



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Schools: Admissions

Jonathan Gullis (Conservative) [80954] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils in England were admitted to schools based on their faith in the last 12 months.

Grammar Schools

Jonathan Gullis (Conservative) [80958] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of removing legislative restrictions on the establishment of new grammar schools.

Nick Gibb: The Department maintains a diversity of provision, including grammar schools and schools designated with a religious character, 'faith schools', within the English school system.

The Department does not collect data on the number of children admitted to schools under specific admission criteria, such as aptitude or ability in music, drama or dance or on the basis of their faith.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80954>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80958>

Islamophobia

Sarah Owen (Labour) [79348] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent discussions he has had with Muslim faith leaders on Islamophobia in the UK.

Lee Rowley: This Government takes tackling Anti-Muslim hatred very seriously and working to stop it. Earlier this year the Secretary of State chaired a roundtable with experts on Anti-Muslim hatred where we discussed the drivers of discrimination against Muslim communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-04/79348>

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House of Commons Written Answers

Trade Agreements: Israel

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [80842] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, by what date she expects a free trade agreement with Israel to be concluded.

Nigel Huddleston: We launched negotiations for an upgraded Free Trade Agreement with Israel in July and held the first round of technical discussions in Jerusalem on 12 – 20 September.

The Government is clear that in negotiations we will not sacrifice quality for speed. We already have an existing deal providing tariff-free trade for 99% of the value of current goods trade. This upgraded agreement is fundamentally about adding ambitious coverage of services and procurement for a modern digital economy. We will only sign when we have a deal that is fair, reciprocal, and ultimately in the best interests of the British people and the economy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80842>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Trade Agreements: Israel

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [80843] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many civil servants are currently involved in trade negotiations with Israel.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [80846] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the cost is to her Department of her Department's negotiations with Israel on a free trade agreement to date.

Nigel Huddleston: The Department for International Trade (DIT) is currently delivering eight Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, and as of September 2022, had approximately 460 staff working in the Trade Negotiations Group. It is not possible to comment on specific negotiations as the number of staff working on each FTA changes depending on the stage and scale of the deal, and to maximise efficiency. Staff also work across multiple negotiations.

DIT allocated £46.3m in 2022-23 for the negotiation and implementation of FTAs, however, it is not possible to identify funding for individual FTAs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80843>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80846>

Trade Agreements: Israel

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [80845] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the UK's objectives are in their trade negotiations with Israel.

Nigel Huddleston: On 20 July, negotiations were launched between the UK and Israel for an upgraded, innovation-focused Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that supported trade in services, digital and procurement. As part of this, our strategic approach to the negotiations was published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). This document sets out the UK's key objectives in these negotiations.

An upgraded FTA with Israel will modernise our trade relations with a growing economy, whose services sector has grown by over 45% in the last decade, and whose total imports are expected to double by 2035.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80845>

Trade Agreements: Israel

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [80848] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, on which dates she has met Israeli representatives to discuss a free trade

agreement between both counties.

Nigel Huddleston: Officials and Ministers are in regular contact with their Israeli counterparts regarding our existing free trade agreement and to discuss negotiations for the upgraded trade agreement.

UK negotiators travelled to Jerusalem for the first round of negotiations on 12 – 20 September. We look forward to the next round of negotiations in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80848>

Trade Agreements: Israel

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [80849] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to support Israel and Palestine relations during free trade negotiations.

Nigel Huddleston: The UK greatly values our bilateral trade relationships with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Although the focus of the UK-Israel Free Trade agreement is trade with Israel, we will continue to build upon our commercial links with the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including through the Trade Facilitation and Customs Support programme (Tasdeer). This is a 3-year, £15 million programme funded by UK ODA, seeking to improve trade performance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with an integrated focus on gender and social inclusion, supporting inclusive growth.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80849>

Palestinians: Health Services

Patrick Grady (Independent) [82352] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has held discussions with his counterparts in Israel on providing access for Palestinians to (a) cancer and (b) other medical treatment outside of the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

David Rutley: The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty of ensuring and maintaining public health to the fullest extent of the means available to it. The wounded and ill in Gaza and the West Bank should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-08/82352>

Gaza: Israel

Caroline Lucas (Green) [80676] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2022 to Question 69580 on Gaza: Israel, if he will make representations to his Israeli counterpart on holding an independent investigation into the airstrike on a three-storey residential building in Gaza on 6 August 2022, and the subsequent (a) deaths of seven people including 13-year-old Mohammad Iyad Hassouna and (b) injury of 35 people including 18 children.

