



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Debate

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019

col 628 **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Lord Agnew of Oulton):** ... These regulations represent a significant step that will equip children and young people with the knowledge and support they need to lead safe, healthy and happy lives in modern Britain. ...

col 629 It is important that at the earliest age children are taught the building blocks they need to develop healthy, positive, respectful and safe relationships of all kinds. All of this will be set in the context of, and include, teaching about personal development and virtues such as honesty, integrity, kindness, resilience and courtesy. This will give schools the opportunity to support pupils to develop an inner sense of what is right and wrong, as well as respect for others and for difference. ...

In developing these subjects, we have received significant input from external organisations and education professionals, as well as the tens of thousands of individuals who contributed to our call for evidence and public consultation. In reviewing responses and determining the final content, we have retained a focus on the core principles for the new subjects. These principles are that the subjects should help keep children safe, help prepare them for the world in which they are growing up—including its laws—and help foster respect for others and for difference. The content included should be age appropriate and taught in a sensitive way, respecting the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils.

In developing the accompanying statutory guidance and required content for these subjects, we believe that we have struck the right balance between prescribing the core knowledge and allowing flexibility for schools to design a curriculum that is relevant to their pupils. Parents and carers are the prime teachers for children. Schools complement and reinforce this role by building on what pupils learn at home. That is why we have taken the decision to strengthen the requirement for schools to consult parents on their relationships and RSE policy by enshrining this in the regulations as well as the guidance. Schools must consult parents on their proposed policy and any subsequent reviews of it, enabling

parents to have the time and opportunity to ask questions and share concerns. It is then for schools to decide a reasonable way forward. ...

We have retained the long-standing ability for parents to request that their child be withdrawn from sex education. Where a primary school chooses to teach sex education, parents will have a right to request that their child be withdrawn; this must be granted by the head teacher. At secondary school, for sex education within RSE, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, unless there are exceptional circumstances, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. At that point, if the child wishes to take part in sex education, the head teacher should ensure they receive it in one of those terms.

col 630 We could not have retained the right to withdraw as it stands because an absolute parental right up to 18 years old is no longer compatible with English case law and the European Convention on Human Rights. Where a head teacher makes an assessment of the request, their assessment will be based not on their personal principles or an assessment of the parents' beliefs but on the particular circumstances of the child. ...

col 631 **Baroness Massey of Darwen (Labour):** ... Will the decision that academies and free schools will not be required to teach sex education, but simply be encouraged to do so, be reviewed? This will affect a great number of children and leave them disadvantaged in relation to protection from harm and gaining important knowledge. ...

col 632 Some of us have concerns about discussing certain issues with children and young people and worry about "corruption". These guidelines make it clear that teaching materials should be age appropriate. ...

col 633 **Baroness Deech (Crossbench):** ... My main fear is that teachers will need protection. As the noble Lord, Lord Storey, said, some of the objections to these regulations are so blinkered and bigoted that one fears very much for the children and the teachers who may be subjected to this sort of unfortunate propaganda. In fact, the children in the care of such people may be the ones most at risk of female genital mutilation and abuse. For their sakes, as well as everybody else's, the facts must be taught. ...

col 634 The new regulations are welcome because they say that misogyny and homophobia must not be tolerated. They are not saying that any particular way of life must be promoted or forced on children—far from it. In fact, as I read it, the guidance strongly supports marriage and parental guidance. Parents should not fear because, if they have a different viewpoint to whatever is taught in school, they can point out to their children at home that they do not approve of it. However, that does not mean that the existence of different lifestyles and sexualities should not be taught in school. Indeed, children will probably get something far worse from watching things online or from their classmates than they will ever be taught at school. It is a matter of regret that primary and secondary schoolchildren could be withdrawn from sex education. The ones who are withdrawn will probably get a much worse representation of what is going on when they ask their classmates what they have missed. ...

col 639 **The Lord Bishop of Durham:** ... I am pleased that schools must take into account the faith background of pupils and work in collaboration with parents in drawing up their policies, and that they must consult parents on the planning of sex education and the resources used. It is worth noting in this debate that the Church of England has been in close contact with our Muslim friends, who share a number of our concerns.

I am also glad that sex education will be optional in primary school. However, I am deeply concerned that the same cannot be said of relationships education. Psychologists, ethicists and paediatricians often debate at what age and developmental stage it is appropriate to be exploring early concepts of relationality and sexuality. For example, girls continue to hit puberty earlier and earlier, while the average age of boys maturing remains more constant. How are schools to come to a conclusion about how and when they teach on such issues, and how will such decisions and resources then be adequately

monitored? ...

The relationships curriculum highlights the unique space that families occupy in our society, often acting as a nurturing space for children. It teaches children to respect the diversity of families. Although its motives are honourable, I do not believe it lives up to its own standard in respecting the diversity of parental concern. ...

I conclude by returning to my opening point. Relationships are primarily formed, not taught. The family is the key place where this happens: schools only follow this. ...

col 643 Lord Farmer (Conservative): ... can the Minister clarify whether the Government's intention is the same as was stated in 2017 by the then Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families during the passage of the Children and Social Work Act: "We have committed to retain a right to withdraw from sex education in RSE, because parents should have the right, if they wish, to teach sex education themselves in a way that is consistent with their values".—[[Official Report, Commons, 7/3/17; col. 705.](#)]

That would mean, for example, that if for reasons of religious belief a parent withdraws their child from sex education up to age of 15, the right of withdrawal will be respected. Currently, the proposals seem to put the final decision firmly in the hands of head teachers not parents, as they are given a power of veto on parents' wishes. ...

col 644 ... after these draft regulations were laid before Parliament, the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee received evidence from over 430 members of the public. All expressed concern about the regulations and many made it clear that they were Christians and that their concern arose out of their religious belief.

