



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Westminster Hall Debate

#### Tier 5 Religious Worker Visas

*col 623WH David Linden (SNP):* ... at the tail end of last year the British Government introduced a change in regulations that meant that visiting clergy could no longer enter the UK via the tier 5 visa route and would instead have to apply via tier 2. The changes, which came into force on 10 January, are causing something of a headache for a whole host of religious organisations ...

*col 624WH* The new arrangements more than double the cost incurred by parishes, making supply cover effectively unaffordable. Basically, the cost of applications will go from £244 to £610, which nets an extra £366 per application for the Home Office.

The tier 2 minister of religion visa route also imposes strict language requirements. ...

*col 625WH* I am somewhat intrigued about why this draconian change for visiting clergy was made. As far as I understand, there have been no problems or abuses of the system by churches bringing supply placement clergy to the UK. It is not just the Catholic Church that has expressed concerns about the change; the Church of Scotland is also urging the British Government to reverse the decision. The Rt Rev. Dr Susan Brown, who convenes the Church's World Mission Council, said that she had been "shocked" by this "retrograde step", and is on record as saying: ... We strongly urge the UK government to reverse this change in the visa system." ...

*col 626WH Ged Killen (SNP):* ... where is the evidence that the changes were necessary? Where is the evidence that large numbers of people were coming to the UK on tier 5 religious worker visas for another purpose? Where is the evidence that ministers of religion are coming in large numbers to the UK to preach, despite not having the English language skills necessary to do so? Is it not a matter for the parish to determine whether a priest or a minister has the appropriate level of English to preach to their congregation? ...

**Valerie Vaz (Labour):** My constituents, particularly those at the Sikh gurdwara, rely on tier 5 for religious workers to come in. They do not want the tier 2 so that their religious workers can be here a long time, and neither do they want to stay indefinitely. It really is a short-term issue and religious workers are being absolutely excluded. ...

*col 628WH John Howell (Conservative):* ... I do not think the problem is widely shared

among all religious communities. ...

I accept that it is a case for the Catholic Church and for many others, but we live in a world where it is very difficult for anyone to recruit priests. ... I point out that Anglicans are in a much better position because they have admitted women as priests. ...

Secondly, Anglican ministries are organised increasingly in teams, so someone is always around; because all the members of the team do not take their holiday at the same time, someone in the team is always available to cover for others in the ministry. ...

**col 629WH Valerie Vaz:** ... He is right when he talks about the Church of England, but that is exactly it: it is the Church of England; many of the others are international religions ... More to the point, does he not agree with having an interchange of people of different faiths coming to this country ... Does it not mean that we are able to look beyond our shores, therefore helping international relations, and not only understanding each of our own religions here but understanding them internationally?

**John Howell:** ... I mention my close contacts with the Jewish community. I appreciate, from conversations beforehand with the hon. Member for Glasgow East, that his view is that the Jewish community in Scotland has similar problems. However, I asked my Jewish colleagues exactly where the problem was likely to occur in the Jewish community, and most if not all of those I questioned did not see this as a problem for them. ...

**col 630WH Patrick Grady (SNP):** ... Why are the UK Government, led by a professed Christian who forever speaks about the importance of faith to our culture and society, going out of their way to deny our Christian communities the right to worship? That is the direct effect of the policy change. ...

The rationale for the changes introduced in December last year, whereby ministers of religion may no longer apply for temporary religious worker visas under tier 5 of the immigration rules, seems to be largely based on proficiency in the English language ... This was not really about Christian or Catholic ministers, was it? Looking at the detail of the policy in the explanatory notes, written statement HCWS1159 dated 6 December 2018 states that the rules are to prevent “religious workers to perform roles, that include preaching and leading a congregation, without first being required to demonstrate that they speak English to an acceptable standard.”

It is pretty clear that the change is targeted at religions—one in particular, I suspect—that do not usually conduct their forms of worship in English. It stands to reason that faith communities that conduct services primarily in English would not have much to gain by bringing in preachers who are not fluent in that language. ...

**col 631WH** The Bishops’ Conference of Scotland has said that in all the years it has sponsored priests through the tier 5 process, it has not been aware of any abuses of the system. Visiting priests are tied by religious vows to return to their home diocese at the request of their bishop, to say nothing of their own personal and family ties. ...

**col 634WH Carol Monaghan (SNP):** ... I wrote to the Home Secretary about the issue back in April and finally got a response from the Minister for Immigration two weeks ago. She said: “These changes align our visa arrangements with the Government’s wider commitment to building strong integrated communities.”

