



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Social Services: Food

Henry Smith (Conservative) [112532] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps care regulators are taking to ensure appropriate care for people with diets arising from philosophical or religious beliefs.

Gillian Keegan: The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care providers in England and acts to ensure that providers take account of preferences and religious and cultural backgrounds when providing food and drink. Under Regulation 14 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, providers must meet any reasonable requirement for people with nutrition and hydration needs arising from their preferences and religious or cultural background. The CQC's Assessment Framework takes into account the personalisation of care with regards to nutrition where providers are inspected and rated. The CQC has a range of enforcement options it can take against providers who do not comply with the regulations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-26/112532>

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Hilary Benn (Labour) [113688] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will list the types of kosher food that currently cannot be sent from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Victoria Prentis: The vast majority of Kosher foods, including Products of Animal Origin (POAO), can currently move from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI). A small proportion of POAO commodities are classed by the EU as 'Prohibited and Restricted' (P&R), which ordinarily would prevent them from moving into the EU or NI from a third country. At present, these POAO P&R goods are still able to move from GB to NI by virtue of the 'standstill period', which has preserved existing grace periods for GB-NI trade while we work with the EU on a more sustainable solution. This includes the Kosher commodities that fall into a P&R category.

However, POAO (including Kosher) commodities moving from GB to NI must be

accompanied by an Export Health Certificate, and also meet further regulatory conditions. The certification process is complicated and time consuming, which has rendered the supply of Kosher commodities to the small NI Jewish community uneconomical for most suppliers. The community can therefore technically access Kosher goods, but in practice they are still unable to do so by virtue of how the NI Protocol works.

This is not sustainable, and it is an example of the bottom line that the Protocol is not working. We are proposing a common-sense solution: goods going to the EU should go through regulatory checks and customs formalities, and those staying in the United Kingdom should not. That means no checks or documentation for goods moving from GB to NI and staying there, such as Kosher foods for the NI Jewish community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-28/113688>

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Animal Health and Welfare Common Framework: Provisional Framework Outline Agreement and Concordat

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1052057/animal-health-and-welfare-provisional-common-framework.pdf

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Face Coverings (Places of Worship)

John Mason (SNP) [S6O-00698] To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the lifting of some Covid-19 restrictions, whether it will provide an update on when it anticipates the requirement to wear face coverings in places of worship will be lifted.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery (John Swinney): Face coverings remain an important measure in reducing the spread of Covid-19, and they are required in most indoor public settings. However, an exemption from wearing a face covering applies for those who are leading an act of worship, and for performers. The exemption applies if the person is separated from other people by a screen or maintains a distance of at least 1m from other people.

We understand that many people are keen to see restrictions regarding face coverings removed entirely in places of worship, and we continue to engage closely with faith and belief organisations on the issue, most recently on 26 January. We are required by law to regularly review all protective measures that are currently in place, and our most recent review concluded that the regulations on face coverings remain proportionate. We will continue to review that regularly and have been clear that protective measures in places of worship, as in other settings, will not be in place for any longer than is necessary.

John Mason: I think that churches and others would totally accept that they should not be given any privileged position. However, given that many sectors, not least schools, are arguing that the restrictions should be lifted for them and people should not have to wear masks, I would like reassurance from the Deputy First Minister that churches and places of worship will not be forgotten about.

John Swinney: I give Mr Mason that assurance. I express my warm thanks to those in our faith communities who have been assiduous in applying the necessary restrictions that we have had in place and who, as a result, have enabled members of the public to participate in public worship, which I acknowledge to be immensely

important for many people in our society.

I assure Mr Mason of our determination to continue to engage with faith and belief organisations. I give the assurance that we will not keep the restrictions in place for any longer than we judge to be appropriate and necessary for the continued suppression of Covid.

Murdo Fraser (Conservative): Individuals attending places of worship are often seated in rows and facing in one direction, and are very often socially distanced from one another. Should we not soon be getting to the point where it becomes an issue of personal responsibility and people can choose to wear face masks in such settings rather than being required in law to do so? That is particularly the case given that we know that, in some cases, having to wear a face mask discourages people from attending places of worship.

John Swinney: I certainly hope that that last point is not the case. My answer to the question might help to address some of those issues. I want members of the public who wish to take part in public worship to feel confident about doing so, which brings me to Mr Fraser's first point. The matter cannot really be left to individual choice, because we are trying to create an environment in which it is safe for people who wish to take part in public worship to do so. As I said in my answer to Mr Mason, I acknowledge that to be a significant commitment of individuals in our society. I assure Mr Fraser that these issues are looked at carefully and that we engage closely with the faith communities.

The faith communities have been marvellous at working with us to apply the regulations in places of worship around the country. I thank them warmly for doing so and assure them that the restrictions will not be in place for any longer than is necessary.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13561&i=123054#ScotParlOR>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

Holocaust: Education

Jim Shannon (DUP) [111581] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase teaching of the events of the Holocaust in UK schools.

Robin Walker: The government has supported Holocaust education for many years and is fully committed to continuing this support.

In recognition of its importance, the Holocaust is the only historic event which is compulsory within the national curriculum for history at key stage 3. This ensures that young people from every background can continue to learn about the Holocaust and its relevance today. Effective teaching about the Holocaust can support pupils to learn about the possible consequences of antisemitism and extremism, to understand how society can prevent the repeat of such a catastrophe.

The department further supports school pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust by providing funding for several programmes. This includes £500,000 in the 2021/22 financial year for University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education which is match funded by the Pears Foundation, and £2.126 million in the 2021/22 financial year for the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project. The latter has been provided on an online basis during the

COVID-19 outbreak and has therefore had the capacity to reach more pupils. These programmes help reach all types of schools and help to develop high-quality teaching across the school sector.

