



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Community Security Trust: Finance

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [33207] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding the Government has allocated to the Community Security Trust for security at Jewish institutions in the 2021-22 financial year.

Victoria Atkins: £14m has been set aside for the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant for the 2021-22 financial year. This grant provides funding for protective security measures at all Jewish state, free and independent schools, colleges, nurseries and some other Jewish community sites, including a number of synagogues.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-14/33207>

Religious Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance

Stuart Anderson (Conservative) [36767] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support is available to assist with the upkeep of places of worship to prevent the need for major remedial works.

Caroline Dinenage: We recognise the importance of carrying out routine repairs and maintenance in order to reduce the need for major remedial works in places of worship, and the great challenge to raise funding to carry out this work, particularly at the present time. Listed places of worship represent some of the nation's finest heritage, and we support them through the DCMS run Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which makes grants equal to the VAT paid on maintenance and repairs. The scheme will continue to benefit listed places of worship across the country, all of which have provided a much needed space for rest, contemplation and well-being during these difficult times, when they have been able to be open. Listed places of worship may also benefit from the latest round of Cultural Recovery Funding with the £300 million package announced in June representing the latest and final tranche of funding for the CRF. The National Lottery Heritage Fund is distributing £40m in partnership with Historic England, based on criteria set by DCMS.

There are a number of sources of funding available for places of worship. The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports a broad range of projects that connect people and communities to the national, regional and local heritage of the UK. This includes historic buildings, monuments and the historic environment. This funding can be used for repairs and conservation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/36767>

Information about the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

Academies: Religion

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [33102] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to protect the secular ethos of (a) non-faith and (a) community-ethos academies entering into mixed-multi academy trusts.

Nick Gibb: Non-faith or community-ethos schools have different characteristics, particularly in relation to governance, compared to schools with a religious designation. Their secular character and ethos are protected regardless of which type of multi-academy trust they join.

The academy trust's charitable object is to recognise and support a school's individual ethos. This places an obligation on the trust and its board to ensure that a non-faith or community school's character is safeguarded in a mixed multi-academy trust.

The supplemental funding agreement, a contract between my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and academy trusts, has recently been updated to include clauses to protect the local governance arrangements of a non-faith or community school joining a mixed multi-academy trust.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-14/33102>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Faith Schools

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [33103] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils with no reasonable choice other than to attend a faith school due to lack of secular provision in their area.

Faith Schools: Admissions

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [33104] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils unable to access their nearest school because of religiously selective admissions.

Nick Gibb: The majority of parents are offered a place at a school of their choice. In 2021, 98% of parents received an offer from one of their top three choices of primary school, while 93.4% received offers from one of their top three choices of secondary school.

The Department has not made an estimate of the number of pupils with no reasonable choice other than to attend a faith school due to a lack of secular provision in their area, or an estimate of the number of pupils unable to access their nearest school because of religiously selective admissions.

Local authorities have a duty to provide sufficient school places in their area. Faith schools have played an important role in our education system for many years. Faith schools are popular with parents and are more likely than other schools to be rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding.

Faith schools are allowed to give priority to children of their faith where they are oversubscribed. Of those that do, some choose to allocate only a certain percentage of their places with reference to faith, while others do not have faith admissions criteria at all.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-14/33103>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-14/33104>

Higher Education: Freedom of Speech

Stuart Anderson (Conservative) [34590] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what duties the Free Speech and Academic Freedom Champion will have to ensure adequate community engagement.

Michelle Donelan: The Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom will be responsible for overseeing the performance of the Office for Students' (OfS) freedom of speech functions, including the monitoring and enforcement of freedom of speech registration conditions, the new complaints scheme and the new duties on students' unions under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill. Further details of the role will be available when the position is advertised in due course. The OfS is anticipated to consult on regulatory changes, to develop the new complaints scheme and to draft guidance.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-16/34590>

Travel: Quarantine

Munira Wilson (Liberal Democrat) [24355] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with specific dietary requirements have access to appropriate food in covid-19 quarantine hotels.

Jo Churchill: The catering requirements for managed quarantine hotels must include a variety of meals to meet nutritional, dietary, religious and cultural needs. ...

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-29/24355>

Northern Ireland Assembly Written Answer

Supply of kosher meat

Paula Bradshaw (Alliance) [AQW 20606/17-22] To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for an update on the work he is doing to ensure the ongoing supply of kosher meats to Northern Ireland from 2022 onwards.

The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs: You will be aware of Northern Ireland's obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement and Northern Ireland Protocol to continue to align with the European Union's sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) rules and my firm opposition to the detrimental impact of the mandated additional rules on the intra-United Kingdom (UK) movement of animals, goods and products, from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI). Restrictions on the supply of Kosher Meats to the local community are solely a consequence of the unnecessary new requirements created by the Northern Ireland Protocol.

I recently met with Lord Frost and Secretary of State Brandon Lewis, to further discuss issues arising from the practical application of the Northern Ireland Protocol and I have clearly presented my assessment of its social and economic impact upon NI, as part of the UK. Please be assured that I will continue to engage with my Ministerial colleagues across the UK, and my officials will do the same with their GB counterparts, to consider all available flexibilities, derogations and potential mitigations that could help to minimise the current impact on trade.

To date my officials have been able to facilitate the continued supply of kosher meats from Great Britain to Northern Ireland because of the special arrangements for retail goods and chilled meat products. If these arrangements are phased out it will be more difficult for GB traders to obtain the certification necessary for these products to move, due to the small volumes involved.

DAERA is currently working with DEFRA officials to establish supply lines and certification capabilities to ensure continuity of supply of all foods including kosher meats. My officials will also raise this particular matter in technical discussions with European Union officials.

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/printquestionssummary.aspx?docid=343392>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Caroline Lucas (Green) [33890] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his letter dated 9 July to the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, FCDO reference MC2021/03479, for what reasons Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv did not raise the issue of human rights with the Israeli Ministry of Justice at the time of the Israeli efforts to evict Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in May 2021; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly: We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The UK regularly raises the issue of forced evictions from their homes, including in Sheikh Jarrah, with the Government of Israel, most recently with the Ministry of Justice on 12 July. On 8 May I publicly expressed concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We monitor the situation in East Jerusalem closely, and officials regularly visit areas at risk of demolition and eviction and attend related court hearings.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-15/33890>

The Minister's comment, referred to above, can be read at

<https://twitter.com/jamescleverly/status/1391028309618839557?lang=en>

The letter referred to above is not available online.

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

**** Charities Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Notice of amendmnts

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/42273/documents/563>

Education (16 to 19 Academies) (Religious Character) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2946>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 9 days**

Animal welfare [EU legislation] (closing date 3 August 2021)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation_en

**** Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill** (closing date not stated, but no later than 23 September 2021)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2021/july/have-your-say-on-the-higher-education-freedom-of-speech-bill/>

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