Can the Minister explain how depriving Christians of their faith leaders could possibly lead to strong, integrated communities? ...

**col 635WH Stuart C McDonald (SNP):** ... the tier 5 religious visas were operating perfectly smoothly for the many churches and religious organisations that relied upon them, until these unexpected changes were made in December last year. ...

We are talking about not only Christian churches, but other religions too. I have heard directly about a Buddhist temple and a Sikh gurdwara that have been negatively impacted. ...

This is about the support that visiting priests and celebrants can provide. ... visiting clergy in themselves enrich the life of the churches that they work at with their new ideas and

approaches, and by sharing knowledge of different cultures. ...

*col 636WH* As one of the 100 or so constituents who contacted me said: "I have attended services in Synagogue where the language used was Hebrew and in other faiths where the language used was Hindi, Gujarati or whatever. That may not suit the British Government but it is a reality". ...

... is it really any business of the Government if religious celebrants spend short periods here and preach in different languages? ...

*col 638WH Diane Abbott (Labour):* ... Religious ministers have been removed from tier 5 visas and are now obliged to apply for tier 2 visas, for which an English language proficiency test can be included in a successful application. Ministers must know, however—and have received representations to this effect—that the change is unwieldy, costly, bureaucratic and discriminatory. Ministers must have been made aware by representatives of a range of faith communities that the measures are a blockage to faith communities, to the religious ministers they need to lead them, whether temporarily or for a little longer, and to good community relations. ...

Do Ministers understand that Catholic priests, rabbis, imams and many others need holidays and cannot be on call 365 days a year, or that they have to visit loved ones or go abroad for further study? They might even get ill, and they need people to stand in for them as occasion arises. ...

... the shift to tier 2 is costly, time-consuming, bureaucratic and unnecessary. We have heard about the issues with English language at tier 2, and about the fact that tier 2 visas are much more expensive than tier 5 visas and put a considerable financial burden on faith communities. As a whole, tier 2 visas are also subject to a numerical cap, which is surely folly. It means that people who we need for our economy and public services may be refused a visa solely on the grounds that the number has already been met, and religious ministers have to compete in that total. ...

*col 639WH* I hope that ... the Minister recognises that no one is talking about a loophole but about the very real needs of faith communities. Maybe he will tell us how many people he thinks sneak their way into the country under a religious cloth. A handful? Dozens? What evidence can Ministers provide for that outlandish proposition?

We pride ourselves—or used to—on being a religiously tolerant society, but these measures do not seem religiously tolerant to those of us here today or to the wider community. This discriminatory policy is causing distress in faith communities of all types across the country. It should be a matter of concern for those of all faiths and none. ...

We should not dictate to anyone who their faith leaders should be. We should recognise and honour the contribution that faith communities make to our society. ...

**The Minister for Policing and the Fire Service (Nick Hurd):** ... the Immigration Minister ... is well aware of the growing sensitivities and distress around this issue—weighted in, but not exclusive to, Scotland. ... she is next week meeting representatives of most faith leaders to discuss this issue at a roundtable ...

*col 640WH* I think we all agree with the point about the added value of contributions made by members of religious institutions from overseas ... That is why the immigration system maintains dedicated arrangements for religious workers, with two dedicated visa categories make provision for those seeking to come to the UK to fill long-term vacancies and shorter-term postings. ...

... we think that this is a generous offer. However, it must be balanced against ensuring that those wishing to lead congregations, regularly performing the primary rites and rituals of their faith, are subject to stronger requirements than those coming to the UK to fill supporting roles for shorter periods. We believe that those tasked with leading roles within our churches, synagogues, mosques and temples must be able to demonstrate a strong command of the English language, which is fundamental to the change to tier 2. The changes that the Government have introduced ensure that all those seeking to undertake

such important roles can explain their teachings in English to all in the community, not just to their congregation. ...

**Stuart C McDonald:** This is fundamental: are churches, mosques and synagogues not better placed to assess the level of English required for priests and other religious leaders to lead worship in their communities, and whether applicants coming in under tier 5 have the skill required?

**Mr Hurd:** ... The Government's position is that it is important that the same rules apply to all, in the interests of fairness ...

*col 641WH* ... the root of the changes introduced in January 2019 was the June 2018 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on the integrated communities strategy. ... The rationale behind that approach is that ministers of religion play a visible role in our religious institutions and must therefore be able to integrate with the wider communities in which they live and serve, rather than only being able to speak to their congregations. ...