The committee set out the main issues raised in these submissions, including,

"a very widespread concern to protect *the right of parents to educate their own children on matters such as relationships and sexual health*".

One particular quote stood out to me:

"The assumption seems to be growing that it is the state which educates children, assisted by parents. It should always be the other way round. It is the parents' job to educate, train and guide their children"—

And, as the right reverend Prelate emphasised, those relationships should be formed at home—"and the state should not take this upon itself". ...

Will my noble friend ensure that the chief inspector and her inspectorate are fully aligned to the new curriculum and its requirement, explicit in primary legislation and now guidance, to have due regard to the age and religious background of pupils? ...

col 647 Lord Morrow (DUP): ... It is the right of parents to withdraw their children from RSE. At the heart of this debate is a simple question: do we trust parents? Do we trust parents to decide what is best for their children? Do we trust parents to steward their authority over their children's education? Do we trust parents to ensure that such education is in conformity with their religious and philosophical convictions? My view is that the Government should do all they can to empower parents, not to undermine them and reduce their authority and responsibility over their children....

col 650 Baroness Barker (Liberal Democrat): ... I wish we could trust every parent to do the right thing—we cannot. I wish we could trust every teacher to do the right thing—we cannot. But teachers are subject to inspection and regulation of what they do so, ultimately, if a child is missing out in school, it will be found in that way. It is important therefore that, on balance, we give educators a greater role in this than perhaps some people would like. ...

col 652 Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown (DUP): ... I remind this House that the responsibility to raise our children is one that is given not by man but by God. Children are a gift from God. The scriptures tell us that children are the heritage of the Lord. Parenthood is given by God and parents carry a God-given responsibility and authority for raising children ...

We are also reminded that parents are given the responsibility to "train up" their children.

That is recorded in the Book of Proverbs, in chapter 22, verse 6: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”.

Therefore, in my opinion, anything that undermines this is of great concern and is a radical shift with far-reaching consequences.

col 653 Sex and relationships education is primarily the responsibility of parents. ... Parental responsibility must be maintained and parental rights of withdrawal from sex education ought also to be maintained.

Today, it seems popular to give sex education to children that ignores biblical standards. ... I believe that ignoring biblical standards is damaging to our young people. Whose standards are we teaching? Do we want society’s standards? Do we want what is regarded by society as acceptable? ...

I also think we ought to acknowledge that there are teachers in state or maintained schools who have strong biblical convictions. What about them? What are their rights? Will they be forced to teach what they do not believe, or things that go against their religious convictions? ...

... the draft statutory guidance states that, “except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents’ request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16”.

col 654 Of course they are to respect the parents’ request, but the headmaster is given a greater responsibility and authority over the parent. That is a dangerous situation whenever we come to children being taught to honour their parents, which I believe is a basic right and a fundamental standard for any civilised society. ...

col 660 **Lord Agnew of Oulton:** ... We have engaged with the whole spectrum of religious schools. It is of course worth remembering that we have at least 6,000 state-funded religious schools in this country and they have been a very important part of the stakeholder engagement. We have had strong support from the Catholic Education Service, the Church of England and the Board of Deputies. It has been a long process, but I believe we have got to a point where those groups are broadly happy. ...

col 661... regarding faith freedoms, in all schools when teaching these subjects the religious background of pupils must be taken into account. Schools with a religious character can build on the core content by reflecting their beliefs in their teaching. In developing these subjects, we have worked with a number of faith bodies, as I have just mentioned, and schools can also consider drawing on their own expertise when delivering those subjects. ...

col 663 I believe that we all share an ambition to ensure that our children and young people have the knowledge to help keep themselves safe, to be prepared for the world in which they are growing up and to respect others and difference. These regulations give us the opportunity to build a consistent foundation across all schools so that children and young people have the knowledge they need to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. ...

Motion agreed

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-04-24/debates/8F9DC3B0-CD59-4FB5-9F00-1554B50AEDDC/RelationshipsEducationRelationshipsAndSexEducationAndHealthEducation\(England\)Regulations2019](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-04-24/debates/8F9DC3B0-CD59-4FB5-9F00-1554B50AEDDC/RelationshipsEducationRelationshipsAndSexEducationAndHealthEducation(England)Regulations2019)

House of Commons Oral Answers

Prime Minister’s Questions

Q8. **John Mann (Labour):** When last month a football referee in Nottinghamshire had to flee a game, lock himself in the car and call the police, the Football Association responded

with a six-match ban and a £50 fine. If we bear in mind what is happening to Raheem Sterling and Danny Rose, who have called for a national forum, and the growth of racism at every level in football, is it not clear that without our help and Government help the football authorities are not capable of getting on top of the problem of racism in football? Will the Government take a lead, just as the Prime Minister did on Hillsborough, and help to convene, using their auspices, such a forum as Mr Sterling and others have requested this summer? Perhaps, Mr Speaker, you might offer this location as an appropriate venue for such a forum. [910501]

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (David Lidington) *on behalf of the Prime Minister:* Every Member of this House will condemn without reservation the behaviour to which the hon. Gentleman referred; it should be regarded as completely beyond the bounds of acceptability in our society. My hon. Friend the Sport Minister will want to sit down with the hon. Gentleman and any other colleagues in the House who make this issue a priority, to discuss what more might be done.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-04-24/debates/E28966A7-C207-4233-B8A6-621967520E3A/Engagements#contribution-9B45776E-6D79-4B9B-9E20-BB1AB956AC8C>

Topical Questions: Women and Equalities

Dawn Butler (Labour): On 22 April, we marked the very first National Stephen Lawrence Day. It has been 26 years since his tragic racist murder. Sadly, as the Prime Minister acknowledged, racism and racial discrimination are still very prevalent in our society. In 2018, the UN special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance stated that any measure that directly or indirectly targets and undermines the rights of marginalised groups must be understood as breaking international human rights law. This Government have presided over an immigration enforcement system in which people are being unfairly racially profiled; refused to allow people to bring forward discrimination claims based on more than one aspect of their identity; introduced voter ID, which will disenfranchise marginalised communities; failed to act on the results of their own racial disparity audit; and introduced hostile-environment policies. Will the Minister inform the House whether, as well as breaking the UN's human rights law, her Government are institutionally racist or just do not care?

