



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	Consultations
Community Relations	Job Opportunities
Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination	Funding Opportunities
Other Scottish Parliament and Government	Events, Conferences, and Training
Other UK Parliament and Government	Useful Links
Bills in Progress	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 UK Parliament will be in recess from 12 September to 7 October 2024.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Free Bus Travel for Asylum Seekers: Cancellation

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-29258] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will issue official confirmation to third sector organisations in the asylum and refugee sector to (a) confirm that it has cancelled the national pilot of free bus travel for people seeking asylum and (b) set out how that decision was reached.

Reply from Jim Fairlie: The Scottish Government is having to make very difficult decisions to deliver balanced and sustainable spending plans for the 2024-25 financial year. It is therefore unaffordable to progress piloting free bus travel for all people seeking asylum in Scotland.

It was considered appropriate in the first instance to inform members of the Working Group established to help develop the pilot. Accordingly, the group, consisting of

representatives from third sector organisations supporting people seeking asylum and those with lived experience of the asylum system, was informed at a scheduled meeting on 16 August. Formal confirmation was provided by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government Shona Robison during a Ministerial Statement on the Pre-budget Fiscal Update in Parliament on 3 September 2024.

This decision sits within the wider context of extremely challenging financial constraints across the whole of the public sector in Scotland. I can confirm however, that people seeking asylum in Scotland who are currently eligible for free bus travel through the National Concessionary Travel Schemes, including those under 22, those aged 60 and over and those with qualifying disabilities, will continue to be able to make use of their entitlement.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-29258>

Free Bus Travel for Asylum Seekers: Cancellation

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-29231] To ask the Scottish Government what consultation took place with stakeholders before its reported decision to cancel the national free bus travel for asylum seekers pilot was made.

Reply from Jim Fairlie: The Scottish Government is having to make very difficult decisions to deliver balanced and sustainable spending plans for the 2024-25 financial year, therefore it is unaffordable to progress our plans to pilot free bus travel for all people seeking asylum in Scotland.

I am grateful to the stakeholders involved in the working group set up to develop the free bus travel for asylum seekers pilot. My officials informed them directly of the difficult decision to cancel the proposed pilot scheme to provide free bus travel for asylum seekers on 16 August 2024.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-29231>

Support with Transport Costs: Asylum

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-29232] To ask the Scottish Government what support is available for (a) third sector organisations and (b) local authorities to provide support with transport costs for people seeking asylum, in light of the reported cancellation of its pilot scheme for free bus travel for asylum seekers.

Reply from Jim Fairlie: The Scottish Government's approach to supporting the integration of refugees, people seeking asylum and other forced migrants within Scotland's communities is set out in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy published in March 2024.

The Scottish Government does not provide direct funding to third sector organisations or local authorities specifically for the purpose of providing travel support for people seeking asylum.

However, people seeking asylum who are aged 60 or over or under 22 years old, or meet the disability eligibility criteria are eligible for concessionary travel in the same way as all other Scottish residents. I would encourage all those eligible to apply.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-29232>

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2024/>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Border Security and Asylum

The Minister for Border Security and Asylum (Angela Eagle) [HCWS73] This Government are committed to tackling irregular migration. The tragic incident in the channel earlier this week is a reminder of why the work to dismantle these dangerous and criminal smuggler gangs and strengthen border security is so vital. The number of asylum seekers crossing the channel in small boats surged under the previous Government. Criminal smuggling gangs are making millions out of these crossings, undermining our border security and putting lives at risk. We will tackle the root of the problem by going after these dangerous criminals and bringing them to justice. That is why this Government are implementing a practical plan to tackle the small boat chaos.

The Home Secretary has already launched the new border security command to strengthen Britain's border security and smash the criminal smuggling gangs. The BSC will be led by a new border security commander who will provide the cross-system strategic leadership and direction across several agencies, drawing together the work of the National Crime Agency, Border Force, policing, the UK intelligence community, immigration enforcement and the Crown Prosecution Service, to better protect our borders and go after the smuggling gangs facilitating these crossings.

The BSC will work with colleagues across Government and with international partners to disrupt the activity of criminal smuggling gangs and ensure those profiting from people smuggling are brought to justice.

As set out in the King's Speech, this Government will introduce swift legislative measures to restore order to our border. Work is advancing on the planned border security, asylum and immigration Bill which will be introduced at the earliest opportunity. The proposed new legislation will include provisions to give the border security system, including law enforcement partners, stronger powers to disrupt, investigate and prosecute organised criminals facilitating organised immigration crime.

On 21 August the Home Secretary announced the recruitment of up to 100 new specialist intelligence and investigation officers at the NCA, to target, dismantle and disrupt organised immigration crime networks. This comes alongside the 50% uplift in the number of NCA officers stationed in Europol. These officers have been immediately deployed to support European operations to disrupt the activity of criminal smuggling gangs making millions out of small boat crossings.

The Government have also established a new returns and enforcement programme to ensure that asylum and immigration rules are properly respected and enforced. Thirteen bespoke returns flights have now departed since we took office on 5 July, returning individuals to a range of countries including Albania, Poland, Romania, Vietnam and Timor-Leste. Those returned have no legal right to be in the UK and include foreign criminals, failed asylum seekers and other immigration offenders. More than 400 people with no right to be here were flown to one destination country, with more than 200 leaving on a single flight—the largest number of people ever returned on a flight. These flights demonstrate the new Government's ambition to take quick and decisive action to speed up removals and secure our borders.

The Home Office is also expanding the detention estate to bolster our capacity for swift, firm, and fair returns. The Government are increasing detention spaces to support the higher pace of removals including reopening and adding initially 290 beds across immigration removal centres at Campsfield and Haslar, with further expansions in the future. This increase will ensure there is additional capacity to facilitate higher levels of enforcement and returns so that rules are properly respected.

We are rapidly expanding the work across Government and with law enforcement partners to target, investigate and enforce penalties on unscrupulous employers who illegally employ those with no right to work here. Intensive immigration enforcement operations

over the last few weeks have targeted rogue businesses suspected of employing illegal workers. Over the course of the operation, more than 275 premises were targeted, with 135 receiving civil penalty referral notices for employing illegal workers. In addition, 85 illegal migrant workers were detained for removal.

We are also improving value for money in asylum accommodation. The latest review of the proposed Scampton accommodation site has concluded that costs have risen significantly, compared to the initial estimates. Costs of £60 million have already been incurred on the site at Scampton as a result of work done and commitments made by the previous Government. In addition, the estimated costs of opening the site and running it from this autumn until the end of planned occupancy in March 2027 has now risen to a further £122 million—taking the total cost for using this single site for a short time as asylum accommodation to nearer £200 million. This is an unacceptable cost.

Taking into account these additional costs and projected occupancy levels, this clearly fails to deliver value for money for the taxpayer. This Government are mindful of their inherited financial position and are determined to ensure that we deliver the best services at the best value for money for the taxpayer. We have also listened to community feedback highlighting the concerns about the history of the site and alternative development plans. Although my officials have investigated other potential uses for the site, it is now better value for money to exit the site and avoid all future service provision costs where these have not yet been committed. We will dispose of this site within the rules laid down for Crown land. Although there will be some additional costs of holding and managing the site while this takes place, this still represents a better financial decision.

The Government's intention is to return to using long-standing dispersed asylum accommodation and will do so as soon as is practicable, once we have made progress on clearing the backlog. Any decision regarding the use of accommodation sites will be fully considered, with a firm focus on value for money and ensuring proper standards are in place.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-05/debates/24090527000006/BorderSecurityAndAsylum>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Ukraine

Visas: Ukraine

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [2497] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to grant visa extensions to Ukrainian nationals under the age of 18 on the Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme that want to pursue higher education.

Reply from Seema Malhotra: Ukrainian nationals and their families granted under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme have the right to work, rent or study and access to benefits and services for the duration of their permission. Ukrainian nationals who wish to pursue higher education are free to do so while seeking sanctuary in the UK under the scheme.

The Ukraine Permission Extension scheme is due to open for applications in advance of the expiry of the first Ukraine scheme visas in early 2025, providing the same rights to study and access to benefits and services that individuals on the existing schemes have.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-30/2497>

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

Information about the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-permission-extension-scheme-information>

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

Universal Credit: EU Nationals

Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [2225] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to enable EU citizens with pre-settled status to claim universal credit.

Reply from Andrew Western: EEA and Swiss citizens with pre-settled status have the same access to benefits as they did prior to the UK leaving the EU. They will be able to access income-related public fund benefits, such as Universal Credit, if they are exercising a qualifying right to reside in the UK, for example by being a worker. This is similar to the rules for UK citizens residing in EU member states on the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement. The eligibility of claimants with pre-settled status is verified through the Habitual Residence Test.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-30/2225>

Visas: Refugees

Rebecca Long Bailey (Independent) [2930] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's criteria are for implementation of an emergency visa scheme for refugees fleeing war zones.

Reply from Seema Malhotra: As the Home Secretary said in her statement to the House of Commons on the 22 July 2024, the UK will always work, along with other states, to help those fleeing war and persecution.

Our global resettlement scheme, the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) is designed in way that allows us to respond in any emergency. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) can refer cases to the UK under their standard resettlement submission categories, based on people's needs and vulnerabilities. The UNHCR is expertly placed to help the UK authorities to identify and process vulnerable refugees who would benefit from resettlement in the UK and as such, HMG does not intervene in who the UNHCR refer for resettlement to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-08-30/2930>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-22/debates/FBB2B906-592F-4047-A6E1-59D6DB97573A/BorderSecurityAndAsylum#contribution-15C5F66A-F293-479F-A1FC-9A2F9087B051>

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

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/611cd056d3bf7f63b45df0ed/Resettlement_Policy_Guidance_2021.pdf

Visas: Palestinians

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [2558] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of creating a visa waiver scheme for Palestinians requiring urgent medical treatment.

Reply from Seema Malhotra: Currently, those seeking to come to the UK for private medical treatment, along with their family members, can apply for a visitor visa and consideration will be given to compelling, compassionate and exceptional circumstances.

It should be noted that the World Health Organisation (WHO) position is that people who are medically evacuated should stay as close to home as possible, so that they remain amongst those who are more likely to understand their language and culture, and so that their return home, when ready, is easier.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-30/2558>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Loans

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [2470] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much was loaned through refugee integration loans in each year since the scheme was created.

