



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

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

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 19 February 2024.

Immigration and Asylum

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

Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill

Kirsty Blackman (SNP) [13086] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the compatibility of the Civil Service Code with the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill.

Reply from Alex Burghart: On 17 January 2024, there was an exchange of letters between the Cabinet Office and the Home Office regarding the future implementation of the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill which set

out draft guidance to the Civil Service.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-guidance-safety-of-rwanda-bill>

Full guidance will be issued when the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill becomes law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/13086>

The Civil Service Code, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [12767] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Pashto and Dari language specialists have worked on the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme in each month since April 2021.

Reply from James Heapey: Between October 2021 and January 2022 three Pashto and Dari language specialists worked on the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme. Two have been working on the ARAP scheme since February 2022.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-02/12767>

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) [12499] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many ARAP applicants awaiting a decision are residing in UK hotels as of 30 January 2024.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Relocation to the UK is only facilitated once ARAP eligibility status has been decided and entry clearance has been issued, therefore there are no ARAP applicants awaiting an immigration decision residing in UK hotels.

The UK has made an ambitious and generous commitment to resettle.

Afghans fleeing persecution and those who served the UK. The latest published Immigration system statistics - (www.gov.uk) show that (up to the end of September 2023) we have brought around 24,600 people to safety from Afghanistan and the region.

These statistics also show that:

- We have relocated 11,684 under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP); and
- 1,674 people were living in interim accommodation (i.e. hotels and serviced accommodation) during this period (though this number changes frequently, and most of those within interim have now moved into settled accommodation) as of September 2023.

ARAP arrivals correct as of around December 2023, and accommodation data, will be reflected in the next release of the Immigration Statistics, which is due around 22 February 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-01/12499>

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 Answer: Ukraine

Refugees: Ukraine

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [13406] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Ukrainians have applied for refugee status in the UK outwith the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme since March 2022.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on asylum by nationality in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on asylum applications is published in table Asy_D01 of the '[Asylum applications, decisions and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2023. Data up to the end of 2023 will be published on 29 February 2024. Further information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-06/13406>

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

Immigration Controls

Dehenna Davison (Conservative) [12688] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to reduce net migration.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government remains completely committed to reducing levels of legal migration. Our points-based immigration system allows us to control who comes to the UK to work, study and visit.

In May 2023, we took decisive action to tackle the substantial rise in the number of students bringing dependants to the UK. These reforms have now been implemented.

On 4 December, the Home Secretary announced a new package of measures to further reduce legal net migration. These include: limitations on family dependants being brought in by care workers and senior care workers; increasing the salary threshold for the Skilled Worker route; commissioning the Migration Advisory Committee to review the Shortage Occupation List and raising the minimum income requirement progressively over the next few years.

This package of measures, taken together with the measures the Government announced in May 2023 to restrict the number of overseas students able to bring dependants, means that around 300,000 people who were eligible to come to the UK last year would not be able to do so in future.

We keep all our immigration policies under review to ensure they best serve the UK and reflect the public's priorities, including filling skills gaps and growing the economy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-01/12688>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

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

Asylum

John Hayes (Conservative) [13239] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of asylum seekers who were given the right to remain in the UK had had a previous application for the right to remain denied in each of the last five years.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the outcomes of asylum applications at initial decision is published in table Asy_D02 of the [Asylum applications, decisions and resettlement](#) detailed dataset. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2023. Data up to December 2023 is due to be published on 29 February 2024.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

Please note that the data relates to applicants' first asylum claim and the initial outcome; the data does not indicate whether the individual has previously applied for any other leave; for further information on the journey of asylum seekers, see the [Migrant Journey 2022 report](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-06/13239>

Asylum: Employment

Deidre Brock (SNP) [13049] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of replacing the Shortage Occupation List with the Immigration Salary List on the number of asylum seekers who are eligible to work who are in employment.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Secretary has commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to carry out a rapid review of the new Immigration Salary List (ISL) in time for its implementation in the Spring Immigration Rules. The MAC is due to report on 23 February, at which point the Government will consider its recommendations carefully. We will keep the list under regular review and the MAC will carry out a fuller review later in the year.