Penny Mordaunt: The hon. Lady raises some very important issues. I am sorry about the tone of her question, because I do not recognise the attitude that she implies among my colleagues, including the Prime Minister, who has done some groundbreaking work in this area. What I would say to her and other hon. Members who rightly are concerned about these issues is that part of the motivation for moving the Government Equalities Office into the Cabinet Office, so that it can sit alongside the race disparity team, is to look at these things in the round. As well as the issues that she identified, individuals in this country face multiple discrimination. For example, an enormous number of people sleeping on the streets in London are young, gay, black men. Only by working together and looking at the disaggregated data will we really understand how we can improve lives for everyone in this country.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-04-25/debates/84E4D3C9-A2F3-4599-98D8-1BAF6F0594D6/TopicalQuestions#contribution-A058D4E1-42D0-4434-A941-A515B4F715F8>

House of Commons Written Answers

Hezbollah: Sanctions

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [244056] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the legal sanctions of proscribing Hezbollah in its entirety extends to

UK nationals meeting with representatives of that organisation overseas.

Ben Wallace: Proscription makes it a criminal offence to invite support for, or arrange, manage or assist in arranging or managing a meeting in support of a proscribed organisation. This offence does not have extra-territorial jurisdiction.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-11/244056/>

Religious Hatred: Crimes of Violence

Jo Stevens (Labour) [244143] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of religiously motivated hate crimes that involved violence against a person resulted in (a) charge, (b) conviction or (c) a custodial sentence in 2018.

Nick Hurd: Official statistics on charges for racially or religiously aggravated violent offences are restricted to the offences of assault with injury, assault without injury and harassment. These are routinely published by the Home Office. The latest available information relates to the 12 months ending September 2018 and can be found in the Open Data tables available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

Statistics for the whole of 2018 are due to be released on 25th April 2019.

The latest published figures are for the 2017 calendar year and statistics for the 2018 calendar year are due to be published on 16th May 2019.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-11/244143/>

Religious Hatred: Islam

Jo Stevens (Labour) [244144] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for the increase in Islamophobic hate crimes after the 2016 EU referendum.

Heather Wheeler: Police recorded hate crime across all strands, including those targeting Muslims, has increased despite a backdrop of a longer-term downward trend in the experience of hate crime overall according to the Crime Survey of England and Wales. We know that there have been trigger events for increases in hate crime, such as the EU Referendum and the terror attacks in 2017, though data shows that these have been temporary. A significant driver of this overall increase is general improvements in police recording, and through our work with the National Police Chiefs' Council and third party services such as Tell MAMA, police are better at identifying whether a crime is a hate crime and victims may be more willing to come forward.

The Government has a comprehensive plan to tackle hate crime in all its forms, as set out in the refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan published in October 2018, which sets out a programme of work across Government and by the police. We are clear that Britain leaving the EU cannot be a reason to target groups or individuals because of their faith or background. We will not tolerate efforts to create division in our communities, against EU citizens or people of any other race, faith or background.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-11/244144/>

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

Religious Buildings: Security

Matthew Pennycook (Labour) [245914] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister for Security and Economic Crime on 18 March 2019, Official Report, column 793, whether he has reviewed the funding for protected security measures for mosques.

Victoria Atkins: On 19 March 2019, the Home Secretary announced a boost in funding for the hate crime Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme to £1.6 million for 2019/20 (including for Mosques). This is double the amount awarded in 2018/19. £5 million over three years has also been committed to providing security training to places of worship in England and Wales. This will enable staff and volunteers to develop the security understanding necessary to make physical security measures work effectively.

In addition to this, the Home Office announced on 19 April 2019 that it is supporting Faith Associates to provide security training and advice to Muslim places of worship in advance of Ramadan. This short-term, two-month project sits alongside the wider £5m fund for security training.

More widely, the Home Secretary has committed to consulting with faith communities to understand what more could and should be done to help protect faith communities at their places of worship. We are working with groups such as the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, Tell Mama and those representing other faiths as part of this consultation.

This increase in funding marks a significant change in our funding for protective security for Mosques and other places of worship. If the threat changes or there is a sense that more money is needed, we will always look at how we should respond.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-18/245914/>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-03-18/debates/B29813B9-4628-4720-A661-BBB855102C55/Far-RightViolenceAndOnlineExtremism>

Information about the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme can be read at

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

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost>

UK Parliament Home Affairs Committee

Evidence Session: Inquiry into Hate crime and its violent consequences

Q865 Chair (Yvette Cooper, Labour): ... I will start with the Christchurch attack—a vile attack in which people were murdered and injured. The killer livestreamed his murders as terrorist propaganda. You have all accepted that, and I think you have all agreed that it should not be on your platforms.