**Valerie Vaz:** The Minister ... is confusing social cohesion and religion. I made the point that the Sikh holy book is not in English. The priests who are required to come over have to read it in their language. ...

**Mr Hurd:** I absolutely understand that point. ...

My understanding of the situation is that, in large part because the Government recognise the importance and value of the contributions to our religious institutions made by people from overseas, we have three separate visa routes in to try to facilitate that process. The changes made in January 2019 require individuals seeking to enter the UK as a minister of religion to use tier 2, demonstrating their command of the English language. To be clear, tier 2 is for religious leaders such as priests, imams, rabbis, missionaries and members of religious orders taking employment or a role within a faith-based community. Those applicants can come for up to three years, with an option to extend for up to six years, and possible indefinite leave to remain after five years' ...

*col 642WH* **David Linden:** ... The fact is that people do not come to be here indefinitely. They come here to cover a month to enable priests or other faith leaders to go on holiday, so the idea that we are talking about people coming here indefinitely and integrating is surely for the birds. ...

**Mr Hurd:** Some may want to. ...

**Stuart C McDonald:** The Minister ... is describing different visas, but ... none of them fits the circumstances of what we have been describing this afternoon—people who come temporarily but nevertheless want to carry out the roles of leaders of congregations and ministers of religion. Short-term visas do not allow people to lead a congregation, but the longer-term visas are completely inappropriate, because people are coming only for short-term visits ...

**Mr Hurd:** I am not sure that the Government agree with that position ...

*col 643WH* The immigration rules had previously permitted tier 5 religious workers to fill roles that may include preaching, pastoral work and non-pastoral work. That allowed an applicant to come to the UK and fill a role as a minister of religion without demonstrating an ability to speak English. That is no longer possible ...

*col 645WH* These changes do not mean that we are targeting any particular group. All faiths are treated equally. ...

Among the permitted activities for those coming on a visit visa, or for a visit without a visa if they are a relevant national, the rules state: "Religious workers may visit the UK to preach or do pastoral work".

This provides an opportunity for ministers of religion to officiate at a wedding or funeral, for example, and even to conduct a weekly service on an ad-hoc basis.

The visit rules rightly do not permit a Minister of religion to undertake paid work. If t he

intention is to provide cover for a holiday incumbent on a prolonged basis, which involves remuneration, we believe that the visiting Minister should have a work visa. ...

Anyone in that situation does require a tier 2 visa ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-07-04/debates/B7C7BF26-85F9-4650-893E-43341AB6583A/Tier5ReligiousWorkerVisas>

*The written Statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-12-06/HCWS1159/>

## House of Commons Debate

### Assisted Dying

*col 1412* **Nick Boles (Independent):** ... [there] is the fear that although a law might start off tightly constrained, there will be what people refer to as “the slippery slope”, and it might then be abused somehow: there might be situations in which people come under pressure to take their own lives when, in fact, they do not want to do so at all. ...

*col 1413* All I would say is that the law could operate only with independent assessment—both by doctors and by a High Court judge, under the proposal in the most recent Bill—that would be clear that the person could not show any signs of coming to a decision under pressure or because they felt they were a burden. ...

*col 1414* What do we think of a law that criminalises otherwise law-abiding people ... who are simply trying to act with love in accordance with their marriage vows and their conscience? What do we think of a law that forces people in the final months of a terminal illness to take desperate and even dangerous steps, which may cause even more suffering to themselves and to the people whom they love, in secret and without any safeguards or support? What do we think of a law that denies hundreds of innocent people dignity and control as their lives draw to a close and condemns them to extreme suffering instead? ...

*col 1415* We have seen a number of royal colleges move from having a formal position of opposing assisted dying to having a position of being neutral about it ...

In the latest opinion poll ... more than 80% of the British public support an assisted dying law for people in the final six months of a terminal illness, and well over 50% of people who declare that they have an active faith take that view. ...

*col 1416* Faith groups play a very positive role in our society and I salute them for it, but this country is a democracy, not a theocracy. When we make our laws, we must focus on men and women, not on God. ... When Parliament next debates the reform of our laws on assisted dying, I hope that it is not religious doctrine, but humanity ... that wins the day. ...

*col 1420* **Carolyn Harris (Labour):** ... While I wholeheartedly believe that life is sacred ... I am a huge advocate of quality of life over quantity and for an individual’s right to make their own choices. ...