The introduction of the ISL will not undermine our policy that asylum claims by an individual applying for permission to work must still be outstanding for 12 months or more and any resulting changes to the policy will be announced in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/13049>

Asylum: Catterick Garrison

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [6669] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) asylum seekers and (b) refugees of which nationalities are housed at Catterick Garrison.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: There are no asylum seekers housed at Catterick Garrison. The Government is using MOD Service Family Accommodation including at Catterick Garrison to provide settled accommodation for Afghans who are eligible for relocation to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy. We are continuing work on other uses for Catterick.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-12/6669>

Asylum: Sexual Offences

John Hayes (Conservative) [12900] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he is taking steps to ensure that asylum seekers convicted of sexual offences are not granted indefinite right to remain in the UK.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 strengthened existing legislation to provide that anyone convicted of a particularly serious crime resulting in a custodial sentence of 12 months or more and are considered a danger to the UK, will be denied asylum and can be considered for removal from the UK. Settlement is a privilege, not an automatic right, and if a refugee has engaged in criminality, it is appropriate that they are denied the benefits of settlement.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/12900>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

Lord Sedwill (Crossbench) [HL1899] To ask His Majesty's Government how many Afghans who were employees of NATO and the UN during 2001–21 have been admitted to the UK under the various Afghan resettlement programmes.

Reply from Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has two Afghan resettlement schemes. The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is for Afghan citizens who worked for or with the UK Government in Afghanistan in exposed or meaningful roles and is managed by the Ministry of Defence. The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) prioritises those who assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values, such as the rule of law, and vulnerable people. The Home Office are the responsible department for ACRS.

FCDO does not hold comprehensive data on who has been resettled under either scheme. We hold data on the first stage of Pathway 3 of ACRS where FCDO acted as the referral partner for Home Office for 3 cohorts - British Council contractors, Gardaworld contractors (Embassy guards) and Chevening alumni. We also hold data on some ARAP eligible persons that FCDO has sponsored because they worked for, alongside or under contract to DFID/FCO in roles contributing to UK national security objectives. We do not hold data on the number of former NATO and UN staff who have been resettled in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-24/hl1899>

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

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

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

Asylum: Mental Health Services

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL2168] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to (1) monitor the mental health of residents, and ongoing safeguarding concerns, and (2) reduce the risk of further suicides, on the Bibby Stockholm and at MDP Wethersfield; and what assessment they have made of the findings of the report Ghettoised and traumatised: the experiences of men held in quasi-detention in Wethersfield, published by the Helen Bamber Foundation and Humans for Rights Network on 15 December 2023, and their implications for housing asylum seekers at MDP Wethersfield.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The welfare of asylum seekers is our utmost priority. The Home Office ensures that accommodation provided is adequate and meets the regulatory standards.

The Home Office assesses an individual's suitability to reside at the sites and only accommodates single adult males who are considered suitable to reside there. Guidance on the suitability criteria used can be found here: [Allocation of accommodation](#).

Each person's suitability is assessed at regular intervals and if they are no longer suitable for any reason, they will be moved to alternative accommodation.

The Home Office operates a Safeguarding Hub to support vulnerable individuals. Both the Home Office and its accommodation providers have robust processes in

place to ensure that where someone is at risk, they are referred to the appropriate statutory agencies of the police, NHS, and social services, to promote appropriate safeguarding interventions.

As well as making safeguarding referrals to the appropriate statutory agencies, other actions include attendance at adult protection meetings with the police and the Home Office liaise with external and internal partners to share information. The statutory agencies retain responsibility for all decisions on intervention activity.

All asylum seekers in the UK may contact Migrant Help 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if they need help, advice, or guidance. This includes raising issues relating to safeguarding.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-02/hl2168>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.helenbamber.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/HBF%20HRNF%20Ghettoised%20and%20traumatised%20report%20on%20Wethersfield%20December23.pdf>

Asylum: MOD Wethersfield

The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford [HL2025] To ask His Majesty's Government what is the schedule for, and availability of, transport provided to residents of MDP Wethersfield to leave the site.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Those living at the site are able to come and go. The process for leaving the site is the same as the rest of our asylum accommodation.