However, versions of the video were still on each of your platforms many hours after the killings took place. There are reports in the New Zealand media this morning that some of those videos are still available and have been found on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. You have all told us many times before about the systems that you have in place to take down terrorist material. Why have your systems failed so badly in this case?

Neil Potts (Public Policy Director, Facebook): ... we were able to remove the content and video within 10 minutes after it was flagged to us by New Zealand law enforcement. However, we saw more than 800 variants of that video appear on the platform. Within the first 24 hours, we were able to remove 1.5 million different copies, including 1.2 million at the initial upload stage, using our automated technology, and then an additional 300,000. ...

The attacker used a network of his friends or colleagues on a separate platform—8chan,

in this case—to spread this, to make it go viral. They deliberately chose to be adverse to our policies and systems. ...

Q867 Chair: The difficulty we have with this is that we have raised this issue with all of you many times before. There is this issue about uploading, re-uploading or taking a screenshot. Surely this is not new. ... I cannot believe that Christchurch was the first time you had people attempt to game your system.

Neil Potts: ... This time was unique because of the use of the live platform, the first-person perspective that the shooting took, and the media sharing many copies. ...

Q868 This is the first case where we have seen this type of activity. It takes a machine multiple times—thousands of times, even—to recognise the type of violence or imagery it is seeing so that it can learn for itself and enact our proper policies. ...

Q869 Chair: What other organisations say is that you refuse help from outside organisations and you do not invest enough money in this kind of thing ...

Neil Potts: I strongly object to that ... We now have more than 30,000 people who work on safety and security. Many of them are subject matter experts who write the policies and have law enforcement, intelligence and other backgrounds. They study counter-terror. We have more than 15,000 content moderators. Importantly, we have a full suite of engineers who focus directly on these issues to build out our product. ...

... it will take time for our artificial intelligence to improve. It is not infallible, but it is a big lever for us to pull and is leverage against this type of harmful content. ...

Q871 ... this was essentially a first-person shooter video. We had someone using a GoPro helmet with a camera focused from their perspective of shooting. If we had different angles and it was a third-party video that showed it, perhaps our systems would have been faster, because we have seen that type of content before. We had not seen content from the actual angle of the shooter or the attacker.

Q872 Chair: Everybody knew—you knew—within a very short time of this happening, that this was a huge shooting attack, a criminal attack, and a terrorist attack. That was known very quickly. I do not understand why the angle of the camera was significant in terms of you then being able to take down all the material—the uploads and the re-uploads.

Neil Potts: ... once we were made aware of the video we took it down extremely quickly—within 10 minutes. ... That is one variant—we were very fast to get the variant from the shooter’s perspective. Other variants that did not resemble the exact shooter’s perspective, and the exact hash or digital fingerprint, made it more difficult. If you turn those angles certain ways, or you dub over soundtracks or add filters, that will subvert our system to some degree. ...

Q877 Chair: ... we have been told by the counter-terror chief here, Neil Basu, that very often the social media companies do not report to the police incidents that clearly involve breaking the law, and that although you might remove content, you do not refer it to the police. ...

Neil Potts: ... we do work closely with law enforcement. If there is an imminent threat of harm or risk, we do refer those things proactively to law enforcement. ...

Q878 Chair: Just in terms of your policies, if you identify illegal content—not simply content that violates your standards, but death threats, the sharing of terrorist propaganda and so on—you rightly remove it, but do you also report it to the law enforcement in that country? ...

Neil Potts: ... We do. In the case that we think—I won’t say that we are certain—that there is an imminent threat of physical harm, we refer it. Whether it is terrorism, other types of crime, threats against a public individual ... or threats against a private individual, we will refer it to the local law enforcement in the hope that it will intervene. ...

Q879 Chair: Okay, but that is where there is “life or limb” risk. Where there is no such risk, but where the posting of a video or something else is itself an illegal act, such as the

promotion of terrorist propaganda, would you report that to the police?

Neil Potts: ... It is hard to answer in the hypothetical. If it is just one posting of a piece of propaganda, I would say that we most likely would not. ...

Q880 Chair: ... the material itself might pass a criminal threshold. ... I am asking you about the situations in which there is not an imminent risk, but nevertheless there is evidence that in that country a crime has been committed. Would you refer that to the police?

Neil Potts: I think it would depend on the crime. ... there are obviously different scales of crime.

Q881 Chair: A crime is a crime.

Q882 Neil Potts: We do not report all crimes to the police. ...

Q883 Chair: Okay, and how do you decide what counts as a crime? Who are you to decide what is a crime that should be reported and what is a crime that should not be reported on your platform?

Neil Potts: We have a very developed process. ...

Q885 Katy Minshall (Head of UK Government Public Policy and Philanthropy, Twitter): ... There are two big lessons learnt for all of us. ... we all need to get better at identifying different variations of this content, and that has to be a priority. Secondly, the importance of a crisis response or command centre was another lesson. ...

Q886 ... at Twitter specifically, because of the limits on video length, we tend to see URLs being shared rather than the original content. Something we have done over the past year is set up a different database for URLs. ... In thinking about different versions of videos, that is part of the effort to try to think about how the video is emerging on different platforms in different locations. ...

Q887 ... we did our own analysis at Twitter and found that 70% of the video views were shared by 62 verified accounts—traditional media outlets. ...

Q889 ... we saw users inadvertently breaking our rules by sharing content while condemning what happened and expressing solidarity with the victims. ...

Q891 Chair: Isn't the reality of your problem that even if you were willing to do this, it wouldn't really make a difference because you don't know who any of those people are because of your policies on anonymity? ...

Q892 ... if there were people on your platform who were deliberately spreading terrorist propaganda, are you able to identify them and to report them? Yes or no? ...