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [2471] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much she expects will be loaned in refugee integration loans this year.

Reply from Seema Malhotra: Refugee Integration Loans were introduced in 2007 following a public consultation and have operated over the last seventeen years to help recipients with the costs of integrating into UK society. They are funded by the Home Office, who make the initial decisions on applications. They are then administered and recouped by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Single applicants can borrow between £100 and £500 and if applying jointly the maximum amount increases to £780.

The Home Office work with DWP to administer the loans across different IT platforms. Consequently, data on the level of loans provided on an annual basis is not held in an easily reportable format and would require a manual search of records that could only be conducted at a disproportionate cost.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-30/2470>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-30/2471>

Information about Refugee Integration Loans, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/refugee-integration-loan>

Asylum: Hotels

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [2473] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the median cost per night for hotel accommodation for asylum seekers was in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what the cost was of the (a) most and (b) least expensive decile.

Angela Eagle: The Government is determined to restore order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly, and fairly, including reducing the use of hotels over time. Additionally, the Government will be reviewing current Home Office arrangements to ensure efficiency and deliver value for money.

Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential; therefore, the Home Office does not publish this information. The total specific breakdowns of hotel costs are not reportable in the format requested, but the expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at [HO annual reports and accounts](#).

The number of asylum seekers in receipt of Section 95 support is published quarterly. At the end of quarter four 2003 published statistics indicate that there were 47,148 people housed in Dispersal Accommodation and a further 30,362 in receipt of subsistence only support. The geographical location of these supported asylum seekers was not published at that time. Since 2019 data on the number of supported asylum seekers in accommodation has been published at [Asylum and resettlement datasets](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-30/2473>

Press Releases

Home Secretary sets out 'moral imperative' to stop smuggling gangs

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-sets-out-moral-imperative-to-stop-smuggling-gangs>

People smuggler jailed for stashing migrants inside motorhome

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/people-smuggler-jailed-for-stashing-migrants-inside-motorhome>

People smuggler who left 7 migrants screaming for help jailed

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/people-smuggler-who-left-7-migrants-screaming-for-help-jailed>

Man involved in smuggling people into the UK in the back of a van jailed

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/updated-sentence-man-involved-smuggling-people-uk-back-van-jailed>

New Publications

Scottish Government Freedom of Information Release: Refugee and asylum seeking children registered in Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202400418339/>

House of Commons Library Briefing: The government's response to the Windrush scandal

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8779/CBP-8779.pdf>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Special visa schemes for Ukrainians

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9473/CBP-9473.pdf>

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>

Coercion and Control: The treatment of women seeking asylum in hotel accommodation

https://www.refugeewomen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Coercion-and-Control-The-treatment-of-women-seeking-asylum-in-hotel-accommodation_WRW24_DIGITAL-2-compressed_1.pdf

Destitute and in Danger: people made homeless by the asylum system

<https://www.jrsuk.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Destitute-and-in-Danger-JRS-UK.pdf>

News: Channel Migrants

France sees Channel migrant deaths as a problem of Britain's making

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9v8272vkxpo>

UK rejects French appeal for asylum treaty after Channel drownings

<https://www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/uk-rejects-french-appeal-for-asylum-treaty-after-channel-drownings-9c3fhrhf5>

UK working with European police to tackle boat gangs

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c89wneepgj3o>

Labour piles £15m into deportation deals for small boat migrants in 11 countries

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/small-boat-channel-crossings-labour-yvette-cooper-b2606251.html>

12 dead after migrant boat capsizes in Channel

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn8lklkxx5no>

Channel migrants drowned after rigid base was taken from dinghy

<https://www.thetimes.com/article/d0f53469-35a1-45c0-9602-e1797d517472>

Channel drownings fail to deter desperate migrants

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5ykzzgp98po>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Payments for Windrush victims denied compensation

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd9dwlp38j1o>

Starmer: I will tackle people smugglers like I did rioters

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/09/06/starmer-i-will-tackle-people-smugglers-like-i-did-rioters/>

Illegal visa network making millions fleecing students

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c97w1x2deyvo>

Plans to house asylum seekers at RAF Scampton axed

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y3v6qq1dko>

Van driver jailed for smuggling migrants on ferry

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c785gqzq9e7o>

Arsonist Thomas Birley jailed for nine years after asylum hotel riots

<https://www.thetimes.com/article/31f64f76-f85e-4be8-be4b-d38ba185cb41>

TOP

Community Relations

Scottish Parliament Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Community Cohesion

The First Minister (John Swinney): During the summer recess, everyone was affected by the dreadful, tragic deaths of three girls in Southport. ...

My thoughts have been with the community of Southport which, while facing that unthinkable tragedy, then faced further distress. Starting in Southport, sparked by false information and rumour on social media as to the identity and background of the perpetrator of the attack, communities in England and Northern Ireland were then made to endure disorder and rioting, on top of their grief and concern for those affected. ...

Let me be clear: that activity was not and should not be classed as protest. It was violence and thuggery, pure and simple, perpetrated by those with a far-right ideology, by those who were taken in by that rhetoric and by criminals. Far from having legitimate concerns, those who were indulging in those mindless acts were doing so from a place of racism, Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment. That cannot and should not be tolerated anywhere. It is absolutely unacceptable for anyone to live in fear of leaving their home, to feel nervous about sending their children to school or to be afraid to use certain services

or transport. Justice has been done in the English courts, with sentences reflecting the serious criminality that was perpetrated.

To date, Scotland has not had to deal with incidents of a similar nature, despite the attempts to organise them via social media, but we must continue to be vigilant against ideologies that can lead to such violence. We cannot take the view that we may be immune from related disorder occurring on our doorsteps. ...

We should rightly be proud of our history as a nation that values free speech and welcomes those who want to live and work here. We can be proud that, as a society, we celebrate, value and protect diversity in our communities. However, we must challenge those who would deny those values. We must guard against the prejudice, discrimination and misinformation that aim to incite hatred and violence. We must remember that those who seek to divide us are in a very small minority...

While we watched the violence unfold in communities and heard about how social media was being used to whip up the disorder and violence that several towns witnessed over some nights in August, we also saw many more people and communities come together to express how that was not reflective of their towns. We saw many more people work together to clean up the mess and damage in their neighbourhoods. We can also all take heart that, on 10 August, thousands of people took to the streets across the UK to protest against the racist thuggery and anti-immigrant rhetoric that they had witnessed—far more people than had taken part in the disorder itself.

Our relationships with our diverse communities are crucial to community cohesion, and I know that many people felt scared or uneasy in those early days of August. Violence, prejudice, racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism have no place in our society, and nobody should ever be subjected to them. I want to reassure everyone who was impacted that this Government will always work to ensure that every person living in Scotland is protected and that we are united in our opposition to anyone who would seek to use disorder as a means of division.

In the first week of August, I attended the Edinburgh central mosque, and, at my invitation, faith leaders came together as well. That provided an opportunity for us all to make clear that conflict and hatred have no place here. Faith leaders from across Scotland continue to promote mutual respect and share a common desire for everybody to be safe in our society. ...

Let me be absolutely clear to anyone in Scotland who is considering mimicking the kind of vile behaviour that we have witnessed in parts of England and Northern Ireland this summer that their actions will not be tolerated, they will be dealt with robustly and criminal actions online will be taken just as seriously. ...

Following the tragic events in Southport, social media was a key factor in the first incident of disorder that then took place. ...

Although we all have an individual duty to question whether everything that we read online is actually true, it is very clear to me that the major organisations behind the platforms also have a duty—both moral and legal—to take action to ensure that individuals in our society are not subjected to hate and threatening behaviour and that communities are protected from violence.

I wrote to the main social media companies, asking them to promptly outline the decisive steps that they plan to take on the matter, and we have engaged constructively with the United Kingdom Government on this question. Social media companies have assured me that safety teams have been working to detect any associated violation of their terms of service and that they have taken action, including account suspension and content removal. However, recent events suggest that there is much more work to do to ensure that hateful content and misinformation do not proliferate.

I want to conclude by emphasising to anyone who feels fearful of being targeted for who they are or what they believe that we stand in solidarity with them. Scotland is a diverse, multicultural society where everyone is welcome, and I want us to be united in our

opposition to anyone who would seek to use disorder and violence to divide people. ...

Douglas Ross (Conservative): ... I say unequivocally that everyone, regardless of faith, race and background, in Scotland and across the UK, deserves to feel safe. Violence has no place in our society. The rioting and attacks that we saw in UK cities over the summer were both tragic and deeply alarming. Although it is welcome that such events have not occurred in Scotland, we cannot be complacent and deceive ourselves that they could never happen here. We have to be prepared. ...

However, in the past three years, police officer numbers in Scotland have fallen by 1,000. David Threadgold, the chair of the Scottish Police Federation, has said that “the service simply cannot recruit the number of officers it needs to replace those who are leaving.” ... What action is the Government taking, therefore, to halt the reduction in the number of police officers across Scotland? ...

Finally, the Home Secretary announced yesterday that the UK Government will review its counter-extremism strategy. What discussions has the First Minister had with the UK Government about that work?

Reply from the First Minister: Police numbers are growing as a consequence of the very significant recruitment efforts by Police Scotland that are now under way, and we expect the numbers to rise in the period ahead. Police capacity has been adequate and appropriate to deal with the challenges that we face. ...

In relation to the work of the United Kingdom Government on terrorism measures, obviously we remain in regular discussion with the UK Government on those questions, and we expect to take forward those discussions in the period ahead, as the UK Government forms its steps.

Mr Ross will be aware that we have taken a slightly different approach to the handling of the communication of these issues in Scotland in the past, which has been built on building community confidence in anti-terror measures. I have a great deal of confidence in that, and I think that, most importantly, the communities of Scotland have confidence in those measures ...

Anas Sarwar (Labour): ... I praise the UK Government’s response, which was strong, swift and appropriate. I also thank the Scottish Government and the police here in Scotland for the tone of their response in order to minimise the risk of disorder. ...

We will not allow the acts of a mindless few to speak for the vast majority of people in this country who believe in the principles of peace, tolerance and love.