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 asylum seekers to larger local towns to access amenities and planned voluntary and community activities off-site.

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/2024-01-30/hl2025>

Asylum: MOD Wethersfield

The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford [HL2026] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to accommodate the planned maximum population of 1,700 asylum seekers at MDP Wethersfield, and if so, when.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office is using a phased approach; increasing the number of asylum seekers accommodated at the site over time, with the practicalities of managing the site under constant review. The site can accommodate 1,700 individuals when fully operational.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-30/hl2026>

Press Releases

Legislative scrutiny highlights human rights failings of Rwanda Bill

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/199840/legislative-scrutiny-highlights-human-rights-failings-of-rwanda-bill/>

People smuggler jailed for cramming migrants in van compartment

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/people-smuggler-jailed-for-cramming-migrants-in-van-compartment>

New Publications

The effect of immigration policy reform on mental health in people from minoritised ethnic groups in England: an interrupted time series analysis of longitudinal data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study cohort

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(23\)00412-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(23)00412-1/fulltext)

House of Commons House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights Report: Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43292/documents/215535/default/>

Consideration of inadmissibility claims under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inadmissibility-claims-under-the-migration-and-economic-development-partnership/consideration-of-inadmissibility-claims-under-the-migration-and-economic-development-partnership>

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/>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Immigration fees

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9859/CBP-9859.pdf>

House of Lords Library Briefing: Windrush scandal and compensation scheme

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/windrush-scandal-and-compensation-scheme/>

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>

Ukraine homelessness management information (England): 24 February 2022 to 31 January 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cccab13054900118679f9/Ukraine_Homelessness_Pressures_Publication_January_2024.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>

Updated: Homelessness management information - Ukrainian nationals: England

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cccab13054900118679f9/Ukraine_Homelessness_Pressures_Publication_January_2024.ods

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Rwanda plan is fundamentally flawed, parliamentary report warns

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68270451>

Rwanda Bill incompatible with UK's human rights obligations, MPs and peers warn
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/rwanda-bill-incompatible-with-uks-human-rights-obligations-mps-and-peers-warn-4513794>

UK's Rwanda bill 'incompatible with human rights obligations'
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/12/uk-rwanda-bill-incompatible-with-human-rights-obligations>

Leaked documents show even immigration minister thinks Rwanda policy will break law
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/11/immigration-minister-thinks-rwanda-policy-will-break-law/>

Flights carrying asylum seekers to Rwanda 'will leave as soon as law is passed'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/18/safety-rwanda-bill-flights-asylum-seekers-michael-tomlinson/>

Minister claims he can guarantee flights to Rwanda before general election
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/michael-tomlinson-guarantee-flights-rwanda-election-b2498158.html>

Battlefield allies fleeing to UK must be exempt from Rwanda plan, ministers told
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rwanda-immigration-john-gummer-americans-windsor-castle-b2496156.html>

News: Channel Migrants

France investigates UK Coastguard over migrant deaths in Channel
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/02/14/uk-coastguard-charges-france-channel-migrant-deaths-rescue/>

Security services monitor Channel migrants over extremism fears
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/15/channel-migrants-monitored-security-extremism-jenrick/>

Channel migrants being monitored over extremism fears
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/channel-migrants-being-monitored-over-extremism-fears-0jhv7tn8m>

Home Office to pay TikTok influencers to warn migrants not to cross the Channel
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/home-office-pay-tiktok-influencers-migrants-b2495703.html>

TikTok stars to be paid to warn migrants not to cross Channel
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tiktok-influencers-persuade-migrants-not-cross-channel-albania-pvdj7t0qz>

News: Ukraine

Ukraine visa schemes to be extended by 18 months
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68329715>

Ukrainians can extend UK visas by 18 months in new scheme

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/18/ukrainians-can-extend-uk-visas-by-18-months-in-new-scheme>