Katy Minshall: ... If there was a threat to life, we are able to work proactively ...

Q893 ... when there is a threat to life, we will reach out to law enforcement ...

Q895 Marco Pancini (Director of Public Policy, YouTube): ... at the end of the day, we are talking about something like 200,000 pieces of content that we took down—the challenge was, as Katy said as well, the presence of pieces of the video in different uploads by authoritative sources. ...

I would also like to stress one other point, which is the collaboration between our companies. That is something new and something positive, which was not there in the past. During the day we were able to share thousands of pieces of videos across the different platforms. That really helped us to catch up with the huge amount of uploads. ...

Q899 Chair: ... For some of this, at the time of the Christchurch attack, it had a content warning up. So you had material, bits of these videos that were up, within eight hours, with a content warning. You had enough information to flash it up as a problem, but not to take it down.

Marco Pancini: ... there are different levels of implementation and enforcement of the policies. If it is about the same video, the same video is blocked. If it is about pieces of the same video, they are sent for review. In the case of something like Christchurch, we have changed our policies, so it is not even going up online—it has to be reviewed by a human. ...

Q900 Marco Pancini: Violation of this kind will lead to blocking the account and taking down the channel. Absolutely. In terms of working with law enforcement, it is a very delicate issue. ... On one side, the need to collaborate together with law enforcement to make sure that the evidence from the crime is collected in a way that is in line with the law of the country where the crime is committed. That requires, in most cases of this kind of very dangerous act, freezing the evidence, waiting for a request from law enforcement to acquire the evidence and then delivering the evidence. ...

Q901 Chair: So you wait for a request from law enforcement in order to give them information. You don't identify something that is illegal on your platform and report it to the police.

Marco Pancini: ... in respect of the due process of law, we hand over the information in a way that makes sure that the criminals can be prosecuted.

Q902 Chair: But again, this comes back to the issue raised by Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, who said that all your platforms are removing things that are illegal but you are not reporting it to them. Do you actively report to the police within a jurisdiction if you identify content that is illegal...

Marco Pancini: We have policies that are in line with the ones of our colleagues ...

Chair: So the answer is no. ...

Q903 The issue is whether you are letting law enforcement know about crimes being committed on your platforms. This is a real concern, because you are effectively making these crimes possible—you are facilitating these crimes. ...

Q906 Stephen Doughty (Labour Co-op): ... Why did you have for so long an account on your site actually called @RadioAryan, which was providing links to the most disgusting antisemitic, Islamophobic, homophobic, racist far-right content?

Q910 ... You have other accounts linking to The Daily Stormer—a well-known US neo-Nazi site—which includes a link to an article I found in three minutes last night, saying that the New Zealand killer bears no responsibility and it was a legitimate revenge attack. I am not talking about deeply hidden organisations or links. Why are there links to very well-known organisations like that in full public view on your platform? ...

Katy Minshall: ... When those accounts are reported to us, we take it very seriously, and we review those contributions.

Q911 Stephen Doughty: Well, you didn't—it took weeks for you to remove Radio Aryan when I reported it to you. ...

Q912 Katy Minshall: ... We have a number of ongoing assessments that we do day in, day out. In terms of one of the challenges we have, people often say about the police that they can't arrest their way out of a problem. We have no interest in having violent extremist groups on our platform, but we can't ban our way out of this problem. ...

Q915 Stephen Doughty: ... Facebook, I similarly raised concerns directly with your team about links to such organisations. It took you weeks to remove links to Radio Aryan from Facebook—I got to the stage of raising it directly with your staff in the UK. Can you explain why you still have links to The Daily Stormer, System Resistance Network and some of these other sites, including Gab? I found a link last night to a page that said, "If Muslims are the bullets, the system is the gun in the hand of the Jew". Can you explain why Facebook is routinely allowing links to such organisations? ...

Neil Potts: Thank you for raising Radio Aryan—I think we were able to designate it as a hate organisation and remove it from our platform within one week of you raising the issue with us, which is very fast. ...

Q916 Stephen Doughty: So why have you still got links, this morning, to System Resistance Network and The Daily Stormer? ...

Q917 You claim that these things are being looked at, yet people can just find them. I can find page after page after page linking to its article—I won't use the terms, but they are

utterly offensive terms relating to Jews, Muslims and black people, and they are in full view on Facebook this morning. ...

Neil Potts: ... we have 2.7 billion users on our platform who share billions of pieces of content every day. We have millions of reports against that type of content. ... We do an extremely good job of finding that information and removing it when it violates our terms, but that is not to say that everything is perfect. ...

Q923 Stephen Doughty: ... Can I turn to YouTube? Similarly, do you have content linking to Radio Aryan on your site?

Marco Pancini: As far as I know, no—we do not have any.

Q924 Stephen Doughty: Okay. Well, last night I found a link to one of their full radio broadcasts within a moment ... A full broadcast was there from an individual providing multiple links to neo-Nazi organisations. I found another set of videos and music—again, white supremacist and neo-Nazi organisations. I found people providing links to Britain First ... I found huge amounts of videos ... from far-right and Islamist organisations ... Why are those links on your site?

Marco Pancini: ... In looking at content when it is uploaded on the platform, we take into consideration two pillars: one is the law; the second is our policies. Our policies do not allow any kind of that abuse, so I really need to link into the content that you are reporting to me with our team.

Q925 Stephen Doughty: ... we are not talking about deeply hidden content; we are talking about stuff in full public view. We are talking about basic links—link after link after link—to neo-Nazi and far-right extremist organisations, all in the comment pages, and people commenting on it afterwards. Not only that, but actual links to full audio recordings of neo-Nazi broadcasts advocating violence against Muslims, Jews, gays, and the state—the violent overthrow of the state. How is that content getting through if you have these policies in place? ...

