



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Hate Crime: Crime Prevention

Christian Wakeford (Conservative) [25216] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to tackle (a) antisemitism and (b) other hate crimes in (i) Bury South constituency and (ii) the UK.

Luke Hall: All hatred including antisemitism, is completely unacceptable and has no place in our society, which is why we're taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms.

We recognise that there has been an increase in reported religiously motivated hate crime incidents across the country.

We are also aware that Greater Manchester had the highest number of antisemitic incidents outside Greater London over the last 10 years (2008-2018) according to the Community Security Trust, who are one of our key partners in tackling antisemitism and the main body reporting on the number of incidents each year.

That is why we became the first country in the world to adopt the working definition of antisemitism as set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. We are making sure the police record hate crimes disaggregated by faith and our refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan reaffirms our commitment to combating antisemitism and our support for Jewish communities. We also are providing £14 million this year, and provided over £65 million to date, for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings.

We have committed just over £1.5 million for projects to tackle racially and religiously motivated hatred from 2018 to 2020, and have just launched a new Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme to promote integration and tackle hate crime, including antisemitism. We have also committed £200,000 of Home Office funding for a new national police hub to tackle the emerging threat of online hate crime.

The hub went live in January 2018.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-04/25216/>

Hate Crime: Sentencing

Jim Shannon (DUP) [24349] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of sentences for people convicted of hate crime.

Victoria Atkins: The legal framework for the prosecution of hate crimes in England and Wales includes provisions in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to increase sentences where the offence is found to have been aggravated in relation to hostility on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity. For example, common assault (non-aggravated) carries a maximum sentence of 6 months imprisonment, whilst racially or religiously aggravated common assault carries a maximum two years imprisonment. These provisions are clearly highlighted in the relevant sentencing guidelines.

The Government has asked the Law Commission to undertake a review of the legislation related to hate crime, which will report in early 2021. The review is considering parity in the existing legislation and the case for additional characteristics to be protected by legislation. This includes reviewing the current range of specific offences and aggravating factors in sentencing.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-03/24349/>

Information about the Law Commission review referred to above can be read at <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Prisoners: Islam

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated) [HL2231] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Keen of Elie on 3 March (HL Deb, cols 507–9), what estimate they have made of the percentage of Muslim managing chaplains in prisons in England and Wales (1) currently, and (2) 10 years ago; and what percentage of current prisoners are Muslim.

Lord Keen of Elie: As of 6 March 2020, 29% of Managing Chaplains in prisons in England and Wales were Muslim. No information is held centrally of the faith adherence ten years ago of managing chaplains (or their then equivalent). As of 31 December 2019, 16% of prisoners in England Wales declared that they were Muslim.

Data on prisoner religion up to December 2019 is shown below. These figures are regularly published on gov.uk under table 1.5 of the prison statistics information.

	31-Dec-18	31-Mar-19	30-Jun-19	30-Sep-19	31-Dec-19	Percentage change December 2018 to 2019
Males and Females	82,236	82,634	82,710	83,810	82,868	1%
All Christian	39,293	39,515	39,257	39,731	39,176	0%
Anglican	13,496	13,480	13,273	13,389	13,225	-2%
Free Church	758	737	739	770	753	-1%
Roman Catholic	14,094	14,160	14,194	14,350	14,183	1%

Other Christian	10,945	11,138	11,051	11,222	11,015	1%
Muslim	12,894	13,008	13,341	13,474	13,424	4%
Hindu	361	343	341	354	342	-5%
Sikh	638	611	601	588	571	-11%
Buddhist	1,575	1,619	1,603	1,627	1,661	5%
Jewish	482	477	494	502	495	3%
Other religious group	1,838	1,876	1,910	1,955	1,965	7%
Non recognised	6	7	6	5	7	**
No religion	25,053	25,034	25,023	25,455	25,099	0%
Not recorded	96	144	134	119	128	33%
Males	78,476	78,802	78,940	79,943	79,165	1%
All Christian	37,119	37,336	37,167	37,607	37,102	0%
Anglican	12,827	12,789	12,632	12,763	12,604	-2%
Free Church	703	685	693	716	707	1%
Roman Catholic	13,377	13,438	13,473	13,606	13,470	1%
Other Christian	10,212	10,424	10,369	10,522	10,321	1%
Muslim	12,659	12,782	13,098	13,222	13,183	4%
Hindu	350	329	327	337	326	-7%
Sikh	618	589	581	571	555	-10%
Buddhist	1,500	1,534	1,524	1,548	1,586	6%
Jewish	476	469	484	495	487	2%
Other religious group	1,735	1,774	1,806	1,850	1,855	7%
Non recognised	6	7	6	5	6	**
No religion	23,919	23,846	23,827	24,204	23,944	0%
Not recorded	94	136	120	104	121	29%
Females	3,760	3,832	3,770	3,867	3,703	-2%
All Christian	2,174	2,179	2,090	2,124	2,074	-5%
Anglican	669	691	641	626	621	-7%
Free Church	55	52	46	54	46	**
Roman Catholic	717	722	721	744	713	-1%
Other Christian	733	714	682	700	694	-5%
Muslim	235	226	243	252	241	3%
Hindu	11	14	14	17	16	**
Sikh	20	22	20	17	16	**
Buddhist	75	85	79	79	75	0%
Jewish	6	8	10	7	8	**
Other religious group	103	102	104	105	110	7%