New 18-month visa extension scheme for Ukrainians in the UK

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-home-office-homes-families-people-b2498064.html>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Record one in five NHS staff in England are non-UK nationals, figures show

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/12/record-one-in-five-nhs-staff-in-england-are-non-uk-nationals-figures-show>

Hostile environment policies linked to prolonged distress in people with Black Caribbean ancestry

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2024/feb/hostile-environment-policies-linked-prolonged-distress-people-black-caribbean-ancestry>

'Hostile environment' caused immense distress in black Caribbeans, study finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/14/hostile-environment-caused-immense-distress-in-black-caribbeans-study-finds>

Theresa May's pre-Windrush policies caused mental distress for Black Britons, finds study

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/mental-distress-caribbean-britons-windrush-scandal-b2495476.html>

Migrant rights groups say visa change puts love in limbo this Valentine's Day

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/londoners-government-mps-home-office-prime-minister-b2496217.html>

Block asylum seekers from working to make UK less attractive, says Robert Jenrick

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/14/block-asylum-seekers-from-work-to-make-uk-less-attractive/>

Home Office warned of violence and arson risks at Essex airbase holding asylum seekers

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/16/ministers-warned-over-risk-of-violence-and-arson-at-essex-wethersfield-airbase-holding-asylum-seekers>

Boredom could lead to violence at asylum centre, inspector warns

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/boredom-essex-raf-home-office-calais-b2497836.html>

Man found dead on Bibby Stockholm was 'tricked' on to barge, says support worker

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/16/family-leonard-farruku-bibby-stockholm-independent-inquiry>

Home Office pays for 16,000 homes for asylum seekers despite housing shortage

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/13/home-office-pays-homes-asylum-seekers-housing-shortage/>

Planning laws must be eased because of immigration crisis, minister insists

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/13/house-building-laws-lee-rowley-immigration-brownfield-citie/>

Elderly couple told they had to sell home to house asylum seekers

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/14/elderly-couple-northampton-council-sell-home-asylum-seekers/>

Home Office warned of violence and arson risks at Essex airbase holding asylum seekers

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/16/ministers-warned-over-risk-of-violence-and-arson-at-essex-wethersfield-airbase-holding-asylum-seekers>

Judge criticises Home Office errors in Palestinian refugee's visa case

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/feb/13/judge-criticises-home-office-errors-in-palestinian-refugees-visa-case>

Make church checks on asylum seekers as rigorous as school applications, say MPs

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/12/church-checks-asylum-seekers-rigorous-school-applications/>

We may have been scammed by asylum seekers, admits Church of England

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/11/we-may-have-been-scammed-by-asylum-seekers-admits-church/>

Newhaven: Person charged after migrants found in lorry

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-68328685>

Man to appear in court after migrants found in lorry at ferry port

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/east-sussex-newhaven-dfds-swanea-border-force-b2498198.html>

Migrants carried out of van in oxygen masks at Newhaven ferry port

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/16/migrants-found-lorry-newhaven-ferry-port/>

Nigerian and Indian students shun British universities amid immigration clampdown

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/15/nigeria-indian-students-universities-immigration-rules/>

Woman told to leave UK despite court ruling she has right to live with family

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/15/woman-told-leave-uk-court-ruling-right-live-family-malwattege-peiris>

'Migrants' found hiding in coach after school trip to France

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrants-school-bus-totton-calais-trip-mvzd7xt2t>

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Community Relations

News

Suella Braverman: stop making people feel guilty for being white

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/12/suella-braverman-stop-white-guilty-countryside-racism/>

Suella Braverman: stop making people feel guilty for being white

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suella-braverman-tory-racism-b2495273.html>

Suella Braverman: Stop making white people feel guilty

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-white-people-guilty-telegraph-cnj9k0jjq>

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Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Maternity Services: Ethnic Groups

Theresa Villiers (Conservative) [12958] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether she has had recent discussions with NHS England on improving awareness of inequalities in black and Asian maternal health outcomes amongst clinicians.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: The Government is committed to tackling and reducing disparities in health outcomes. My Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has not had specific discussions with NHS England about improving clinician awareness. However, the Maternity Disparities Taskforce, of which I am a co-chair, was established in February 2022 to tackle disparities for mothers and babies and reduce maternal and neonatal deaths.