Sadly, there are people who seek to divide our communities. Much of that is amplified by reckless politicians who are only interested in their own divisive agendas, and we have to call them out for what they are. However, greater responsibility must be borne by the social media companies that allow their platforms to be used as vehicles to amplify, to recruit, to organise and to fundraise.

There is also, of course, people’s individual responsibility to make sure that they are not deliberately or inadvertently sharing misinformation. ...

Reply from the First Minister: ... There is a responsibility on us all with regard to what we say and what we do on social media, as well as with regard to whether we believe what we see on social media, but there is also a huge obligation on those companies in that regard. The United Kingdom Government has been making those obligations pretty clear to social media companies. Ofcom has also been doing that—its statements at the height of the difficulties were very clear about the obligation of those companies to operate within the code of responsibility. ...

We cannot pause for a moment in any way, shape or form relax our rejection of far-right ideology. We have to stand together and be persistent and assertive about setting out that that represents the wrong agenda for our country, that we believe in the importance of diverse, multicultural communities and that we believe in the importance of bringing people together. ...

Patrick Harvie (Green): ... although I welcome a lot of what was in the First Minister’s

statement, I suggest that two things were missing from it. First, it is not only social media that is responsible for the promotion and proliferation of hatred and prejudice against immigrants, asylum seekers and Muslims. Those attitudes have also been deliberately cultivated by swathes of the UK mainstream media and by successive UK Governments. Politicians from a number of different parties are culpable for that.

Secondly, it is when social and community cohesion is already weakened that the far right finds its opportunity. ...

Reply from the First Minister: ... Many comments have been made in the mainstream media and by politicians that I would never want to be associated with, because they represent an ideology that I find repugnant. However, I accept that that is a reality, which is why it is important that we exercise political leadership in Scotland, that we reject that ideology and that we reject it across the Parliament. ... I will do everything that I can as First Minister to foster a climate that enables that to be the case, because I want this Parliament to speak as one in saying that the far-right ideology of racism or hate has absolutely no place in our society whatsoever. ...

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Liberal Democrat): ... When those murders happened, the four nations of these islands fell silent, but that silence was broken by the brutal thuggery that we saw on the streets of England. I was astonished—I am sure that members shared my astonishment—that some of the youngest perpetrators of the lawlessness were as young as 11 years old. Nobody is born racist but, as the First Minister said, many people in our society are becoming more susceptible to rhetoric and online misinformation. When it comes to young people of that age, it strikes me that, as a state, we have a role to play in countering that. What steps is the First Minister's Government taking to work with education authorities to ensure that we counter, right at the heart of our school system, that level of misinformation and rhetoric?

Reply from the First Minister: ... the ethos of curriculum for excellence, which is the curriculum in our schools ... is to create responsible citizens. That aspiration runs right through our approach to our three-to-18 curriculum...

On the specific incidents over the summer, the chief inspector of education wrote to all local authorities to convey guidance and educational materials that the school system could use when pupils returned in August. ...

Evelyn Tweed (SNP): ... Will the First Minister further outline what action needs to be taken to ensure that websites such as X, Meta and TikTok combat the spread of misinformation and address racist and hateful material on their platforms? Have social media platforms provided reassurance?

Reply from the First Minister: I have been in touch with social media companies, and I have had responses from some of them about the steps that they take. They provided some degree of assurance about material that is taken down, but I do not think that that goes nearly far enough. It is quite easy to view material online that I consider to be completely and utterly repugnant and unacceptable.

Ofcom has strict and clear guidelines in place, but my sense is that those are not being respected by social media companies. We will engage in dialogue with the UK Government to ensure that whatever strengthening is required is undertaken. Social media companies have a responsibility to exercise their duties, and they could exercise them this minute to protect communities from being exposed to unacceptable material.

Russell Findlay (Conservative): ... We all have a duty to stand up to bigotry and racism in all its forms, and it is important to recognise that the response to the riots showed the overwhelming tolerance and decency of people across the UK. ...

Will the First Minister tell us what he considers to be the minimum number of officers required to keep our communities safe?

Reply from the First Minister: Obviously, the number of police officers is an

operational matter for the chief constable, but there are discussions between the Government, the chief constable and the Scottish Police Authority about such matters. ...

Rona Mackay (SNP): It is vital that we do all that we can to reach out to our faith and migrant communities and offer solidarity, support and reassurance that they enrich the social and cultural fabric of our nation. With that in mind, will the First Minister provide further detail on the work that is being supported to promote community cohesion across the country?

Reply from the First Minister: A great deal of work is under way in that respect through dialogue with stakeholder organisations who are well connected within communities. The justice secretary and I visited the Edinburgh central mosque during the incident and it was reassuring to hear the comments that were being made by members of the Muslim community about their relationship with the police and the dialogue that takes place.

I had my own experience of that when I visited a synagogue in East Renfrewshire and I met the Jewish community and heard similarly their appreciation of the assurance of their safety that was undertaken, although they highlighted to me the fact that, at times, they feel very unsafe and fearful. ...

Katy Clark (Labour): Does the First Minister agree that the rise of the far right is a problem across the UK, with many in society feeling alienated and disenfranchised? ...

Reply from the First Minister: ... We have to give relentless political leadership on the value and inclusivity of our communities and not allow anything at all to get in the way of our unity on that point. ...

Pam Gosal (Conservative): Scotland was not exempt from the turmoil that occurred last month. Although no riots broke out in Scotland, ethnic minority constituents in my region contacted me to say that they felt unsafe—so unsafe that they decided to stay at home or close their businesses until tensions calmed. What action is the First Minister taking to build community cohesion, not just between civil servants and community leaders but between members of the community? ...

Reply from the First Minister: It is important that we encourage and enable the cohesion of communities. Some of that comes about by political leadership, some comes about by community work and some by the active investment in social and economic priorities in the Government's programme and the programme of local authorities. ... It is unacceptable that somebody has to close their business because they are fearful of being attacked ... Police Scotland is prepared to be visible and active to protect people, and it has done so. ...

To read the full transcript see

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-03-09-2024?meeting=15967&iob=136319#orscontributions_M2098E385P721C2606766

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Community Cohesion

Alex Baker (Labour) [900273] What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to help promote community cohesion.

Noah Law (Labour) [900276] What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to help promote community cohesion.

Jacob Collier (Labour) [900280] What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to help promote community cohesion.

Reply from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Angela Rayner): Last month's appalling violence exposed deep-

rooted weaknesses in our society. Division and decline, combined with rising Islamophobia and racism, contributed to the vile scenes of hatred. I am determined that we should now support the recovery of towns and cities affected, and investment in community cohesion. That has started with a comprehensive support offer for Southport, and I can confirm that I will now lead cross-Government efforts on this issue. I will update the House on our plans in due course.

Alex Baker: Whatever our beliefs, faith leaders and faith groups can play an important role in bringing us all together. Will the Deputy Prime Minister join me in commending the many faith leaders I have met across Aldershot and Farnborough who are working to promote tolerance and understanding across our community? Can she outline what her Department is doing to encourage those community leaders, whose work reminds us that we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us?

Reply from Angela Rayner: ... I was proud to serve alongside my good friend Jo Cox in this House, and her words about our common humanity and what unites us ring as true as ever. I have met many local communities, businesses and other groups affected by the acts of deplorable violence that we have seen across the country in recent weeks, including in places such as Stoke-on-Trent and Rotherham. I heard powerful stories from those who experienced appalling violence, but I also heard about how those communities came together to defend their streets and were united against hatred and thuggery. I know that my hon. Friend has been a leader in her own community, and we Ministers will support her and her constituents in the spirit that she has set out.

Noah Law: Our community cohesion in Cornwall is being undermined by the housing crisis, with many locals priced out or even facing homelessness. This matter requires urgent attention, and I am therefore pleased that this Government have placed building new homes at the top of our legislative agenda. Can the Deputy Prime Minister ensure that we are building the right kinds of homes in Cornwall—namely, social homes?

Reply from Angela Rayner: Absolutely, and my hon. Friend is right. We are strengthening housing targets and acting to ensure that local plans are ambitious enough to support this Government's commitment to 1.5 million homes in this Parliament, including social homes. Under our new proposals, assessed housing need across Cornwall would increase by around 65%, demonstrating our commitment to approving the supply of new homes that his constituents desperately need.

Jacob Collier: Following the horrific Islamophobic attacks experienced by Muslim communities around the country, the Princess Street mosque in Burton-upon-Trent opened its doors to the wider community so that everyone could learn more about Islam and see their place of worship. This was a way to challenge misinformation and promote mutual understanding. Does the Deputy Prime Minister welcome this as an example of how communities can help bring people together?

Reply from Angela Rayner: I absolutely welcome it, and I commend the actions such as those taken by the Burton-upon-Trent mosque. I agree with my hon. Friend that building understanding among those from different backgrounds is vital to fostering strong communities. This Government are committed to working with communities around the UK to build a culture of cohesion, trust and mutual respect and we will outline further actions in due course. ...

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... Sometimes it is easy to dwell upon the negativity, but there are positives as well. There were positives in my constituency when two people decided to burn down the mosque, because they were caught by the police and they will hopefully be imprisoned, and because the community came together, which is the issue I want to put over. Across this great United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, there are many people who want to live together. ... Sometimes we need to put over the good things as well.

Reply from Angela Rayner: ... absolutely right. When I was visiting those communities, I saw them coming together. I saw the way in which they worked well and the way in which everybody looked out for each other. It reminded me of why I am in this place and why I do what I do for the great British people and what they do.

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat): In Westmorland, we have a story that has underpinned cohesion for decades. That is the true story of the Windermere children. In August 1945, almost half the children who survived the Nazi death camps were rehabilitated on the banks of Windermere at Troutbeck Bridge. I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister would agree to meet me, because a group of us, including members of the '45 Aid Society and the local school, the Lakes school, want to build a lasting memorial at Troutbeck Bridge, on the site where the children were housed, while rebuilding the school that was built on that site. Will she carry on the cross-party work that we had before the election, and meet me and others from that community to help make that a reality?

Reply from Angela Rayner: I congratulate the hon. Member on his work in this area. Either myself or one of my Ministers will be happy to meet him. ...