Marco Pancini: ... in the last two years, thanks to the work that we have done with these NGOs in the context of the code of conduct, we were able to pass from a tick-down rate of 40% to 80% for the referrals that we are receiving on these kinds of issues across all of Europe, so the situation is improving. ...

Q931 John Woodcock (Independent): ... if the UK changed its law to require everything available to be routinely shared ... could you do it? Would you object to doing it? ...

Katy Minshall: ... More detail on where the regulator ends and law enforcement begins would be very welcome. ...

Neil Potts: ... we want to comply with the law where we can. ...

Q934 John Woodcock: ... If the UK passes a law to say that you must automatically share the IP data related to those accounts, which clearly you have, would you have an issue with doing that? ...

Neil Potts: ... even in the space of terrorism there are different levels. ... For example, if someone wants to share awareness of the attack in Sri Lanka in a way that violates our policies, where it is not clear that they are condemning but are just sharing something without a caption, that puts us in a difficult position to assess someone's intent behind the sharing. ...

Q943 Chris Green (Conservative): ... there is significant and quite repugnant content on Twitter that, it seems, has been more effectively shut down on Facebook and other platforms than it has been on Twitter. Isn't Twitter keeping pace?

Q947 Katy Minshall: ... we see 500 million tweets a day. One in a million happens 500 times, and we will never get to a 100% success rate on any of these issues in the near term. We look at our metrics compared to the same time last year: we are now removing three times the number of abusive accounts within 24 hours. ...

Q949 Chris Green: I don't think that this tweet would get over the line, in terms of being banned. However, I think you will appreciate that, whether on the hard right or on the left of our politics, there is a lot of repugnant stuff out there. I will just read you this tweet. It was about a video that actually showed Guatemalan soldiers beating young people, and it was put out by someone who I think is on the left of politics, who said: "Why does this secretly recorded video appear to show your cowardly soldiers brutally beating up Palestinian children, again?" That was directed to @IsraeliPM, and the suggestion was that the video showed the Israeli Defence Force.

That tweet was widely seen on Twitter. We know the context in the UK of antisemitism and the targeting of the Jewish community and the genuine and legitimate fears that the UK's Jewish community have. That tweet was not taken down by Twitter; I think it was deleted by the person who put it up. Do you think that it goes against your rules and should have been taken down by Twitter? ...

Katy Minshall: ... I am not familiar with whether it would break our rules or not. ...

Q959 Stuart C. McDonald (SNP): ... To what extent would each of you accept that the growth and recent success of the far right and other extreme ideologies is down to how they are able to use your platforms? ...

Katy Minshall: ... What is particularly striking—this is something that previous witnesses have raised with this Committee—is the sheer variety of the platforms that are being used. We see people leaving Twitter all the time saying, "Follow me on x," or, "Add me on y platform." There is a likely risk over the next few years that the better our tools get and the more users we remove from our platform, the more they will migrate to other parts of the internet where nobody is looking—indeed, maybe nobody can look, because they are private, encrypted communications. ...

Q961 Neil Potts: ... violence, whether from the far right or other groups that espouse hate and terrorism, isn't allowed on our platform. ... If the question is about radicalisation, that is a very complex issue. I believe studies show that radicalisation happens in many forms. It can happen at the local pub, it can happen within the family or the church, and it can happen online. Any solution we focus on needs to be comprehensive, attack all those areas and get to the root of what hate is and why the ideology exists. ...

Q963 Marco Pancini: There are at least two areas in which I would like to add to what my colleagues said about where we need to work together. First, we need to make sure that the technology or the solution that we, as big companies, implement can be shared with smaller platforms. We have already seen the risk of a spillover effect in the context of Daesh, and that could also happen for far-right groups. That is something we can fight together through, for example, the activity we are doing with the GIFCT to train small platforms on how to use our database of hashes and how to be better prepared for the new threats of radicalisation that, for example, far-right groups present. The second point is the work we have done and can do together to create anti-radicalisation programmes in schools. In 2018, we had a programme that reached something like 2 million students here in the UK. ...

Q965 Neil Potts: ... we recently banned a number of groups and organisations in the UK, including Britain First, the English Defence League and others. We look at a series of signals on our platform, on other platforms and offline. For example, if we know that an organisation is engaged in violence offline—whether it is hosting events that espouse violence or it is actually carrying out violence—we take those signals in as well. ...

Q969 Stuart C. McDonald: ... One of the members of the Committee staff here did an experiment in preparation for the hearing. They opened up a new YouTube account and all they searched for were terms such as "British news", "British politics", "football", "music", "TV" and "games". Suddenly, through searching with those perfectly innocent terms, they were being recommended towards right-wing commentators and very controversial psychologists, who, essentially, hold what I regard as racist views, and a far-right political

figure in the United Kingdom. ... Why is that happening?

Marco Pancini: ... The problem is that in looking at political speech, or speech in general, the suggestions that the user may have are suggestions that can go right across the spectrum, from slightly more extremist, mainstream, to absolutely not related or not extremist-related. Indeed, there is also the possibility that there is a trajectory towards content that is more extremist, but that is not our intention. ...

Q972 **Chair:** Actually, we do not have any evidence that more extreme content is more engaging for users. Users are not interested in more and more extreme content. ...

Q974 **Chair:** We want the 2 billion users who come on YouTube every month to have a positive experience and we want to invest in products that give more visibility to authoritative sources. ...

