



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Universities: Ethnic Groups**

**Nadia Whittome (Labour)** [78934] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report entitled, Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged, published in October 2019, what progress he has made on tackling racial disparities in employment at universities.

#### **Universities: Racial Harassment**

**Nadia Whittome (Labour)** [78935] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report entitled, Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged, published in October 2019, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of racial harassment of staff in employment by universities.

**Michelle Donelan:** Racial harassment is unacceptable, and we cannot tolerate staff and students being victims of it at our world-leading universities. There is no place in our society - including within higher education - for any form of harassment, discrimination or racism. Universities have clear responsibilities in this regard.

As independent and autonomous institutions, higher education providers are responsible for the contracts and conditions of employment that they offer to their staff. We expect universities to follow fair recruitment and employment practices in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) to ensure that all job applicants and existing staff, regardless of race, have the opportunity to progress in their careers. This government will continue to work closely with key partners, and the Office for Students, to drive progress on matters of racial harassment and inequality in higher education.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-22/78934/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-22/78935/>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged.pdf>

## The Charity Commission

### **New online register of charities “widens the public’s window” into how charities are run**

The charity regulator today launched an improved public register of charities, which makes more information about individual charities available to donors and the public.

The register at [www.gov.uk/checkcharity](http://www.gov.uk/checkcharity) ... is an important source of information for the public, funders, philanthropists and charities themselves. ...

The new display is designed to increase transparency for the public and others by displaying a wider range of information than before.

Where a charity has been held to account by the Commission, ‘regulatory alerts’ on its register entry highlight the specific action taken or underway. ...

Financial information includes the number of staff within a charity that receive total income packages over £60,000, and whether trustees, who are usually volunteers, are paid for their services to the charity. It also highlights income that individual charities receive from government grants and contracts.

The new display also shows whether individual charities work with a professional fundraiser and whether they have specific policies in place, including on safeguarding. ...

The new display is also designed to make it easier for trustees to access and update their charity’s information with the Commission ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-online-register-of-charities-widens-the-publics-window-into-how-charities-are-run>

## Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

### **Programme for Government 2020-21**

**Liam Kerr (Conservative):** The First Minister said in her statement that freedom of speech and expression is fundamental in any democracy. The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill has been criticised as a threat to freedom of speech by, among others, the Law Society of Scotland, the Scottish Police Federation and several cultural figures. Will the First Minister listen to those criticisms and withdraw and rethink the bill, which so many have spoken out against?

**Reply from the First Minister:** Liam Kerr has been in Parliament for long enough, I hope, to know how the legislative process works. I deliberately said what I did today because I know that concerns have been raised about the bill, and it is important that we listen to those concerns. I answered a question about the bill during First Minister’s question time last week. Offences about stirring up hatred are not new in Scots law; they have existed in relation to racial offences for quite some time.

One of Liam Kerr’s colleagues rightly raised the issue of disability hate crime. There are very good reasons why we need to ensure that we have laws in this country that are capable of tackling hate crime, because it is pernicious and horrible and we should have zero tolerance for it. However, we have to do that in a way that respects and protects people’s legitimate freedom of speech and expression. As with so many important things that we do in society, the issues are not always straightforward. They involve striking balances and getting into the real detail of how

we get them right.

We are at the start of a legislative process. The right thing to do is to listen to concerns and to go through the committee scrutiny process. If we need to lodge amendments to reassure people who have legitimate concerns, we give an undertaking to do so. I mentioned the bill specifically today to give an indication to people that we hear the concerns. We want to navigate a way through the bill that ensures that we do what we want to do in relation to hate crime but that does not leave people thinking that the legitimate right to freedom of speech is being compromised.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12779&i=115567&c=2272836#ScotParlOR>

### **Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

**Liam Kerr (Conservative):** Yesterday's programme for government mentioned the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, but it failed to mention the bill's costs. Submissions by the police suggest that the bill's costs have been grossly underestimated and that several policing costs have not even been accounted for. Does the First Minister recognise the police's concerns? Given that many other concerns have already been highlighted about the bill, will she now consider rethinking it?

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** ... We are at the start of the legislative process. I know that concerns have been raised about the bill. I have given a commitment that we are listening carefully and that, if we require to lodge amendments, we will do so. Issues relating to the bill's financial implications will be fully considered and taken account of as part of the legislative process. That is the right and proper way to do things in Parliament.

I make no apology for thinking that it is really important that, as a society, we do more to tackle hate crime. The pernicious impact of hate crime on groups that are often already disadvantaged is unacceptable; none of us should be prepared to tolerate or live with that.

On the other hand, freedom of speech and expression is absolutely fundamental and, as legislators, it is our responsibility to strike the right balance. These things are not easy, but we are elected to come to this place to do that difficult work. That is what the legislative process is for, and I encourage Liam Kerr to engage with it in detail—as I am sure that he will—rather than simply throwing headlines across the chamber. Let us get down to the detail of doing the hard work to get to the right outcome, which I think that most people across the country want to see.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12782&i=115594#ScotParlOR>

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## **Holocaust**

### **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**

#### **Communities Secretary announces new members of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation**

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has ... announced the appointment to the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation of:

- Sir Jon Cunliffe, Deputy Governor for Financial Stability at the Bank of England
- Mona Siddiqui OBE, Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies at the University of Edinburgh

- Matthew Westerman, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Imperial War Museum. ...

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said: ... This year marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz Birkenau. It's unacceptable that 75 years after liberation, incidents of antisemitism are still rising in the UK and demonstrates why it is so important to remember the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution.

The UK Holocaust Memorial will serve as a continual reminder to us all of why we need to make a stand against antisemitism, racism and hatred, whenever and wherever we find it – something that this government will always do.

Co-chairs of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, Rt Hon Ed Balls and Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles said: ... Education on the Holocaust and subsequent genocides is one of the most powerful tools we have in the battle against antisemitism, racism and misinformation. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-secretary-announces-new-members-of-the-uk-holocaust-memorial-foundation>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Hebron: Coronavirus

**Colum Eastwood (SDLP)** [78908] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterparts on reports of the recent demolition of a Palestinian drive-through covid-19 testing centre in the City of Hebron, south of the occupied West Bank.

**James Cleverly:** We are concerned by the reports of a recent demolition of a covid-19 testing centre in Hebron. We have not to date made representations on this particular case but have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our view that demolitions, in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-22/78908/>

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

### UK Parliament

#### Assisted Dying Bill

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

### **Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

### **Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

\*\* **Getting Married: A Consultation Paper on Weddings Law** (closing date 3 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/#weddings-consultation-paper>

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