Kemi Badenoch (Conservative): Can the right hon. Lady give me her assessment of the Khan review into social cohesion?

Reply from Angela Rayner: The Khan review into social cohesion is one element of what we need to do to get back to addressing the issues of community cohesion, as opposed to the divisiveness of the way in which the previous Government looked at community cohesion. What I would like to see, instead of the language and tone we have seen from Members on the right hon. Member's Benches, is the tone that the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) took around how we can bring communities together and work together to ensure that people can respect people's differences and celebrate what makes us British, and that is that we all have different places.

Kemi Badenoch: The right hon. Lady has not read the Khan review, as she would not have given that answer if she had.

The review talks about the 2021 incident at Batley grammar school, where a teacher was failed by local police and the local council and had to go into hiding. Given the fears about the rise in Islamist sectarianism in communities such as West Yorkshire, what are the right hon. Lady's plans, especially as she has not read the review, to ensure that such incidents do not happen again?

Reply from Angela Rayner: I have read the review. Maybe the right hon. Lady was busy launching her leadership campaign earlier today.

The point I am making is that under the previous Administration there was not an element of community cohesion but constant division and stoking of division. I tried to bring our education system together when I was shadow Education Secretary. Across education, across my Department and across our Government I would like to see how we can celebrate our differences and bring communities together. If the right hon. Lady is successful in her bid to become Leader of the Opposition, I hope she will work with us on that endeavour.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/0D204C51-88E8-4A4B-BAFC-DCFD4925918F/CommunityCohesion>

The Khan Review, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65fdbfd265ca2ffef17da79c/The_Khan_review.pdf

Press Release

Community cohesion: First Minister's statement

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-cohesion-first-ministers-statement/>

“We must work together”: How UK migrant communities are rebuilding from the far-right riots, one month on

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/far-right-riots-migrant-centres-racism-uk-b2603913.html>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Government Ministerial Statement

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care statement on anti-racism

The Programme for Government 2024-25 reiterates our unswerving commitment to embedding anti-racism across the public sector.

As the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, I acknowledge that racism persists in society and within our NHS and social care services. We know this because colleagues tell us about their experiences and because we have data showing that minority ethnic communities have some of the worst health outcomes. The long-standing harm caused by racism was highlighted again during the pandemic. As a result, we recognise racism as a significant public health challenge.

That is why I want to be clear that we are taking a firm anti-racism approach to the improvement of our services.

By anti-racism we mean actively standing up against racism, challenging and changing the policies, practices, beliefs and behaviours that unjustly disadvantage people from minority ethnic groups; and being proactive in creating a more inclusive and fair society. This is fundamental to our efforts to reduce health inequalities in Scotland.

I want to assure everyone that these are not just words – we have been working closely with NHS boards, experts, patients, and staff to develop targeted and meaningful changes to make sure everyone receives the treatment they deserve. We have also begun national conversations with staff-led organisations, like the NHS Scotland Ethnic Minority Forum, to ensure that what we’re doing can make a difference to the experience of people who are at the front of delivering care to the public every day.

In recognising that racism is a public health issue for Scotland, at the start of this year, we asked all 22 NHS Health Boards to make more rapid progress in tackling racism’s impact on patient and staff experiences, wellbeing and outcomes for which they will be held accountable.

We will achieve this through the requirement for all boards to develop and deliver against their own anti-racism plans. This will state their ambition and the action they will take to address racism – in whatever form it takes, as well as the outcomes they are seeking to achieve. Whilst some boards have already made progress, we are making anti-racism a priority for all boards so that this will be a true turning point in the culture of our NHS.

To help support the development of effective plans, we are publishing national guidance for boards. The guidance, developed in consultation with the Ethnic Minority Forum, provides a national standard for their anti-racism plans and the expectation that they will be done in collaboration with leadership, trade unions and local staff minority ethnic forums.

We are also taking forward the development of bespoke anti-racism training resources to support NHS managers on how to address racist incidents in the workplace and support staff who experience or witness it. These resources are being developed in partnership with external anti-racism experts using direct feedback from staff about their lived

experience and understanding of racism.

We know that there is similar work happening in Social Work, with a statement of intent and action plan both expected this year.

Change is needed on many fronts. My priority is for NHS staff to feel safe and supported to speak up about racism, and to be confident that racism will be dealt with. I also want to see greater diversity across the NHS, including in leadership positions. Improvements in healthcare are also essential, focussing initially on areas where minority ethnic patients have poorer outcomes and experiences – including maternity care, mental health, Type 2 Diabetes and Cardio-Vascular Disease.

I recognise that these changes can't come fast enough. Racism already has a life-threatening effect on minority ethnic communities across the UK. That has been the case for generations. However, the only way we can make a difference now is to actively work against racism. This work is just one step in the right direction.

Our health and care services have the power to transform people's lives. I am therefore calling on everyone in the NHS in Scotland and in social care to harness that power. I want you to be leading anti-racism organisations and play a defining role in building a healthier and safer NHS and social care service. It is the only way we can grow and live up to the ideals of a fairer and prosperous Scotland.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/cabinet-secretary-for-health-and-social-care-statement-on-anti-racism/>

The Programme for Government, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2024-25-serving-scotland/>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Violent Disorder

col 55 The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper): ... Just before the parliamentary recess, I made a statement to this House on the horrendous attack that took place in Southport on 29 July. ...

That day in the House, all of us came together in sorrow and in solidarity with the families and the people of Southport, and I spoke of the bravery, compassion and distress of the police, the paramedics and the firefighters I had met that morning, who were first on the scene. It is truly appalling that within hours of that statement, the same Southport police were facing the most disgraceful violent attacks from criminals and thugs. Police officers were pelted with bricks and bottles. The local mosque—a place of worship—was subjected to violent attack. While millions of decent people across the country were praying for bereaved families, a criminal minority of thugs and extremists saw only an opportunity to hijack a town's grief. ...

col 56 In the days that followed, we saw further disgraceful violent disorder in a number of towns and cities. There were repeated attacks on the same police officers whose job it is to keep communities safe, and over 100 officers were injured. In Sunderland, a citizens advice branch was set alight. In Liverpool, a library and vital community hub was torched. In Hull, shops were looted and a mosque was targeted. In Rotherham, a hotel used as asylum accommodation was set alight when people were inside. In Bolton, clashes between rival groups involved fireworks and bottles being thrown. And we saw people targeted on the streets because of the colour of their skin. This disgraceful disorder and racist hatred, included that whipped up by a hateful minority online, was an insult to those grieving over Southport.

Let us be very clear: those violent and criminal attacks were not protests. They were not about grievance. They were thuggery, racism and crime. Plenty of people across the country have strong views about crime, policing, immigration, asylum, the NHS and more, but they do not pick up bricks and throw them at the police. They do not loot shops or

attack places of worship, and they do not set buildings alight knowing that other human beings are inside. ...

The Prime Minister and I made it clear that criminals would pay the price for their violence, and we meant it. The Prime Minister announced a new national violent disorder programme to bring together the best policing capabilities and enhance intelligence sharing across forces, and Ministers worked daily with the police and criminal justice partners to ensure that there was a strong and determined response. The National Police Co-ordination Centre operated a national mobilisation plan to ensure that strategic reserves of public order officers were ready to be deployed in support of different police forces. More than 40,000 officer shifts were worked by public order officers over 10 days, with over 6,600 public order officers deployed on one day alone. Rest days were cancelled and additional hours were worked.

The Crown Prosecution Service deployed over 100 additional prosecutors, boosting its 24-hour charging service with additional advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions so that they could move swiftly to charge. The Ministry of Justice accelerated the work on new cells to bring 500 more prison places on stream earlier, and the Lord Chancellor made it clear that the courts stood ready to hear all the cases coming through. The Home Office established a new rapid procedure for security support for mosques to ensure that communities felt supported and safe. In total, around 1,280 people have been arrested, around 800 charges have been made and over 570 individuals had been brought before the courts for offences such as violent disorder, assaults on emergency workers, arson and encouraging violent attacks online. ...

I want now to update the House on some of the next steps we will take. ...

col 57 I am therefore ... His Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary and fire and rescue services to work quickly with the NPCC, the College of Policing and the national lead for public order, to review the lessons from this summer's events so that we can ensure that strong co-ordination and intelligence systems are in place and that there is sufficient public order policing for the future.

Secondly, as well as ensuring that there is proper punishment for those responsible for this disorder, we will be pressing forward at pace with this Government's mission to take back the safety of our streets and restore respect for the police and the rule of law. We will put thousands more neighbourhood police officers and police community support officers back on the streets, reversing the collapse in community policing and rebuilding the relationship between local communities and forces. ...

Thirdly, I have been concerned for a long time that not enough is being done to counter extremism—including both Islamist extremism and far right extremism—as there has been no proper strategy in place since 2015. I have ordered a rapid review of extremism to ensure that we have the strongest possible response to the poisonous ideologies that corrode community cohesion and fray the fabric of our democracy. ...

Fourthly, the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology will strengthen the requirements for social media companies to take responsibility for the poison being proliferated on their platforms with the roll-out of the measures in the Online Safety Act 2023, and we will continue to be clear that criminal content online results in criminal sanctions offline. Fifthly, we stand ready to support the police through the special grant for policing, and the Home Office will work with police and crime commissioners to ensure that the Riot Compensation Act 2016 works effectively in the areas that are affected. ...

col 58 **James Cleverly (Conservative):** ... There is not, and never can be, any excuse, justification or rationale for the violent disorder that we have seen. We cannot and will not let rioting thugs or extremists win. The Government must always back our police officers to do what is necessary to maintain law and order. Attacks on the police by any group must not be tolerated, and intimidation of the public or the media cannot be allowed.

Does the Home Secretary now see that the comments made by one of her Ministers at the time of the riots, seemingly making excuses for armed thugs who intimidated the media,

undermines the Government's credibility, reinforces the accusations of bias, and puts people, including police officers, at increased risk?

Does the Home Secretary now also recognise that the Labour leadership kneeling in the immediate aftermath of the Black Lives Matter disorder, when violent protestors attacked police officers, makes it look like her party takes some forms of violence less seriously than others? Does she accept that any perception whatsoever of treating the same crime differently, based on the race, religion or community of the perpetrator, increases tension rather than reduces it? ...