As it stands, a UK citizen travels to Switzerland to end their life every eight days. I believe that if the law allowed assisted dying in this country, enabling people to choose to die surrounded by their loved ones in a familiar environment, that would bring comfort and solace to many people. ...

*col 1426* **Bernard Jenkin (Conservative):** I do not think this debate is about the sanctity of life, because the people who did not support the Bill last time believe it is legitimate to end a life early; the question is how to legalise it. It is not a moral question....

*col 1428* **Fiona Bruce (Conservative):** ... Just a few days ago, a clinical director from Canada came to this place and made a presentation. I was privileged enough to chair the meeting; it was called “‘Assisted dying’ in Canada? A cautionary tale.” To clarify, at about the same time as this House rejected assisted suicide here, in Canada there was a court

case that decriminalised assisted suicide ...

She told us of grave problems now being encountered in that country in connection with the practice of assisted suicide. She told us that in fact medical assistance in dying, or MAID as it is called there, involves in 99% of cases euthanasia, not assisted suicide. She told us of funding allocated to palliative care previously now being diverted for these purposes; of assessments being done on a very rudimentary basis, including even by telephone; of safeguards such as the 10-day reflection period being regularly shortened; and of MAID being used for non-terminal illnesses, even in a case of arthritis. There are now even proposals for it to be extended to so-called mature minors. ...

**col 1433 Steve McCabe (Labour):** ... We need to focus on quality of life, capacity for life and the rational, sound judgment of a person who makes such a decision. Life expectancy in itself does not tell us anything about suffering. We should be considering assisted dying both in the context of terminal illness and in the context of suffering and a lack of meaningful life. That is especially true when we are talking about progressive conditions, conditions such as locked-in syndrome or intolerable suffering. ...

**col 1438 Jim Fitzpatrick (Labour):** ... The right hon. Member for Twickenham (Sir Vince Cable) and the hon. Member for Congleton (Fiona Bruce) quoted Lord Sumption. The fuller quote says: "I think the law should continue to criminalise assisted suicide, and I think that the law should be broken from time to time...It has always been the case that it's been criminal, but it's also been the case that courageous friends and families have helped people to die...I don't believe there's a moral obligation to obey the law. Ultimately it's for each person to decide."

Coming from somebody who is a judge in the Supreme Court, that is absolutely breathtaking. The courts have challenged Parliament to address this issue and to clarify the law.

**col 1439 Lyn Brown (Labour):** ... there is an absence of understanding about just how difficult it is for many people in this country and elsewhere to withstand the pressures of family who might feel that they are a burden. We are tripping gently into a hellish nightmare for many people. ...

**col 1440 Liz McInnes (Labour):** ... I worry also about our attitude towards people with disabilities. In 2015, a disability campaigner expressed their concern to me about changes in legislation having the potential to lead to value judgments being made about whether other people's lives are worth living or not and to send out a message that suicide is acceptable in some cases. As the campaigner said to me, "Someone taking their own life is seen as a tragedy, except if that person is disabled. Then it is seen as understandable." ...

**col 1448 The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Edward Argar):** ... The Government's position remains that any changes to the law in this area remain an issue of conscience for individual Members of this House, and it is right that this is so given the strength of the deeply and sincerely held views on both sides of this debate. It remains a matter for this House to decide, not the Government, but a Government must implement and work with whatever this Parliament and future Parliaments decide. In the recent lectures by Lord Sumption, which a number of Members have alluded to, he touched on this issue, and while it is important that the courts should, and do, interpret the law, Parliament cannot and should not seek to avoid or outsource decisions on such profound moral questions to them. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-07-04/debates/EFD57ADB-AE18-4D6B-9DA8-CCDDF99D1D0A/AssistedDying>

## House of Lords Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Prisons: Ministers of Religion**

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP)** [HL16560] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) Christian, and (2) Muslim, prison chaplains there were in England and Wales in (a) 1989, (b) 1999, (c) 2009, and (d) 2018.

### **Prisoners**

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP)** [HL16559] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the current size of the (1) general population, and (2) prison population of England and Wales; and what proportion of each of those populations were Muslim in (a) 1989, (b) 1999, (c) 2009, and (d) 2018.

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Staffing figures for prison chaplains in public sector prisons from 1989 until 2009 are not available, as figures were not collated centrally during this period.

The table below shows the number of Christian (which includes Anglican, Free Church, Roman Catholic, Orthodox) and Muslim Chaplains (full-time equivalent) employed at public prison establishments by religion of the post from the most recently collated figures.

