



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Employment: Religious Discrimination**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [39852] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment her Department has made of the prevalence of religion and belief discrimination in the workplace.

**Amanda Solloway:** The prevalence of any alleged discrimination by employers because of religion or belief is not routinely monitored by government. However, there are clear provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010 which prevent employers from discriminating against an employee, or a prospective employee, because of religion or belief (including any lack of religion or belief).

The Government sponsors the Equality Advisory & Support Service, which is a free service offering help and advice to anyone who feels that they have suffered discrimination, and the EASS statistics for contacts to the service relating to religion or belief discrimination within employment over the last five years are:

| Year           | Number of contacts | % of all contacts to the service |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2018           | 150                | 0.83%                            |
| 2019           | 179                | 0.97%                            |
| 2020           | 110                | 0.71%                            |
| 2021           | 193                | 1.17%                            |
| 2022 (to date) | 59                 | 0.84%                            |

The year 2021 saw an increase in contacts, partly due to a number of people claiming that it was their philosophical belief to object to having a vaccination against Covid. Such concerns would be registered by the service under the 'religion or belief' protected characteristic category.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-19/39852>

#### **Pupils: Discrimination**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [36765] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help support pupils and families who have been victims of discrimination in schools.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:** Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools have a duty to take steps to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all protected characteristics. The department has published advice to support schools to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The department is also making sure that all children in England learn about respectful relationships, in person and online, as part of mandatory relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). The curriculum has a strong focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, and on the importance of valuing difference. Guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>

The department is providing over £2 million of funding between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2023 to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools with tackling bullying. This includes projects aimed at eradicating the bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate-related bullying.

The department continues to publish information, guidance, and support for teachers and school leaders on how to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs, on its Educate Against Hate website. One of these resources is the Respectful School Communities toolkit. This is a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach that promotes respect and discipline. This can help to combat bullying, harassment and prejudice of any kind, including hate-based bullying. The website also hosts information for parents and carers through the Parents' Hub.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-14/36765>

*The website referred to above can be read at*

<https://educateagainsthate.com/>

*The toolkit referred to above can be read at*

[https://educateagainsthate.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/6.4953\\_DFE\\_Respectful-schools\\_signposting-tool\\_FINAL\\_Fillable\\_Client\\_Cop....pdf](https://educateagainsthate.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/6.4953_DFE_Respectful-schools_signposting-tool_FINAL_Fillable_Client_Cop....pdf)

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Israeli Settlements

**Sarah Champion (Labour)** [36770] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UN Security Council Resolution 2334, what assessment she has made for the implications of her policies of the settlements constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory.

**Amanda Milling:** We have long supported resolutions consistent with our policy, including United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334. The UK's position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We urge Israel to halt settlement expansion immediately.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-14/36770>

*The Resolution referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Diana Johnson (Labour)** [36719] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made representations to her Israeli counterpart on steps toward lifting the 15-year blockade of Gaza.

**Amanda Milling:** The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-14/36719>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Gaza: Mental Health**

**Diana Johnson (Labour)** [36718] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for policies of Save the Children's report entitled Trapped: The impact of 15 years of blockade on the mental health of Gaza's children, published 15th June 2022.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Diana Johnson (Labour)** [36720] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of the blockade of Gaza on children's ability to access vital health and education services in that country.

**Amanda Milling:** We are aware of Save the Children's report into the wellbeing of Gazan children. The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. In 2021, the UK provided £2 million to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund to help them provide child-sensitive grants to vulnerable households in Gaza reaching 4,311 boys and girls. This support enabled families to meet the essential needs of their children, with the majority of the support spent on food, education, and healthcare. Through our annual support to United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the UK supports their Mental Health and Psychosocial Support interventions, especially for children, which included summer school activities targeting 98,595 children (52,236 girls and 46,359 boys) in Gaza in 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-14/36718>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-14/36720>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

[https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/gaza\\_blockade\\_mental\\_health\\_palestinian\\_children\\_2022.pdf/](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/gaza_blockade_mental_health_palestinian_children_2022.pdf/)

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Bill of Rights Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

#### **Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

#### **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

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

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

#### **Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

#### **Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

#### **Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

#### **Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

#### **Schools Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

### Scottish Parliament

#### **Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

#### **Standards for ethnicity data (closing date 30 August 2022)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-ethnicity-data>

#### **Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25 (closing date 23 September 2022)**

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

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