Does the Home Secretary also recognise that the delay in holding a Cobra meeting until almost a week after these events started was a mistake, that it created a vacuum and that it delayed the actions that could have brought this disorder to an end more quickly? ...

col 59 Violence has absolutely no place on our streets. Anyone who engages in violent disorder or commits violent crime must face the full force of the law, no matter who they are. We will continue to hold the Government to account to ensure that they deal with disorder swiftly, effectively, fairly and even-handedly.

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... We set up the strategic reserve and it was in place for the second weekend; we had thousands of police officers who were ready. We did not use the old arrangements that we inherited from him, where mutual aid had to be on call and stood up in a rush when it was called for. ...

Secondly, the shadow Home Secretary referred to the issues around social media. Seriously—his party delayed the Online Safety Act 2023 for years. The Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology ... has already been working closely on putting more pressure on the social media companies, but the shadow Home Secretary's party did nothing for years. ...

col 60 Finally, I have to say that the shadow Home Secretary is playing games, undermining the credibility of the police. He is trying to blame the Prime Minister for something that happened four years ago—saying he is somehow responsible for the violent disorder on our streets this summer—and undermining the credibility of police officers. ...

Andy Slaughter (Labour): ... Was my right hon. Friend, like me, concerned about the number of very young people—pre-teen, in some cases—who took part? ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: My hon. Friend makes an important point about the number of young people involved. Some of them had a string of convictions—they had history—but there were also young people who were drawn into violence and disorder, sometimes antisocial behaviour and the looting of shops, or sometimes into serious violence as well. ...

Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat): ... does she agree that this renders urgent the need to appoint an independent adviser on Islamophobia, a post that has been vacant for the past two years, and to have a formal definition of Islamophobia, in order to underpin and inform Government policy across the board and across all Departments?

col 61 **Reply from Yvette Cooper:** ... there were significant attacks on mosques, which is why we brought forward the work on mosque security. He is also right that we need to challenge Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate wherever it is found. ...

Patrick Hurley (Labour): ... It is no surprise to me that some of the targets of the violence were places of worship, a citizens advice bureau and a library. These are the places where communities go to heal, and when they are driven to improve each other and themselves. The thugs who attacked those targets set their faces against community self-improvement, so it is no surprise that those were the targets they attacked.

For those who continue to propagate the lie that the thuggery we saw came from justifiable concerns or that the actions of the mob are somehow justified, will the Home Secretary reiterate that what happened in Southport provides no justification at all for anyone throwing bricks at the police, attacking people in their own cars or burning down buildings with people inside them? ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... He is absolutely right that no one should ever use the terrible attack on three little girls as an excuse for the kinds of violent disorder we have seen. ...

Julian Lewis (Conservative): Does the Home Secretary agree that one reason why what might be called her shock and awe policy successfully shut down the violence so quickly was the speed with which the offenders were brought before the courts and sentenced? ...

col 62 **Reply from Yvette Cooper:** ... There is no doubt that the swift response from the police, the prosecution and the criminal justice system had a strong impact and was clearly a deterrent and an overwhelming signal to people that if they get involved in disorder they will pay the price. ...

Dawn Butler (Labour): ... There is no excuse for being racist or for using the innocent lives of Elsie, Alice and Bebe. ... It is important that we are all mindful about how we use language in this House, especially when we are referring to immigration and migration. It is also important that we talk not only about thuggery and racism, but about Islamophobia. The rise in racism is frightening ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... One of the most troubling things that we saw during those days of violent disorder was people feeling fearful to be out on the streets because of the colour of their skin. That should never happen in our country, which is why we do have to challenge racism and extremism wherever they are found. ...

Gavin Robinson (DUP): ... I agree with the Home Secretary's condemnation of violence. Indeed, I suspect her unwillingness to open up this statement is because she wants the voice of this House to be one of condemnation of violence. She is right about that ...

col 63 **Reply from Yvette Cooper:** ... An important debate needs to take place around border security, the asylum system, the way immigration rules operate and so on. Those are all reforms that this Government want to bring forward, but, quite simply, it is important that no one should excuse the violent disorder that we saw as somehow being related to issues about policy. Lots of people have really strong views about immigration policy, but they do not pick up bricks and throw them at the police.

Jonathan Brash (Labour): ... It is undoubtedly the case that the violence was fuelled by the lies and misinformation that are largely, although not exclusively, perpetrated online. What can the Home Secretary do to challenge and prevent the spread of that misinformation ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: My hon. Friend is right that there has been continual misinformation about this—often deliberate misinformation. Those who made the decision to get involved in violent disorder—attacks on the police, attacks on shops, the looting and the disgraceful behaviour—have to take responsibility for their own actions. They cannot blame things that they saw online for that.

Equally, we have also made it clear that what is criminal offline is also criminal online. There is an important responsibility on those posting online and also on the social media companies to make sure that criminal content is taken down. ...

col 64 **Pete Wishart (SNP):** We in Scotland are grateful that we were spared any of the violence that we saw throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. The Home Secretary says that she wants a debate. Does she accept that the way that immigrants and asylum seekers have been portrayed by a host of political voices has helped to foster, foment and even encourage some of the scenes that we witnessed? ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... Some of what we saw was extremism, as well as local criminals and thugs. Some people who had a violent history of crime in the local area also got involved. To deal with the disorder, we have to deal with all the different aspects and origins of it.

col 65 **Stella Creasy (Labour Co-op):** ... these events did not happen in a vacuum. That is why, after three days of distress and panic in Walthamstow because somebody published a list suggesting that thugs were going to come to our community, thousands of

people took to our streets. They stood with members of our local mosques and churches, holding hands with them to keep them safe. They helped businesses to board up their properties. We even had knitters against Nazis.

As much as we are grateful for that solidarity, we ... know that the fear endures even after the immediate threat has gone. That is the challenge that we have to deal with in this place: those people who promote anger rather than answers to the challenges that we face in our society. ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: Nobody in Britain should ever feel afraid because of the colour of their skin. That is the really troubling thing that we found people saying and feeling as a result of the violent disorder earlier in the summer. I have set up a review around countering extremism. I have had concerns for a long time that not enough is being done to counter extremism in this country. That means far-right extremism, Islamist extremism, and some of the other forms of changing extremism that do not fit necessarily into the clear, more historical, categories.

There has been a definition that the Home Office has used for a long time around “extreme right-wing” extremism, and some of the issues online, but we also know that there are changing patterns, particularly with online radicalisation. ... We need to tackle all forms of extremism and violent hatred. It is so important to our wellbeing as a democracy and who we are as a country. We have always stood against that kind of extremism, and we must continue to do so.

col 66 **Nadia Whittome (Labour):** The appalling racist riots may be over for now, but the ideology behind them is a growing threat, both here and internationally. In Germany, for example, the far right has just won a state election for the first time since the second world war. Does the Home Secretary agree that to prevent more people being won over by the far right, our Government must deliver proper improvements in living standards in order to combat disillusionment, and refuse to march to the beat of the far right’s drum on immigration and Islamophobia?

Reply from Yvette Cooper: Clearly, we want to see increasing living standards right across the board. ... We also need a serious and sensible debate on a range of policies, including on crime, immigration and other issues ... We have to take much stronger action to counter the kinds of online radicalisation that we have seen, whether we are talking about far-right extremism or Islamist extremism. ...

Siân Berry (Green): The ugly, racist mob violence in our towns and cities this summer was incited and organised by far-right groups, often using electronic platforms including Telegram and X. For example, on Telegram, groups have distributed instructions for making petrol bombs. Locations of hotels housing migrants and offices of immigration lawyers were also shared. Elon Musk, the proprietor of X, has greatly amplified some accounts that promote racist violence in our cities, while failing to take action to remove others. In the Home Secretary’s response, will she look at options for prosecuting those who own platforms that may have enabled or committed crimes under section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006?

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... full implementation of the Online Safety Act 2023 has been long delayed and is still needed. One of the provisions of the Act is a requirement on social media companies to remove illegal content. Many of the examples that she raises are of illegal content that is still available online, which is shocking and irresponsible. ... Social media companies should also take much broader responsibility for ignoring their own terms and conditions, their responsibility towards communities and public safety. ...

col 67 **Apsana Begum (Independent):** For too long, Muslims have been scapegoated for the failings of the political and economic system by the same type of politics that led to the hostile environment for migrants. Can the Home Secretary outline the steps that she will take to ensure that any measures that arise from the rapid review of extremism do not perpetuate or extend harm to the very communities—Muslims and migrants—who have

been the primary target of the far right's violence?

col 68 Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... The whole purpose of the review on countering extremism is to make sure that we tackle the kinds of extremism that we have seen grow in this country in recent years. That includes far-right extremism, Islamist extremism, the violent Islamophobia and attacks that we have seen, and concerns around antisemitic attacks. We have to make sure that we do so, and it is immensely important that we work with the communities who are often the most affected by extremism and the damage that it can do. ...

Andrew Pakes (Labour): ... Can the Home Secretary give confidence and comfort to communities like mine that, in the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to tackle extremism, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred? ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... That is why the Deputy Prime Minister is taking forward work around community cohesion. We should also recognise that, right across the country, the overwhelming majority of people were truly appalled by what we saw from a small minority of people. The action that we took was important, because it meant that the small minority involved in disorder faced consequences, but they do not speak for Britain...

col 69 Jim Shannon (DUP): ... With regard to community tensions, it is essential that everyday people who have legitimate concerns about illegal immigration are not drawn into situations that become less about the right to display disapproval and protest, and more about violence. How will the Government seek to ensure that those with legitimate concerns are heard, and that those whose intent is simply to disrupt and destroy are dealt with appropriately?

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... He is right that most people in the country want a serious debate about the importance of net migration coming down. ... We also need to recognise that most people across the country want stronger border controls, and for the UK to continue to do its bit to help those who have fled persecution and conflict, but they want the rules to be properly respected and enforced, and those who do not have a right to be in the UK properly returned. ... Most people want to be part of that debate; the overwhelming majority do not want to go anywhere near this kind of violence and thuggery, because that is not the kind of country we are. Those are not the values that most people in this country have. ...