Q978 **Chair:** ... you have had this issue about your algorithms pushing people towards more and more extreme content raised with your company repeatedly. Yesterday, I did a search on YouTube for a relatively popular right-wing US YouTuber. As a result, I immediately had recommended on my home page, as the third recommendation, another channel from somebody who has promoted racist and homophobic language.

As a result of clicking that, on my YouTube channel this morning, on my home page, the first and fourth recommended videos that come up are for the former leader of the EDL, somebody who has been banned on both Facebook and Twitter. I have never searched for his videos but they are coming up. ...

Q979 **Marco Pancini:** The logic behind this product is to provide to users, who have seen a specific set of content, suggestions that are in line with the content that they have seen before. ...

Q982 **Chair:** You are recommending it; you are promoting it. This is not about whether or not you have got it on. ...

Q988 **Stephen Doughty:** ...When I was searching last night, it is not just the algorithms; it is your actual channels that people are then being encouraged to subscribe to.

I have a channel here from a well-known extreme right-wing person who used to be linked to the BNP, a self-described Nazi and so on. It is just video after video on a subscriber channel with 86,000 subscribers—which is fairly high, as you know—with videos like “Black man throws white boy off balcony”, “Bullied to death for being white”, “Treason from Parliament”, “The media promotes anti-white violence”, “How the Israel lobby controls”—you know. It is video after video after video of curated content by one of your subscriber channels. ... What on earth are you doing? It is the algorithms. It is the channels. You are essentially accessories to radicalisation—accessories to crimes. ...

Q989 **Marco Pancini:** ... I would really love to look into this content together with our team and come back to you with a specific answer in relation to that. ...

Q993 **Tim Loughton (Conservative):** ... Mr Pancini, you seem to be in denial that it is not just the individual sites that are lingering on your platforms that we are primarily concerned about. There seems to be a systemic problem that you are actively, because of the way your sites and algorithms are structured, signposting and promoting extremist sites. ...

Marco Pancini: We take this issue very seriously. We understand that, for specific areas, there could be an effect that is not intended. ...

Q1017 **Chair:** ... David Duke tweeted two days ago, blaming the awful attack in Sri Lanka on the “Zionist Occupied Government” and the “Zio media”. He is the former Grand Wizard of the KKK. You have banned Britain First. You have banned the former head of the EDL. Why have you not taken down David Duke?

Katy Minshall: I was not aware of that specific tweet. There may be a team that is already reviewing this ...

Q1019 **Neil Potts:** ... We are not only reviewing content, whether it’s user-reported in those groups, with our proactive measures, with our artificial intelligence service, and we

are also holding the group admins more accountable now. So, if I was a member of the group and I was posting harmful content that violated it, I would get my penalty, as normal, but those penalties would also read down towards the admins of those groups. As you eclipse a certain threshold, you run the risk of having the group removed, and you run the risk around being able to admin or moderate other groups as well. ...

Chair: ... We have taken evidence from your representatives several times over several years, and we feel as if we are raising the same issues again and again. We recognise that you have done some additional work, but we are coming up, time and again, with so many examples of where you are failing, where you may be being gamed by extremists or where you are effectively providing a platform for extremism.

You are enabling extremism on your platforms. For example, Mark Rowley, who is the former counter-terror chief, said that the Finsbury Park attacker “had grown to hate Muslims largely due his consumption of large amounts of online far-right material including, as evidenced at court, statements from former EDL leader... Britain First and others.” This is why it matters. ...

Particularly in the case of YouTube, I am just appalled that the answers that you have given us are no better than the answers that your predecessors gave us in every previous evidence session. ... We hugely value the work that social media companies do, but we need you to keep us safe and you are not doing so. ...

To read the full transcript see

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/oral/100660.html>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

Islamophobia (Definition)

Anas Sarwar (Labour): Today, we welcome to the Scottish Parliament Baroness Sayeeda Warsi and Wes Streeting MP, who are officers of the all-party parliamentary group on British Muslims. The group’s landmark “Islamophobia Defined” report, which I as convener of the cross-party group on tackling Islamophobia and our secretary, Professor Peter Hopkins, who has done 10 years of extensive research on Islamophobia in Scotland, contributed to, sets out a definition of Islamophobia that hundreds of organisations, academics and communities across the country have adopted.

While the United Kingdom Government continues to dodge and dither on the issue, we have a chance to show leadership in Scotland. I hope that the definition will be adopted by organisations in Scotland, all the Scottish political parties and—crucially—the Scottish Government. Will the First Minister make that commitment today so that we can focus not on whether Islamophobia exists, what it means or how it manifests itself but on what we as policy makers can do to challenge and defeat it?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I agree with that. All organisations should sign up to the accepted definition of Islamophobia, as they should sign up to the accepted definition of antisemitism. I am happy to give the update on the Scottish Government’s position that I certainly want the Scottish Government to do that.

I, too, welcome members of the all-party group to the Scottish Parliament, and I commend the work that Anas Sarwar and my colleague Humza Yousaf have done to tackle Islamophobia. However, it should not be down to Muslim members of the Parliament to lead the fight on their own; every one of us should be shoulder to shoulder with every Muslim across our country in tackling Islamophobia. As First Minister, I am more than prepared to lead from the front in that battle.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12056&i=109090#ScottParlOR>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf>

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Israel

See also the House of Commons written answer “Hezbollah: Sanctions” in the “Home Affairs” section above.