Date	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-18
Christian	151	157
Muslim	45	61

The Department does not hold data on the general population.

With regard to the proportion of the prison population who identify as Muslim, we are unable to access data from 1989 and 1999 without incurring disproportionate costs.

The figures for 2009 and 2018 are available and are presented in the table below:

Date	30-Jun-09	30-Jun-18
Total prison population	83,319	82,773
Total prisoners recorded as Muslim	9,932	12,894

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-20/HL16560/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-20/HL16559/>

## Home Office

### **Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme open for applications**

The Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, now in its fourth year, is now worth £1.6 million, after the Home Secretary doubled the amount available from last year in the wake of the Christchurch terrorist attacks.

In a further change to previous years, applicants will no longer be required to show they have already experienced hate crime and will be able to apply if they can show they are vulnerable to hate crime.

The more streamlined process will also mean security measures can be arranged through one central provider, significantly reducing the administrative burden for small, volunteer-run institutions.

In an expansion of the scheme, for the first-time, associated faith community centres will

be able to apply for the fund.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said: Places of worship are at the heart of our communities and should provide peace and sanctuary.

I'm proud that through the fund we will be able to help even more institutions to protect their congregations from hate-filled individuals intent on harming them.

The application process will be open for 8 weeks until 31 August. Applications will be assessed by an independent panel made up of representatives from each faith. ...

Minister for Countering Extremism Baroness Williams said: No one should be fearful of abuse or attack because of their faith, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone in the UK is able to practise their religion free from fear. ...

In addition to the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, the Home Office has also previously announced a consultation across all faiths to review what more can and should be done to protect faith institutions, as well as a £5 million fund which will provide security training for institutions.

Institutions can apply for the scheme by going to the [Places of Worship page of GOV.UK](#)

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-protective-security-funding-scheme-open-for-applications>

TOP

## Holocaust

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270260] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June to Question 263696, what proportion of the engagement meetings organised or participated in by Big Ideas under that organisation's contract for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre have been held (a) in the City of Westminster, (b) in Greater London other than the City of Westminster and (c) outside Greater London.

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270261] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June to Question 263698, how many (a) schools, (b) mother and toddler groups, (c) housing associations and (d) Westminster community groups Big Ideas has (i) organised or participated in meetings with and (ii) engaged with in other ways on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270262] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June to Questions 263696, how many (a) Jewish and (b) other faith groups Big Ideas has (i) organised or participated in meetings with and (ii) engaged with in other ways on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Heather Wheeler:** Big Ideas Community Interest Company have reached out to a range of community organisations across Westminster, Greater London and nationally. They have held meetings with those groups who expressed an interest in learning more about the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre either through direct engagement or hosting information in their newsletters. A list of direct engagements is below.

Emmanuel Centre - Mother and Toddler Group
Board of Deputies of British Jews Board Meeting
Brixton Library - Foyer Space
Emmanuel Centre - Homework Club
Emmanuel Evangelical Church - Sunday Service and Community Lunch
Grey Coat Hospital School - Y11 and Sixth Form Group
Grey Coat Hospital School - Year 9 Class
Holocaust Survivors' Centre
Kinder Lunch - Alyth Gardens Synagogue
National Holocaust Centre, Nottingham - AJR Members
Open Age Westminster (Churchill Hub) - Coffee Morning
Remembering and Rethinking - Kindertransport Conference - Lancaster House
Thamesbank Centre - ETAT Group (Encouragement Through the Arts and Talking)
Thamesbank Centre - Mothers and Toddlers Group
The Abbey Centre - The Wash House Cafe
Together Plan - Memories of the Minsk Ghetto
United Synagogue - Annual Women's Dinner
Wiener Library - Heroes of the Holocaust
Wiener Library - Panel discussion
William Gibbs Community Centre - Coffee Morning

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270260/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270261/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270262/>

*The answers referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263696/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263698/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270263] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June to Question 263698, for what reasons the Government's contract with Big Ideas on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre does not specify engagement with existing users of Victoria Tower Gardens.

**Heather Wheeler:** The work of the Big Ideas Community Interest Company aims to engage local people whether or not they use Victoria Tower Gardens.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270263/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270264] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the highest number of submissions was that Big Ideas submitted in a day to the Westminster Council website on the planning application for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Heather Wheeler:** This information is available on Westminster City Council's planning portal.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270264/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270265] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will place in the Library the speaking notes and presentations used by Big Ideas in its public engagement work on the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Heather Wheeler:** The work of the Big Ideas Community Interest Company drew on material that is publicly available.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270265/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270266] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June to Question 263703, how many of the 24 possible sites for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre reported by the CBRE to the board of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation on 11 January 2016 had not been brought to the board's attention before that date.