Kim Johnson (Labour): ... the diverse communities of my Liverpool Riverside constituency, particularly those who are visibly black and Muslim, are still very anxious about going out, due to the rise in racism and Islamophobia. My right hon. Friend mentioned the Deputy Prime Minister's work on community cohesion. I would be grateful if she confirmed whether local authorities like mine will receive additional funding to undertake that work.

Reply from Yvette Cooper: The Deputy Prime Minister will be working with local councils across the country on what we need to do to improve cohesion. ... we cannot have a situation where people feel afraid or at risk on the streets of this country because of the colour of their skin or their religion. That is why it is so important that the two programmes on cohesion and extremism work in parallel.

col 70 Connor Naismith (Labour): Does the Home Secretary agree that those who suggest that this country has some form of two-tier policing serve only to undermine our brave frontline police officers ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... Police officers in this country take an oath when they become officers to operate without fear or favour. ... Those claims have been used by those who want somehow to legitimise attacks on the police, who work so hard to keep us safe. It is wrong to make those claims. ...

col 71 Afzal Khan (Labour): ... the Home Secretary ... announced rapid access to the protective security scheme for mosques, which was welcomed by mosques across the UK, to help them provide additional security when needed. Can she confirm how many

mosques have accessed that funding, and what proactive engagement the Home Office has had with mosques and Muslim organisations to support them in their funding applications?

Reply from Yvette Cooper: ... everybody has the right to feel safe at their place of worship, without fear of attack. I will send him further details on the precise numbers, but dozens of mosques came forward and were provided with swift support to ensure that they had security in place under the accelerated procedure. It is important that Muslim communities feel safe.

col 72 Andy McDonald (Labour): ... the Home Secretary ... will be aware that the riots, which sought to exploit the Southport killings for a racist and Islamophobic agenda, included one in Middlesbrough that saw homes, businesses and vehicles damaged in a predominantly Asian and Muslim area, where thugs created roadblocks that allowed only white British drivers to pass. That racist violence caused real fear, resulting in the postponement of the Middlesbrough Mela, the premier celebration of multiculturalism in the north-east. The community, which so magnificently cleaned up the mess, refuses to be cowed, so the mela will go ahead this coming weekend. ...

Reply from Yvette Cooper: I am glad to hear my hon. Friend's description of the way in which communities come together to celebrate. It is distressing to hear about the fear that was created and the community events that were delayed because of it. ...

Joani Reid (Labour): There has been much discussion of the role that social media played in fuelling the violent disorder that we have seen on our streets. Many of the extremists were swiftly arrested and charged; does my right hon. Friend agree that those who spread pernicious and poisonous online lies should also share responsibility for the disorder that we have seen, and that online thugs who deliberately stir up hatred and division should have been similarly punished? If not, what does she think can be done about this increasingly wicked online behaviour?

Reply from Yvette Cooper: My hon. Friend is right: we have seen deliberate attempts to radicalise people or promote extremism online, including on social media platforms, and we have seen illegal content not taken down. Obviously, incitement and encouragement of serious violence and racial hatred offline has been a criminal offence in this country for many years, but what is criminal offline is also criminal online. ...

Andrew Lewin (Labour): Last month, Elon Musk fanned the flames of violent disorder. He personally amplified extremist accounts and, shamefully, even said that he believed our country was heading for "civil war". Some 10 months previously, the leader of the Conservative party invited Elon Musk to Downing Street, and in a stunt, they even superimposed his new logo on to the front of Downing Street. Does my right hon. Friend agree that that was a major error of judgment ...

col 73 Reply from Yvette Cooper: There is an important point here, which is that the social media companies and their owners need to take some responsibility for the criminal content that appears on their platforms, but also for the way that they operate—for the way that their algorithms operate, and how they can be used and manipulated by extremists. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/BCE59770-06E2-4D12-908D-4CDAD8046C58/ViolentDisorder>

The July Ministerial Statement referred to above by Yvette Cooper can be read at
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-30/debates/FEFD41FE-E92C-4F6F-B33D-4087E36510C9/SouthportIncident#contribution-88DF5349-DB3D-4D54-A4BF-3BD2F422402D>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Violent Disorder

[The Home Secretary's statement to the House of Commons](#) was read in the Lords.

col 1072 Lord Sharpe of Epsom (Conservative): ... There can never be any excuse for this type of behaviour, and I agree with the Home Secretary that this was thuggish and criminal activity. There are plenty of ways to express legitimate frustrations and points of view in this country, and many do without resorting to violence and intimidation. Acting at speed to quell the disturbances was the right thing to do ...

col 1073 However, the Home Secretary's Statement yesterday also prompted a number of questions ... First, the Home Secretary described actions taken by the NPCC and referenced that: "the co-ordination infrastructure and systems that they had to work with were too weak".

Can the Minister expand on that and explain which systems were too weak and why? ... our police forces retain operational independence. That phrase may be frustrating on occasions, but it also describes an important underlying principle that Ministers, while no doubt "working daily"—to quote the Home Secretary again—should not get involved in operational matters. ...

Following on from that, what are the terms of reference for the review that the Home Secretary has commissioned to ensure that there is "sufficient public order policing for the future"? What does "sufficient" mean? ...

The Home Secretary talked about countering extremism, and that is of course welcome. She referenced Islamist and far-right extremism, but I note made no mention at all of far-left extremism. Why not? I am sorry to say that the far left is in large part responsible for the most enduring form of racism: that of anti-Semitism. That is worse now than in my lifetime, and it sickens and disgusts. I will be charitable and allow that those who conflate what is happening in the Middle East with the British Jewish community are just stupid, but some will not be, and they are just as manipulative as those who foment hatred of other groups and individuals. Can the Minister reassure us that the previous Government's work supporting CREST and the Jewish community will continue, and that anti-Semitism and those stoking it will be met with the full force of the law?

col 1074 My final questions relate to ... perceived inconsistencies in the policing of protest. ... there is a lingering suspicion that some riots and disorder attract more robust attention than others. Referring back to my previous question, there was clear evidence of anti-Semitism on our streets in relation to Israel/Gaza, and I know that the police have now made many arrests. I understand, of course, that it can be difficult to make arrests during a demonstration; the police are usually heavily outnumbered, so that could cause more trouble. Nevertheless, the impression created was one of a degree of tolerance for the chanting of well-worn anti-Semitic tropes and the display of symbols sympathetic to proscribed terrorist organisations. Similarly, in Harehills, in Leeds the police seemingly disappeared when the Romanian Roma community rioted. Why? ...

Baroness Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrat): ... My Lords, the shocking deaths of three little girls in Southport, followed by the shocking disorder on our streets perpetrated by a minority of violent thugs, was truly frightening. There was racist mob violence in our towns and cities, clearly incited and organised by far-right groups and individuals—mainly online, where shockingly they shared the locations of hotels and hostels housing asylum seekers and migrants. ...

The bravery and professionalism of the police and emergency services are to be commended. They were dealing with what was sometimes an impossible job. However, it is disappointing that the Official Opposition has not mentioned the targeted attack on Muslim communities. They were clearly the focus of these attacks; online, we saw the most appalling Islamophobia and hate crimes. That affects not just Muslims in this country

but those perceived to be Muslims, who were of course migrants and asylum seekers—and anyone perceived to be a supporter of or even associated with asylum seekers, or from an ethnic-minority community. ... Some of them felt that they could not stay in their homes, in an area such as Walthamstow that was targeted.

col 1075 Does the Minister agree that to tackle record levels of hate crimes against Muslims we need a consistent and coherent approach to tackling Islamophobia, underpinned by a working definition to better understand what Islamophobia is and is not, in the way that we have—quite rightly—a working definition of anti-Semitism? Six years ago, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims put forward the first working definition of Islamophobia after two years of consultation with 800 community groups up and down the country, with all faiths and with victims of hate crimes. That definition was accepted by all parties, apart from the last Government. Will this Government look to revisit that, and start to come to a proper understanding and definition of what we mean by Islamophobia? Do they intend to appoint an independent adviser on Islamophobia—a post that has been vacant for two years? Discrimination, prejudice and hatred damage everyone and the fabric of our society. We must work together to challenge it.

The Statement mentions far-right extremism, which has been on the rise. We saw some people on the streets with signs depicting Nazi emblems. Make no mistake, these people are entrenched in anti-Semitism if they support Nazi symbols and that kind of behaviour. ...

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Lord Hanson of Flint): ... we had 40,000 police hours over the course of those riots. I pay tribute ... to police officers who gave up their leave, faced attacks, and stood for the values of this House and this Parliament in defending individuals from the Islamic community, and from other communities, who were under attack from forces which should have known better. ...

We fully support police independence. ... the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, me and other Ministers in the Home Office met police shortly after those events to encourage and understand the response that they were going to make independently. Make no mistake, when criminal acts of intimidation and Islamophobia are committed, properties are burned down and legitimate sources of government support for asylum seekers are attacked, the courts will take action. ...

col 1076 ... the Home Secretary, the Prime Minister and the Home Office team will undertake a review not just of the incidents and the response, and not just of the capability of the response or how it was organised, but of the underlying factors behind those concerns. ...

I say to both Front Benches that extremism on all sides is something that we have to take cognisance of; we must be responsible in our approach to it and look at the underlying causes. There is much radicalisation online; there are people in bedrooms on their own being radicalised from both the left and the right, and on a whole range of issues. ...

The noble Lord's question on anti-Semitism is equally as important as the point about Islamophobia. I want to see individuals in this society respected for their beliefs. I was very pleased to see, in discussions I had with members of the Church of England, that they had reached out to colleagues from the Jewish and Muslim communities and, particularly in Southport, had stood side by side to show support and that we have respect for religious beliefs. We respect the differences in those religious beliefs and understand that people live their lives and live their religious beliefs differently, but all have a right to live, breath and support themselves in the communities that we represent. ...

Let there be no mistake that a crime is a crime, and when people throw rocks, abuse, intimidate, organise on social media or encourage others to do so ... those are crimes. ...

col 1077 ... the question of Islamophobia is extremely important. We live in a multicultural society. These are people of the Islamic faith who have been born here and whose fathers and mothers have been born here. It is not an issue of race but an issue of faith, and people have the right to express their faith openly, in accordance with their principles. One thing that we did in response to the attacks was to provide additional support to mosques in a protection fund. To go back to the point about anti-Semitism, that has applied equally to Jewish community organisations and facilities. We will continue to do that. ...

