlement to services. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

No Recourse To Public Funds

21 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course to help frontline workers identify a tenant's current status, clarify what this means in terms of access to public funds and plan effective support where difficulties arise. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

[TOP](#)

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>

New Scots <https://newscots.scot/>

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>

[TOP](#)

SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

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



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

The copyright of each article belongs to the publisher on whose website it appears, and it may only be copied or reproduced in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions. Full details of these, and the publisher's contact information, are available on each website.