Education is a devolved matter, and approaches to Holocaust education may differ in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-25/111581>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Overseas Trade: Israel

Kevan Jones (Labour) [110267] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her department is taking to increase trade between the UK and Israel.

Penny Mordaunt: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has committed to enhancing and improving the UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement. The United Kingdom published a Call for Input on February 1st to hear the views of businesses and wider society on how to improve our £4.8 billion trade relationship. Israel is one of the world's most dynamic and innovative economies and this will be a first step in strengthening our trade relationship even further.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/110267>

The call for input referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/trade-with-israel-call-for-input>

International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [111554] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to join the board of the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

James Cleverly: We support the objectives of the US Middle East Partnership for Peace Act and we will continue to engage with the US to identify opportunities for further collaboration. I outlined the UK's support for increasing dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians at the Alliance for Middle East Peace's 'Light the way' gala on 12 December.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-25/111554>

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Beth Winter (Labour) [113285] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister for the Middle East, North Africa and North America of 25 January 2021, Official report 846, what recent representations she has made to the Israeli Government to object to the destruction of the Salhiya family home, and their subsequent homelessness, in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, by Israeli forces.

James Cleverly: The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. On 19 January, I [Minister Cleverly] urged the Government of Israel to stop these practices.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-27/113285>

The oral contribution referred to above was made on 25 January 2022 (not 2021) and can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-01-25/debates/E127271B-6E9A-451A-8C1A-4A5B0395687E/TopicalQuestions#contribution-C5EF8BBE-A70E-4744-BD75-1F3575F1F083>

The statement referred to above can be read at
<https://twitter.com/jamescleverly/status/1483866915613388810>

Iran: Nuclear Power

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [111555] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the implications for the Middle East Peace process of Iran's potential non-adherence to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

James Cleverly: Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) commitments since 2019 and its nuclear programme is more advanced today than it has ever been before. We urge Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPoA without delay and take the opportunity in front of them in the JCPoA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. Iran has also continued with its destabilising regional activities. The UK remains firmly committed to the two state solution as the best way to deliver Palestinian self-determination and ensure a safe and secure Israel.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-25/111555>

House of Lords Written Answer

Palestinians: Coronavirus

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL5541] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk of a health crisis in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, given the rapid spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 there; what steps they are taking to support the relevant authorities in relieving any such crisis in the camps; and what recent discussions they have held with the UN Relief and Works Agency on this matter.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In support of Lebanon's response to coronavirus, the UK has contributed nearly £4.5 million for medical supplies via World Health Organisation, support through the British Red Cross, training to medical professionals, and funding for 10 isolation centres.

The UK is committed to supporting vulnerable Palestinian refugees in Lebanon through our annual support to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). UK aid helps UNRWA provide essential services to vulnerable Palestinian refugees including responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-19/hl5541>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Trade With Israel Policy Update

The Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan) [HCWS578] The call for input on a future trade agreement with Israel has launched today.

The UK is committed to our trade and investment relationship with Israel, one of the Middle East's most dynamic and innovative economies and the world's 30th largest economy in 2020. ^[1] This deal aims to secure more access for British goods and services, opening significant new opportunities for UK business which could boost trade with Israel, worth £4.8 billion in 2020. It aims to cement the UK's position as a world leader in innovation, and digital and services trade.

The UK signed a trade continuity agreement with Israel in February 2019 which replicated the scope of the EU-Israel agreement. The UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement includes provisions on tariff liberalisation, customs and trade facilitation and public procurement but does not include many key areas of a comprehensive FTA such as services, data, or intellectual property, which we hope to include in the new agreement. The call for input will provide businesses, individuals, and other interested stakeholders with the opportunity to give valuable feedback and highlight their priorities for our future trading relationship with Israel.

The feedback received from stakeholders will be crucial when shaping our mandate, and will inform detailed negotiations preparation, and policy positions. The Department for International Trade is committed to ensuring future FTAs and their provisions are good for British businesses and the British economy.

The UK aims to begin negotiations for an upgraded trade deal with Israel this year, focused on creating even greater opportunities for UK businesses. These new negotiations would allow us to go further to boost trade with Israel, whose demand for global imports is forecast to grow almost twice as fast as the global average between 2019 and 2030.^[2] There is significant scope to expand our trade in services, including digital services—which grew a remarkable 73% between 2010 and 2020. This would complement our services-based economies and cement the United Kingdom as an international services hub.

Following the consultation, the UK and Israel share a desire to launch negotiations during 2022. The call for input will seek to support the goal of greater economic prosperity for businesses and will ensure that their needs are heard. The Government are committed to transparency and will ensure that Parliament, the devolved Administrations, UK citizens and businesses are kept regularly updated on negotiations.

^[1] IMF World Economic Outlook, October 2021, 2020 data.

^[2] Source GTO September 2021.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-02/debates/22020234000007/TradeWithIsraelPolicyUpdate>

Department for International Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051583/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2022-02-03.pdf

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051638/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2022-02-03.pdf

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

Assisted Dying Bill

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

Charities Bill

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

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

Marriage Law (Northern Ireland) (closing date 18 February 2022)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/public-consultation-marriage-law>

Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights (closing date 8 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>

Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland (closing date 28 March 2022)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-hate-crime-legislation-northern-ireland>

Trade with Israel (closing date 30 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/trade-with-israel-call-for-input>

CPS: Public interest guidance for suicide pact and 'mercy killing' type cases

(closing date 9 April 2022)

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/consultation-public-interest-guidance-suicide-pact-and-mercy-killing-type-cases-0>

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