The Lord Bishop of Southwark: ... I am grateful that Members of the House have spoken so powerfully on the evil of anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and racist incidents, which the Minister rightly addressed as criminality. In addition to the measures announced, are His Majesty's Government seeking to address, perhaps through an inquiry, some of the underlying economic and social issues that can render people vulnerable to exploitation and incitement, to their own cost and to the detriment of the wider community?

Reply from Lord Hanson of Flint: ... While I cannot give assurances today on timescales or terms of reference ... we have to tackle the underlying causes of individuals feeling alienated from society. There is no excuse for that behaviour—it is criminal behaviour and will be dealt with as criminal behaviour—but we still have to understand the reasons why people have fallen into that criminal behaviour ...

col 1078 **Lord Carlile of Berriew (Crossbench):** ... I ask ... whether [the Minister] agrees that the actions of online entities such as Channel3Now in Pakistan, allowing online advertising sites to make money by purveying violent, demonstrably deliberate untruths about the country we live in, is wholly unacceptable. ...

Reply from Lord Hanson of Flint: ... Much of the content that fired the organisation of some of the events we saw, not just in Southport but across the whole United Kingdom, began its life in an internet or social media post that encouraged poor behaviour, not just in the UK but, as the noble Lord said, outside the United Kingdom.

The Online Safety Act was passed by both Houses in the last Parliament and was the child of the previous Government. The level of implementation of some of the measures in that Act needs to be looked at. ...

Lord Reid of Cardowan (Labour): ... There is no doubt in my mind that there are deep underlying causes to what we saw. The Minister mentioned online social media. I believe they are instrumental but not the underlying causes. In my view, the underlying causes lie in the poisoned chalice that the Government have been given of apparently unlimited immigration, huge reductions in public services and the language used for the past 10 years describing immigrants as “dangerous aliens” whether they are legal or illegal immigrants. ...

col 1079 **Reply from Lord Hanson of Flint:** ... In my view, immigration falls into three or four categories: immigration for everyone from the centre forward of a football team through to a professor or somebody else coming to this country because they are an expert in their field and bringing a contribution to the growth of our economy, versus people coming on a boat seeking asylum or people coming here completely illegally. The debate needs to be put into the context of how we manage that. We need to detoxify the debate to ensure that we deal with asylum and speed up asylum claims; deal with people who have come here illegally, because we must have integrity in the migration system; and make sure that, in doing that, we do not turn away people who will help us grow our economy or bring skills and challenges to our society. ...

col 1080 **Lord Hogan-Howe (Crossbench):** ... I ask the Minister to consider two big issues in the review that he mentioned. First, there was clearly a lack of intelligence at times about the groups involved—what they were planning and how many would turn up. Sometimes over the last few years it has become difficult to use some of the most intrusive

surveillance gathering against political extremists. We understand why—obviously, political parties should not be targeted in that way—but, where politics veers into violence, that is a different matter altogether. ...

The second area that the review might consider is the number of officers that can be mobilised together quickly and in large numbers. It was mentioned that by the time that the riots started to subside, around 4,000 officers were being deployed. This sounds like a lot, but when you consider that in Notting Hill recently—where two murders sadly occurred—7,000 officers were deployed in about half a square mile, and that the riots of 2011 were only subdued when 16,000 officers were patrolling the streets of this city ...

Reply from Lord Hanson of Flint: ... It is important to note that on Saturday 10 August, 6,675 officers were deployed in a single day to hold back criminal riotous behaviour. ...

The extremely important point was made that intelligence-led policing is absolutely vital to ensure that we get ahead of what is happening. That means using important—but difficult and challenging—tactics which involve looking at social media posts, tracking and looking at the capability of potential offenders and advising forces on how to deal with them in potential hotspots. ...

col 1081 **Lord Caine (Conservative):** ... Will the Minister ... join me in condemning those who immediately sought to exploit the appalling violence that took place in Harehills for their own political ends, using language that was designed only to stoke division and tension within that community, and did so from the luxury of Milwaukee? I refer, of course, to the leader of Reform UK.

Reply from Lord Hanson of Flint: ... The Member for Clacton, if that was the Member he was referring to, is responsible for his own comments, in his own way and in his own time. ... If, underneath that, there are long-term trends of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, right-wing ideology or, indeed, extreme left-wing ideology, we need to look, in a cold, calm way, at what has caused that, how we deal with it, how ... we intelligently police it and, ultimately, how we bring people to court if they have committed criminal offences. ...

Baroness Fox of Buckley (Non-affiliated): ... I want to know whether there is any ministerial concern about the many free speech and civil liberties organisations around the world expressing shock about the degree of state-backed censorship being greenlighted in the wake of the riots. ... The majority of people have not been incarcerated for incitement. They may have put out bigoted memes that we can deplore; none the less, people in the UK are being imprisoned not for what they do but for what they say. As there seem to be threats of more censorship, I want the Minister to reassure me that we will not end up in a situation where these riots, which were tragic enough, will chill legitimate debate and lead to a censorious, authoritarian atmosphere where people are frightened to speak freely.

col 1082 **Reply from Lord Hanson of Flint:** There is freedom of speech, and I made it very clear in the wake of the riots that people are entitled to criticise the UK Government's asylum policy, immigration policy or any aspect of UK government policy. What they are not entitled to do is to incite racial hatred, to incite criminal activity, to incite attacks on mosques or to incite burnings or other criminal, riotous behaviour. That is the threshold. The threshold is not me saying, "I do not like what they have said" ... the threshold is determined by criminal law, is examined by the police and is referred to the CPS. ...

Lord Brown of Ladyton (Labour): ... the Minister will be aware of the analysis by the European Consortium for Political Research ... The correlation between the location of violence and the incidence of child poverty in any area was significantly greater than the correlation between rioting and the presence of any of the other, many factors that people have attributed the violence to. ...

Reply from Lord Hanson of Flint: ... the Home Office, via the Deputy Prime

Minister and her department, wishes to look at some of the wider issues of social deprivation that may or may not have contributed to these riots. However ... we still have to focus on the points that were made in this debate: irrespective of social conditions in a particular area, scapegoating and attacking citizens or individuals who have in many cases no relationship to those causes is simply not acceptable, so they have to face the law. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-09-03/debates/0EA031F6-6557-48DD-93AD-B7EABA1F68B4/ViolentDisorder>

The analysis referred to above by Lord Brown of Ladyton can be read at

<https://theloop.ecpr.eu/what-caused-the-riots-in-britain/>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Islamophobia

Afzal Khan (Labour) [900272] What steps [the Minister] is taking to help tackle Islamophobia.

Reply from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Angela Rayner): Islamophobia is a scourge on our society that must be rooted out, and I thank my hon. Friend for his work on this issue. Much of last month's violent disorder was Islamophobic, and the targeting of Muslims shows that we need to go further and faster in tackling this vile hatred, which was fuelled by fake news. We have now provided greater security and rapid support for Muslim communities, and our Faith Minister in the other place, Lord Khan, is actively considering further steps to crack down on anti-Muslim hatred, monitor Islamophobia and engage the community effectively.

Afzal Khan: My right hon. Friend will know the fear and distress that the civil disorder this summer caused to many of my constituents and to Muslim communities across the country who were targeted by violent extremists. I am sure that she will join me in making it clear that the vast majority of people in our country—of all faiths and backgrounds—wish only to live together peacefully and utterly reject those who stir up division. What engagement have Ministers undertaken with Muslim communities since those events, and what are they doing to give reassurance for the future?

Reply from Angela Rayner: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to underline that the vast majority of people in this country—of all faiths and backgrounds—want only to live together peacefully, and my Department is at the heart of the Government's work to restore order and unity in all our communities following the appalling disturbances. While we continue to make sure that criminals are brought to swift justice, the vital work to strengthen the bond between the Government and communities, including our Muslim communities and those of many other faiths and backgrounds, is central to this Government's mission to bring the whole country together.

Lee Anderson (Reform): Could the Secretary of State please explain to me and the House what the Government's definition of Islamophobia actually is?

Reply from Angela Rayner: I say to the hon. Member that a new definition must be given careful consideration so that it comprehensively reflects multiple perspectives and considers the potential implications for different communities. We are actively considering our approach to Islamophobia, including definitions, and we will provide further updates in due course.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-09-02/debates/22A1825D-B496-4540-8FA0-DCD9BC70A133/Islamophobia>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Radicalism: Scotland

Blair McDougall (Labour) [900243] To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for the Home Department to help tackle far-right extremism in Scotland.

Reply from Kirsty McNeill: The past weeks have been frightening for many of our communities in Scotland, in particular for Muslims. I will never forget hearing from a young woman who has asked to work from home indefinitely because she is so afraid to be in a city centre, in Scotland, in 2024, wearing the hijab. That is intolerable and cannot - and will not - be accepted.

So I do not share the complacency of some that Scotland has no issues around racism and Islamophobia to address.

The UK Government and Scotland Office are determined to play our part in defeating hate. I am grateful to the civil society and voluntary organisations throughout our communities whose efforts are so vital in supporting that endeavour, and to Police Scotland for their work in keeping us safe.

While I am confident that the true values of this country are best reflected by millions of decent, law abiding people who cherish our neighbours and will not be divided, we must acknowledge that mosques, synagogues and other buildings used by a range of faith communities in Scotland have had to take advantage of Home Office funding for security. Their need to do so shames us all and we will not rest until those responsible for violent disorder are brought to justice and everyone, of every faith and background, feels equally safe.

This government will continue to promote unity and solidarity across the diverse communities that so enrich life in Scotland and the United Kingdom and bring to justice all those engaged in thuggery and violent disorder.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-08-27/900243>

Islamophobia

Kemi Badenoch (Conservative) [2454] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to tackle islamophobia.

Reply from Alex Norris: Islamophobia, and all forms of religious and racial hatred, have absolutely no place in our society. No one should be targeted because of the colour of their skin, or their faith. This Government is clear that perpetrators of such hate crimes will face the full force of the law.