Non recognised	0	0	0	0	1	**
No religion	1,134	1,188	1,196	1,251	1,155	2%
Not recorded	2	8	14	15	7	**

The role of Managing Chaplain is predominantly managerial rather than faith based and posts are filled through fair and open competition in line with Civil Service guidelines.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-04/HL2231/>

Home Office

Places of Worship scheme provides record levels of funding

... Minister for Countering Extremism Baroness Williams said: No one should be fearful about practicing their faith. Whether it is a church, a mosque, gurdwara or temple, any place of worship should be a space of reflection and safety.

The Places of Worship scheme provides that physical security. However, we can always do more, which is why we want to hear from worshipers about how we can better protect them from these terrible attacks.

The Places of Worship Protective Security Funding scheme provides funding for measures such as CCTV, fencing, gates, alarms and lighting, to places of worship and associated faith community centres that are vulnerable to hate crime.

Twenty-seven mosques, thirteen churches, five gurdwaras and four Hindu temples have received funding this year, the largest amount of funding in a single year since the scheme was set up in 2016.

Next year's scheme will double again, with £3.2 million earmarked for 2020/21. ...

In 2018/19 police in England and Wales recorded 103,379 hate crime offences, an increase of 10% on the previous year. This is largely due to improvements in the police recording and more victims feeling able to come forward and report these crimes.

The consultation being launched by the Home Office this month will ask faith groups what else should be done to help them feel safe and confident while practicing their religion. ...

The consultation recognises that different religious groups have different needs, and that some members of congregations, such as women or the elderly may feel more vulnerable than other groups. ...

The Jewish Community receive a separate fund – the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant – which is administered by CST.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-scheme-provides-record-levels-of-funding>

The consultation referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>

Northern Ireland Executive

Minority Ethnic Development Fund 2020/21

Closing date for applications: 2pm, 6 April 2020

The Minority Ethnic Development Fund (MEDF) provides support for voluntary and community organisations working with minority ethnic people and groups. The aim of the Fund is to assist minority ethnic and local community organisations to promote good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds.

For full details, and to apply, see

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/minority-ethnic-development-fund-202021>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Palestinians: Agricultural Products

Louise Haigh (Labour) [27616] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure UK businesses can trade with the Palestinian territories following the restrictions placed on the export of Palestinian agricultural goods by Israel.

Louise Haigh (Labour) [27617] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on Israel's imposition of restrictions on the export of Palestinian agricultural products.

James Cleverly: The UK is concerned about the impact of recent Israeli trade restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We are committed to supporting Palestinian economic development, and strongly support the principle of free trade. Businesses should be free to import Palestinian products without barriers. Her Majesty's Ambassador to Israel has raised this issue with the Government of Israel, most recently on 12 February. We welcome the agreement reached by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, on 20 February, to lift their respective trade restrictions. We urge both sides to ensure the continued implementation of this agreement and will monitor the situation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-10/27616/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-10/27617/>

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Relevant Legislation

** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/assisteddying.html>

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/divorcedissolutionandseparation.html>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/educationassemblies.html>

Genocide Determination Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/genocidedeterminationbill.html>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageandcivilpartnershipminimumage.html>

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education (closing date 27 March 2020)

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/76f6bdd3-bb14-4956-b089-cd1598323d55/consultation-on-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education.pdf>

Hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland: an independent review (closing date 31 March 2020)

<https://www.hatecrimereviewni.org.uk/sites/hcr/files/media-files/Consultation%20Paper%20Feb%202020.pdf>

Electing a more diverse Assembly (closing date 22 April 2020)

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=389>

Amendments to the organ donation regulations (Wales) (closing date 30 April 2020)

<https://gov.wales/amendments-organ-donation-regulations>

Regulating Independent Educational Institutions (closing date 8 May 2020)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/regulating-independent-education-institutions/>

** Protecting places of worship (closing date 10 May 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>

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