The taskforce brings together experts from across the health system, governmental departments, and the voluntary sector to explore and consider evidence-based interventions to tackle maternal disparities. One of the key priorities of the taskforce at present is focusing on improving access to effective pre-conception and maternity care for women from ethnic minorities, and those living in the most deprived areas.

NHS England has also published their Equity and Equality guidance for Local Maternity Systems, supported by a £6.8 million investment, which focuses on actions to reduce disparities for women and babies from ethnic minorities and those living in the most deprived areas.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/12958>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/C0734-equity-and-equality-guidance-for-local-maternity-systems.pdf>

Maternity Services: Ethnic Groups

Theresa Villiers (Conservative) [12960] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to measure progress made by initiatives to tackle health inequalities in maternity care in the black and Asian community.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: NHS England's three-year delivery plan for maternity

and neonatal services outlines an ambition to reduce inequalities for all in access, experience, and outcomes, and provide targeted support where health inequalities exist. As part of this plan, NHS England will utilise several metrics to track the impact on maternity and neonatal outcomes based on ethnicity, to measure progress towards improving equity for mothers and babies. These metrics are of sufficient sensitivity and statistical power to track changes in clinical outcomes for the groups most at risk of adverse outcomes.

Ethnic coding data completeness has improved year on year since 2019, helping to better understand health outcomes for different ethnic groups. NHS Resolution's Maternity Incentive Scheme safety action two also sets a data quality standard to improve ethnic coding data completeness.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-05/12960>

Information about the Maternity Incentive Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://resolution.nhs.uk/services/claims-management/clinical-schemes/clinical-negligence-scheme-for-trusts/maternity-incentive-scheme/>

News

Ethnic minorities in England have worse access to GPs

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/15/ethnic-minorities-in-england-have-worse-access-to-gps>

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Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Transplant Surgery: Racial Discrimination

Jackie Doyle-Price (Conservative) [11773] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps she is taking to help tackle racial inequalities in levels of organ transplantation.

Reply from Andrea Leadsom: Generally, patients from ethnic minority backgrounds on the transplant waiting list, wait longer than white patients for a transplant. For example, black patients wait six months longer for a kidney transplant than white patients. The best chance of a match is from an ethnically matched donor. Therefore, NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is focussed on sharing the benefits of transplantation more equally and increasing consent levels for organ donation amongst ethnic minority communities.

NHSBT raises awareness throughout the year, including during Organ Donation Week every September, with targeted social media, and press engagement. It also works with charities, community partners, celebrities, and influencers to amplify the need for donors from ethnic minority backgrounds. Since April 2023, NHSBT has invested £700,000 into 304 initiatives through the Community Grants Programme, targeting South Asian and black heritage communities, to align with clinical need.

NHSBT is looking at systems as well as training and diversifying the network of Specialist Nurses and implementing national organ offering schemes, which play a key role in targeting inequalities. But more progress is needed, and everyone can help by signing up to the Organ Donor Register.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-29/11773>

New Publication

Antisemitic Incidents Report 2023

https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/9/f/Antisemitic_Incidents_Report_2023.pdf

News

Anas Sarwar reveals toll Islamophobia has taken on his family

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/islamophobia-mohammed-scottish-labour-adam-muslim-b2498019.html>

Pontins served with unlawful act notice by equality watchdog after race discrimination investigation

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/media-centre/news/pontins-served-unlawful-act-notice-equality-watchdog-after-race-discrimination>

Pontins served 'unlawful act notice' over discrimination against Irish Travellers

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/15/pontins-served-unlawful-act-notice-over-discrimination-against-irish-travellers>

Shocked that Pontins put Irish Travellers on a secret blacklist? They're far from the only ones

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/feb/15/pontins-irish-travellers-blacklist-hatred-britain>

Pontins blacklist of 40 Irish surnames outrages Travellers

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pontins-blacklist-of-40-irish-surnames-outrages-travellers-d3kkzcg03>