Sadly, we have seen how Muslim communities and other minorities have been targeted in the deplorable acts of violence following the recent tragic events in Southport. This Government will make sure that criminals intent on causing violence and unrest on our streets will be stopped in their tracks and brought to justice thanks to the new National Violent Disorder Programme. We are also providing rapid additional support to mosques through the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme to protect Muslim communities, which comes on top of the £29.4 million already made available to fund security at mosques and Muslim faith schools this year.

British Muslims are a crucial part of Britain's history and British life today. This Government will not tolerate Islamophobia in any form and has committed to a more cohesive and integrated approach to ensure that all forms of hatred are stamped out of our communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-30/2454>

Temples: Security

Paula Barker (Labour) [2147] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

what steps her Department is taking to help protect Hindu temples.

Reply from Dan Jarvis: We are absolutely committed to protecting the right of individuals to freely practise their religion and we will not tolerate anti-Hindu hatred in any form. Government and police routinely assess potential threats to ensure that protective measures are in place to protect Hindu communities and their places of worship against terrorism and hate crime.

Additionally, Hindu temples in England and Wales can benefit from the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme. This scheme offers physical security measures – such as CCTV, intruder alarms, and secure perimeter fencing to places of worship and associated faith community centres, that are particularly vulnerable to religiously or racially motivated hate crime.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-29/2147>

Information about the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

Press Releases

Childminder admits inciting racial hatred over social media post

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/childminder-admits-inciting-racial-hatred-over-social-media-post>

Antisemitism is a scourge on our collective humanity: High Commissioner

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/09/antisemitism-scourge-our-collective-humanity-high-commissioner>

New Publications

Employment Tribunal Judgement: Mr S Thomas v Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, & Ms A Brett

The claimant alleged that his assignment with an NHS Trust had been terminated because of his belief in English nationalism. He claimed that this was belief discrimination contrary to the Equality Act 2010 (“the EqA”). At a preliminary hearing, the employment tribunal held that the claimant’s belief was not protected by the EqA. The claimant appealed against this decision.

The appeal is dismissed. The claimant’s views are of an English nationalism which believes that there is no place in British society for Muslims or Islam itself. Among the claimant’s views are that Muslims should be forcibly deported from the United Kingdom. These views are not capable of protection under the European Convention of Human Rights (“the Convention”) as they would offend Article 17 which provides that “Nothing in this Convention may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the Convention.”

The claimant is not prevented from holding his views, but he is outside of the right to complain that he has been discriminated against in relation to those beliefs in the circumstances covered by the EqA. ...

To read the full judgement see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d97c5cfb86ba5a1f214e47/Mr_S_Thomas_v_1_Surrey_and_Borders_Partnership_NHS_Foundation_Trust_2_Ms_A_Brett_2024_EAT_141.pdf

Antisemitism in schools: How prevalent is it, and how might it affect parents' decisions about where to educate their children post-October 7?

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/School%20experiences%20and%20school%20choices%20-%20JPR%20report%20-%20September%202024.pdf>

News

Angry scenes as thousands attend rival demonstrations in Glasgow

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c20r7wzke97o>

Thousands of protesters turn out for anti-racism rally in Glasgow

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/sep/07/thousands-protesters-anti-racism-rally-glasgow-scotland>

Anti-racism protesters drown out far right in Glasgow

<https://www.thetimes.com/article/e2ea08f1-001b-40e4-9637-ba3a6729fa9f>

Pontins apologise for race discrimination, as equality watchdog announces action plan

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/media-centre/news/pontins-apologise-race-discrimination-equality-watchdog-announces-action-plan>

Pontins says sorry to Travellers over discrimination

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3d92nr2dxmo>

Racial hatred post did not break X rules

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn8lijjimp5o>

TOP

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Release

Urgent action taken to balance Budget

<https://www.gov.scot/news/urgent-action-taken-to-balance-budget/>

New Publications

Programme for Government 2024-25: Serving Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2024-25-serving-scotland/>

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing: The 2024-25 Programme for Government – reaffirming the four priorities: child poverty, economy, climate emergency and public services

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2024/09/06/the-2024-25-programme-for-government-reaffirming-the-four-priorities-child-poverty-economy-climate-emergency-and-public-services/>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Mortgages: Islam

Afzal Khan (Labour) [2132] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing the tax regulations for Sharia-compliant mortgages in line with conventional mortgages.

Reply from James Murray: The Government is committed to the continued strength of the UK Islamic Finance sector, both as an important part of the UK's overall financial ecosystem and as an instrument of financial inclusion.

The alternative finance tax rules aim to provide a level playing field for tax purposes across alternative and conventional financing arrangements.

On 16 January 2024, HM Treasury published a consultation proposing changes to the Capital Gains Tax (CGT) rules that apply to alternative finance arrangements.

The proposed changes seek to amend those rules so that where property is used as collateral for the purposes of raising finance, the CGT outcome is the same whether alternative finance or conventional finance is used. The consultation also asked whether there are any implications for capital allowances. The consultation closed on 9 April 2024 and the Government is considering responses. Next steps will be set out in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-29/2132>

The consultation referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a5058974ae6600d738aa5/240109-Tax_Simplification_for_Alternative_Finance_Consultation_Document.pdf

Taxation

Afzal Khan (Labour) [2131] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether her Department plans to respond to the consultation entitled Tax Simplification for Alternative Finance, which closed 9 April 2024.

Reply from James Murray: The Government is committed to the continued strength of the UK Islamic Finance sector, both as an important part of the UK's overall financial ecosystem and as an instrument of financial inclusion.

The alternative finance tax rules aim to provide a level playing field for tax purposes across alternative and conventional financing arrangements.

On 16 January 2024, HM Treasury published a consultation proposing changes to the Capital Gains Tax (CGT) rules that apply to alternative finance arrangements.

The proposed changes seek to amend those rules so that where property is used as collateral for the purposes of raising finance, the CGT outcome is the same whether alternative finance or conventional finance is used. The consultation also asked whether there are any implications for capital allowances. The consultation closed on 9 April 2024 and the Government is considering responses. Next steps will be set out in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-29/2131>

The consultation referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a5058974ae6600d738aa5/240109-Tax_Simplification_for_Alternative_Finance_Consultation_Document.pdf

TOP

Bills in Progress

** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

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 Support (Prescribed Period) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3758>

Bill as introduced

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/56154/documents/5058>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-09-06/debates/07E04ADF-F94C-4674-A1EF-3B2616736A25/AsylumSupport\(PrescribedPeriod\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-09-06/debates/07E04ADF-F94C-4674-A1EF-3B2616736A25/AsylumSupport(PrescribedPeriod)Bill(HL))

**** Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3747>

Bill as introduced

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/56074/documents/5010>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-09-02/debates/93E3F568-8A6B-4F54-B2C0-C46B16D0AA13/Refugees\(FamilyReunion\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-09-02/debates/93E3F568-8A6B-4F54-B2C0-C46B16D0AA13/Refugees(FamilyReunion)Bill(HL))

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator: Changes to charity law** (closing date 1 October 2024)

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/give-us-your-views-on-important-changes-to-charity-law/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2025-2028 (closing date 3 October 2024)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/our-strategic-plan-consultation-2025-2028>

Intimate Image Abuse Research (closing date not stated)

<https://t.co/X1cGnXygg3>

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

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

Cyber Security Survey (closing date not stated)

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/680a646c-5811-47f4-8958-588f1c794eca>

TOP

Job Opportunities

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

TOP

Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Faithful Welcome

Application deadline not stated

Faith in Community Scotland, and Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees funding of up to £500 to support Scotland's faith communities to welcome refugees and asylum seekers and enable them to be an integral part of community life, wherever they are coming from and whatever the reason. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/bdd5kr6n>

TOP

Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Introduction to supporting refugee integration

10 September 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Scottish Refugee Council course to help you understand the key principles of a rights-based refugee-led approach to integration, the underpinning principles of the Scottish integration framework and effective integration planning. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p9p9jdx>

**** this week!**

Progressing Human Rights

11 September 2024 (Glasgow, 10.00–4.00)

Human Rights Consortium Scotland Conference to explore how can human rights be made more of a reality for more people in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3fpzahjy>

Human Rights and Equalities Workshop

17 September 2024 (paisley, 10.00–2.00)

THRE workshop in collaboration with Engage Renfrewshire to explore how to apply a Human Rights and Equalities First approach to the work of Third Sector organisations. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2mjyu2se>

The Basics: A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach

25 September 2024 (online, 10.00–3.00)

THRE course for people who are just starting out and want to learn the fundamentals or who know a bit about human rights and equalities and want to know more or are just

curious about what a human rights and equalities first approach might be. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2z5b97e8>

Scotland's Programme for Government: What does it mean for Human Rights?

26 September 2024 (online, 12.00–1.00)

Human Rights Consortium Scotland discussion about the Scottish Government's latest Programme for Government and its impact on human rights in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/w2javsx6>

Faith and the Future of Scotland

27 September 2024 (St Andrews, 8.30–5.00)

Scotland's Future, and St Andrews University School of Divinity discussion on how faith can positively shape the future of Scotland by dialoguing across religious and political divides. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/5c4hudzk>

PANEL Workshop: A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach in Practice

3 October 2024 (online, 1.00–4.00)

THRE course about applying a human rights and equalities first approach using the PANEL principles for people who already know a bit about human rights and equalities and want to know how to apply them to their role and/or organisation. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/sy9weepe>

The Basics: A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach

15 and 16 October 2024 (online, 2.00–4.00)

Two-day THRE course for people who are just starting out and want to learn the fundamentals or who know a bit about human rights and equalities and want to know more or are just curious about what a human rights and equalities first approach might be. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yv2p3b7f>

Scottish Interfaith Week

11 to 18 November 2024 (Scotland-wide)

Celebrating 20 years of Scottish Interfaith Week, and encouraging people to discover and learn about the lives of others as an effective way to challenge prejudice and misunderstanding. For information see <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

National Interfaith Conference 2024

12 November 2024 (Dundee, 11.00–4.00)

To mark the 20th anniversary of Scottish Interfaith Week, Interfaith Scotland is hosting a National Interfaith Conference on the theme of "Discovery". The conference will encourage people to discover and learn about the lives of others as an effective way to challenge prejudice and misunderstanding. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/249ac37b>

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 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.