House of Commons Written Answers

Hamas: Freezing of Assets

Joan Ryan (Change UK – The Independent Group) [245559] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the political and military wings of Hamas, including the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassem Brigades, will remain on HM Treasury’s Consolidated List of Financial Sanctions Targets in the UK in the event of the UK leaving the EU (a) with and (b) without a withdrawal agreement; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Field: As the Prime Minister has set out, the UK will look to carry over all EU sanctions at the time of our departure from the EU. During an implementation period, EU sanctions will continue to apply in the UK. Under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, individual listings will need to meet the threshold of evidence and justification that our legislation requires. In a no-deal scenario, the full list of those subject to UK sanctions will be published on the UK sanctions list on exit-day. The UK proscribes Hamas’ military wing as a terrorist organisation and retains a policy of no contact with Hamas, in its entirety.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-18/245559/>

Hamas

Joan Ryan (Change UK – The Independent Group) [245560] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the extent of involvement of Hamas in terrorist activities.

Mark Field: We continue to strongly condemn all acts of terrorism by Hamas and call upon them to permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel. Our policy on Hamas is clear: Hamas must renounce violence, recognise Israel and accept previously signed agreements. Hamas’ military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK since 2001. The UK retains a policy of no contact with Hamas in its entirety.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-18/245560/>

Israel: Refugees

David Drew (Labour Co-op) [245594] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of (a) Sudanese and (b) Eritrean refugees detained by the Israeli authorities; and whether the UK Government has made representations to the Israeli authorities on preventing the repatriation of those refugees.

Mark Field: Whilst we do not hold any information on the number of Sudanese and Eritrean refugees being held by the Israeli authorities, our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises our concerns over the issue of treatment of refugees with Israel.

House of Lords Written Answer

Israel: Elections

Lord Steel of Aikwood (Non-affiliated) [HL15198] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the general election result in Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Following the election that took place in Israel on 9 April, Israeli political parties are now engaged in coalition formation discussions. The UK looks forward to continuing its excellent relationship with the Israeli Government and to working closely together on shared areas of interest.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-10/HL15198/>

Department for International Trade

Updated Guidance: Exporting to Israel after EU Exit if there's no deal

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/exporting-to-israel-after-eu-exit>

Updated Guidance: Exporting to the Palestinian Territories after EU Exit if there's no deal

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/exporting-to-the-palestinian-territories-after-eu-exit>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN experts call on Israel to overturn deportation of Human Rights Watch director

UN human rights experts have expressed grave concern at the revocation of the work permit for Mr. Omar Shakir, the Israel and Palestine Director of Human Rights Watch, urging Israel to reverse a deportation order and to allow him to carry on with his human rights work.

"This ruling threatens advocacy, research, and free expression for all and reflects a troubling resistance to open debate," the UN experts said. "It is a setback for the rights of human rights defenders in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

"The grounds for revoking Mr. Shakir's work permit appear to be tied directly to his human rights advocacy, and have nothing to do with any assertion of illegal conduct." ...

Israel had revoked Mr. Shakir's work permit on the grounds that he had supported the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement in the past. The UN experts note that Human Rights Watch has stated that neither the organisation nor Mr. Shakir promotes the boycott of Israel. Human Rights Watch works to discourage economic support for Israel's illegal settlement enterprise.

The UN experts do not take a position on BDS. However, they point out that expressing support for, or opposition to, BDS, is fully guaranteed by the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association. ...

"We urge Israel to reverse the order, to allow Mr. Shakir and Human Rights Watch to continue unimpeded with human rights advocacy, and to fully respect its human rights obligations in its relationships with Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights organisations."

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24516&LanglD=E>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Meat: Overseas Trade

David Drew (Labour Co-op) [215075] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether all current trade agreements that include the export of meat specify that animals have be stunned before slaughter; and if he will make a statement.

David Rutley: Through membership of the EU, the UK currently participates in around 40 free trade agreements. These do not specify that animals have to be stunned before slaughter.

However, all slaughter of animals for export from the UK – whether stun or non-stun – must strictly comply with EU and the UK regulations on animal welfare at the time of killing and additional welfare at slaughter rules apply to animals subject to non-stun slaughter.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-01-31/215075/>

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Other Relevant Information

Tell Mama

National Mosques Security Panel

Tell MAMA are launching the National Mosques Security Panel which will implement practical training and security measures for mosques in the U.K.

The recent attack by a far-right extremist on two mosques in New Zealand highlight the need for mosques to develop security planning measures and to implement practical ways by which staff can ensure that crowd management can take place and thereby maintain the safety and security of people coming into and out of respective mosques. ...

Any installation of security features must be part of a wider programme of 'community confidence' (building safer and stronger communities) and in this respect, work conducted at local, regional and national levels will also involve communications campaigns which bring communities together. This will also ensure that faith communities sign up to the principles of standing together at times of crises. ...

Speaking about the launch of the National Mosques Security Panel, the Chair, former Met Commander Mak Chishty QPM said: "With Islamophobia and hate crimes against Muslim communities quickly becoming a permanent fixture across the world it is important to ensure that all Muslims are protected, feel safe and are reassured. The threat is driven by a mistaken belief that Muslims are extreme and support terrorism and this belief is given legitimacy by far right elements.

The response to this threat must therefore be strategic and long term, must include immediate protective security measures but also seek to tackle intolerance and enable genuine integration. The protective security strategy must therefore not just be confined just to buildings and local hotspots, it needs to part of wider community safety approach. ... I look forward to building a brighter, tolerant and safer environment together."

To read the full press release see

<https://tellmamauk.org/national-mosques-security-panel/>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/internationaldevelopmentassistancepalestiniannationalauthoritieschools.html>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Online Forums Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.html>

Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/palestinianstatehoodrecognition.html>

Scottish Parliament

Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Online Harms White Paper (closing date 1 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438