Black mental health patients more likely to be injured at hands of police

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/17/black-mental-health-patients-more-likely-injured-police-england>

Antisemitic Incidents Report 2023

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2024/02/15/antisemitic-incidents-report-2023>

UK antisemitic hate incidents hit new high in 2023, says charity

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68288727>

'Explosion in hatred' as all-time high antisemitism recorded by Jewish charity

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/national/24120915explosion-hatred-all-time-high-antisemitism-recorded-jewish-charity/>

Worst antisemitism in UK for 40 years

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/antisemitism-uk-anti-jewish-incidents-britain-james-cleverly-k5lcgjbx7>

Huge rise in antisemitic abuse in UK since Hamas attack, says charity

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2024/feb/15/huge-rise-in-antisemitic-abuse-in-uk-since-hamas-attack-says-charity>

Antisemitic attacks double in Scotland with country emerging as hate hotspot as Jews face new 'pogrom'

<https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/scottish-news/antisemitic-attacks-double-scotland-country-32129543>

Jewish people in Scotland feel 'scared'

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24120797.jewish-people-scotland-feel-scared/>

UK politicians must step up and fight this tide of antisemitism

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/uk-politicians-must-step-up-and-fight-this-tide-of-antisemitism-9qgjf9l7n>

What is really driving the new wave of antisemitism?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/what-is-antisemitism-meaning-online-conspiracies-b2496611.html>

Third Labour politician 'spoken to' amid anti-Semitism row

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/14/third-labour-politician-spoken-to-amid-anti-semitism-row/>

Tory councillor Atiquel Hoque expelled for alleged antisemitic comments

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-68301692>

Expelled Tory mayor 'said Jews were responsible for Jesus's death'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/02/15/tory-mayor-salisbury-atiquel-hoque-expelled-antisemitism/>

University anti-Semitism tsar to be appointed as Jewish students face death threats

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/16/university-anti-semitism-tsar-to-be-appointed-as-jewish-stu/>

Director-general acknowledges anti-Semitism at BBC and vows to stamp it out

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/16/director-general-acknowledges-anti-semitism-bbc-vows-stamp/>

Synagogue received hate-filled messages 'from Hitler' after Hamas attack

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/synagogue-received-hate-filled-messages-from-hitler-after-hamas-attack-khc0hqs0f>

Doctor who said Hammersmith would be better without Jews not racist, GMC tribunal finds

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/10/doctor-not-racist-jews-antisemitism-three-month-ban-gmc/>

Rada makes David Harewood first black president after labelling itself 'institutionally racist'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/15/rada-appoints-david-harewood-as-its-first-black-president/>

BBC cuts Apprentice contestant from spin-off show after antisemitism complaints

<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-68303830>

Police Scotland tell Jewish man to hide Star of David for 'safety'

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24120185.police-scotland-tell-jewish-man-hide-star-david-safety/>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Release

Tackling Scotland's population challenges

<https://www.gov.scot/news/tackling-scotlands-population-challenges-1/>

New Publication

Supporting and enabling sustainable communities: action plan to address depopulation

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-enabling-sustainable-communities-action-plan-address-depopulation/>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Meat: Labelling

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [12604] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to undertake a consultation on the labelling of non-stun slaughter meat.

Reply from Mark Spencer: There are no Regulations that require the labelling of non-stun slaughter meat, but where any information of this nature is provided it must be accurate and must not be misleading to the consumer. The Government respects religious freedoms and expects the industry, whether food producer or food outlet, to provide consumers with all the information they need to make informed choices.