**Heather Wheeler:** None were formally submitted to the Foundation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270266/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263703/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270267] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June to Question 263706, for what reasons Victoria Tower Gardens was not included in the site selection process for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre conducted by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation and the CBRE between September 2015 and 11 January 2016.

**Heather Wheeler:** CBRE was only one element in the search for potential sites.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270267/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263706/>

### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270268] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answers of 19 and 21 June 2019 to Questions 263702 and 263704, on whose authority representatives of the UKHMF engaged in discussions with Royal Parks and government departments on 2 December 2015 on the possible use of Victoria Tower Gardens for the Holocaust Memorial and

Learning Centre; and for what reasons those discussions were not reported to the board of the UKHMF.

**Heather Wheeler:** Representatives of the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF) engaged with the Royal Parks on the authority of the chair of UKHMF and Ministers.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270268/>

*The answers referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263702/>

*and*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263704/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270269] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June to Question 263707, whether it is the Government's policy that following the construction of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre that there will be no continuing call on public funds for that centre's maintenance and operation.

**Heather Wheeler:** The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation are considering various operating models to cover the running costs as part of a sustainable long-term plan.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270269/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-12/263707/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270270] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is his policy that work on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre after planning permission has been secured will not begin until (a) pledges of funding from non-government sources of at least £25 million have been secured and (b) funding for ongoing maintenance and operation is in place.

**Heather Wheeler:** Funding arrangements will be in place before main construction begins.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270270/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270271] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons the Government reduced the amount to be raised through the public fundraising campaign for the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre from £52 million to at least £25 million.

**Heather Wheeler:** The aim is to raise at least £25 million from charitable donations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270271/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270272] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate the Government has made of the

possible (a) depth and (b) breadth of the roots of the mature trees in Victoria Tower Gardens which will potentially be affected by the construction of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Heather Wheeler:** We have undertaken and continue to undertake extensive arboricultural surveys to establish the extent of root systems which vary along the length of the gardens. We have also commissioned an arboricultural expert to advise on measures to enhance tree health.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270272/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270273] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy that no construction work will begin on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens until the Government can provide an assurance that none of the roots of the plane trees in that location will be compromised by that construction.

**Heather Wheeler:** Measures have been undertaken to ensure the Memorial and Learning Centre will have minimal impact on tree roots. For example, as a result of ground-penetrating radar surveys carried out by arboricultural experts, the Memorial has been relocated further north than the original competition proposal to avoid tree root protection zones.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270273/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270274] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what will be the proportion reduction in the lawn area of Victoria Tower Gardens as a result of the proposed construction of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

**Heather Wheeler:** The Holocaust Memorial will require seven and a half percent of Victoria Tower Gardens. Around eighty five percent green space being retained, with improved drainage and planting. Existing paths will be replaced with water permeable ones to increase the health of vegetation, including trees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270274/>

#### **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Edward Leigh (Conservative)** [270275] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on what date public access to Victoria Tower Gardens leading up to the fins of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will be permitted; and if he will place in the Library a plan showing the division between areas where public access (a) will and (b) will not be permitted.

**Heather Wheeler:** The aim is to open the Holocaust Memorial in late 2022. The public exhibition boards showing the area open to the public are available on the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation website at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/761583/UK\\_Holocaust\\_Memorial\\_public\\_exhibition\\_boards\\_December\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761583/UK_Holocaust_Memorial_public_exhibition_boards_December_2018.pdf).

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270275/>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### Israel: Nuclear Weapons

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL16619] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) SIPRI Yearbook 2019, Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security, published on 17 June, which claims that Israel has between 80 and 90 nuclear warheads.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Israel has not declared a nuclear weapons programme. The British Government has consistently called on Israel to join the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state and to upgrade its arrangement to a full scope Comprehensive Safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-06-24/HL16619/>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

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

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

**Opt-out organ donation: organs and tissues excluded from the new system** (closing date 22 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/opt-out-organ-donation-organs-and-tissues-excluded-from-the-new-system>

**Regulation of pre-paid funeral plans** (closing date 25 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulation-of-pre-paid-funeral-plans-consultation-on-a-policy-proposal>

**Islamophobia in Scotland** (closing date 26 August 2019)

<https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=13027>

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