David Rutley: I refer the honourable Member to the answer given on 1 November 2022 to Question 69580, the answer can be found on the Q&A web pages on

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-24/69580>

We continue to monitor the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza. All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza.

Gaza: Israel

Caroline Lucas (Green) [80677] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2022 to Question 69582 on Gaza: Israel, what response the British Embassy in Tel Aviv has received to its representations to the Israeli authorities on the importance of regularised access to healthcare for people in Gaza; and what progress has been made following those representations.

David Rutley: I refer the honourable Member to the answer given on 1 November 2022 to Question 69582, the answer can be found on the Q&A web pages on <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-24/69582>

Access in and out of Gaza, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, remains essential for humanitarian purposes and those, including Palestinians, travelling for medical purposes. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. We strongly condemn all forms of violence and incitement to violence directed towards healthcare workers. The wounded and critically ill in Gaza and the West Bank should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/80677>

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Other Relevant Information

Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church in Scotland

St Margaret Declaration officially signed at Dunfermline Abbey

An historic declaration of friendship between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland was signed at Dunfermline Abbey this afternoon. ...

It was signed by Most Revd Leo Cushley, Roman Catholic Archbishop and Metropolitan of St Andrew and Edinburgh, who preached during the service, Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and Princess Anne.

Dr Greenshields said: "I am deeply honoured and privileged to be one of the signatories of the St Margaret's Declaration at Dunfermline Abbey in its 950th year and on St Margaret's Day.

"This new friendship agreement has been many years in the making and is aptly named after a Scottish Queen who was venerated for her missionary Christian faith and her kindness and generosity to poor people.

"The declaration reflects the steadfast desire of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland and the Church of Scotland to continue to journey together and to see the healing of division within our nation.

"Friendship is a very deep relationship, a relationship of conscious and deliberate choice in which individuality is respected but there is room for disagreement.

"This is a relationship in which we stand alongside one another, support one another, rejoice together and weep together, pray for and with each other, and work together.

"I would want people across Scottish society to look at this new relationship between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church and take away a powerful message – there is more that unites us than divides us as we strive to be an ever more united Christian voice in this land. ..."

Written by senior figures from both Churches, the declaration describes the Churches' shared beliefs, 'rooted in the Apostles, Christ's first disciples,' and acknowledges a common heritage as Christians in Scotland.

It also recognises the divisions of the past, apologises for the hurt and harm caused and seeks to make amends, asserting 'we repent and ask forgiveness of one other.'

It is accepted that some divisions between the Churches remain challenging and more work is needed on reconciliation and healing.

Nevertheless, both Christian denominations say that what they hold in common is far greater than what divides them, and they commit to continue working towards greater unity. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2022/articles/st-margaret-declaration-officially-signed-at-dunfermline-abbey>

See also

Historic declaration signed between Catholic Church and Church of Scotland

<https://scmo.org/news-releases/perma/1668613380/article/historic-declaration-signed-between-catholic-churc.html>

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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>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/48522/documents/2457>

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

**** Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

Press Release: Charities Bill published

<https://www.gov.scot/news/charities-bill-published/>

Bill as introduced

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill/introduced/bill-as-introduced.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill/introduced/enaccessible.pdf>

Policy Memorandum

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill/introduced/pmaccessible.pdf>

Financial Memorandum

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill/introduced/fmaccessible.pdf>

Delegated Powers Memorandum

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill/introduced/delegated-policy-memorandum.pdf>

Keeling Schedule

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill/introduced/keeling-schedule.pdf>

Equalities impact assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/charities-regulation-administration-scotland-bill-equalities-impact-assessment/>

Data protection impact assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/charities-regulation-administration-scotland-bill-data-protection-impact-assessment/>

Business and regulatory impact assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/charities-regulation-administration-scotland-bill-business-regulatory-impact-assessment/>

Island communities impact assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/charities-regulation-administration-scotland-bill-island-communities-impact-assessment/>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

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