As recently announced by the Secretary of State, we will soon be launching a consultation on clearer food labelling. This will include proposals to improve and extend current mandatory method of production labelling, including options for the production standards behind them. Our proposed standards initially focus on the period of time the animal spends on farm. We will seek views through consultation on these standards, including the period of life which they should cover.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-01/12604>

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Cost of Living

Scottish Government Website

Help during the cost of living crisis

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

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

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

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

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

News

Four in 10 parents use savings for childcare

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/18/parents-forced-to-use-savings-for-childcare/>

Surge in parents racking up debt to fund childcare: ‘Procreation is financial suicide’

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/childcare-costs-debt-savings-pension-b2497569.html>

More parents relying on debt or savings to pay for childcare, survey suggests

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/england-jeremy-hunt-department-for-education-b2498124.html>

‘I spent a week living on little more than the state pension – it wasn’t much of a life’

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/pensions/state-pensions/state-pension-retirement-income-week-life-spending/>

Economy slides into recession in final quarter

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/economy-slides-into-recession-in-final-quarter-c6zfwl7rp>

Stagnation Nation

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-uk-economy-stagnation-nation-kzbrmwxb>

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Other New Publication

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator: Sector Overview Report:
End of Quarter 4 – 2023 Report

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/4763/2023-4-sector-overview-report.pdf>

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Other News

Genetics may help explain Black men's high prostate cancer risk, say scientists

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/15/genetics-may-help-explain-black-mens-high-prostate-cancer-risk-say-scientists>

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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>

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>

Committee Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-02-12/debates/136225B1-7F9B-46AE-9818-A2C7ACB79353/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-02-12/debates/136225B1-7F9B-46AE-9818-A2C7ACB79353/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-02-14/debates/DF3D4002-2381-4691-8E89-54B4F3D90DD2/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-02-14/debates/DF3D4002-2381-4691-8E89-54B4F3D90DD2/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

Amendments Paper

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/54220/documents/4429>

House of Commons House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights Report

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43292/documents/215535/default/>

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

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

Scottish Law Officers (Devolution) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3665>

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>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

Democracy Matters (closing date 28 February 2024)

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

Health and Social Care Workforce – Help Us to Tackle Racism (closing date extended to 4 March 2024)

<https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/7K3359S>

Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill (closing date 6 March 2024)

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/sppa/scottish-elections-bill/consult_view/

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

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

Ending conversion practices in Scotland (closing date 2 April 2024)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-conversion-practices-scotland-scottish-government-consultation/>

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

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

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Job Opportunities

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

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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Refugee Festival Scotland

Closing date: 1 March 2024

Scottish Refugee Council grants of up to £750 to help deliver arts and cultural events as part of Refugee Festival Scotland. Any event is welcome, from art, film, music, dance and discussion to sport, storytelling, theatre, cookery demonstrations, creative workshops, community-get-togethers and family-friendly picnics. For information see <https://www.refugeefestivalscotland.co.uk/get-involved/funding/>

Alwaleed Community Grant Scheme

Closing date: 11 March 2024

Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World funding of up to £5,000 for projects which engage with the following themes: Interfaith and intra-faith relations, Islam and the environment, Education and skills development, and Digital Islam. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/4atszf5m>

Ethnic Minority Development Fund

Closing date: 15 April 2024

National Lottery Community Fund grants from £500 to £15,000 for projects run by ethnic minority-led third-sector organisations in Scotland that bring ethnic minority people together and build strong relationships across communities, help more ethnic minority people to be the best they can be, by supporting them as soon as possible, or improve places and spaces that matter to ethnic minority communities. For information see <https://cemvoscotland.org.uk/emdf/>

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>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

No Recourse To Public Funds

21 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

22 May 2024 (Glasgow 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>

How To Be a Political Commentator - Broadcast Media Training for Women of Colour

8 March 2024 (Glasgow. 10.30–5.30)

Pass the Mic and Women in Journalism Scotland are working together to host a media commentator training day exclusively for women of colour who are based in Scotland. The purpose of the day is to give you a chance to experience giving interviews on radio and

TV. You will meet journalists and presenters, and lunch will be provided. For information see <https://passthemicscotland.org/2024/01/20/media-commentator-training/>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

13 May 2024 (Glasgow, 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>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

15 May 2024 (Glasgow, 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>

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Useful Links

Scottish Parliament <http://www.parliament.scot/>

Scottish Government <https://www.gov.scot/>

UK Parliament <http://www.parliament.uk/>

GovUK (links to UK Government Departments) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>

One Scotland <http://onescotland.org/>

Scottish Refugee Council <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk>

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>

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



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



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

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