



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Department for Education

Review of relationships, sex and health education to protect children to conclude by end of year

New Relationships, Sex, Health and Education (RSHE) statutory guidance will be completed by the end of the year, in response to disturbing reports that inappropriate material is being taught in some schools.

The review is needed to make sure all children are protected from inappropriate content in all cases, even if many schools already teach RSHE and engage parents in a positive way. The review, which was recently accelerated by the Prime Minister and Education Secretary, will be informed by an independent panel to be appointed over the coming weeks to provide external expertise. The panel will bring together input from health, children's development, curriculum and safeguarding. The review will also draw on close work with Ofsted, to understand what material is currently used in the classroom, and consider what improvements might need to be made.

The panel will advise on how to put in place clear safeguards to stop pupils from being taught contested and potentially damaging concepts, including introducing age ratings setting out what is appropriate to be taught at what age, to prevent children being taught concepts they are too young to understand. ...

The Education Secretary has also today written to schools to remind them they are required by law to publish a relationships or a relationships and sex education policy and consult parents on it, and should also provide all curriculum materials to parents and stop entering into contracts that seek to prevent parents from seeing materials.

Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan said: I am deeply concerned about reports of inappropriate lessons being taught in schools.

This urgent review will get to the heart of how RSHE is currently taught and should be taught in the future. This will leave no room for any disturbing content, restore parents' confidence, and make sure children are even better protected.

The letter makes clear that parents should be able to view all curriculum materials, and that parents can ask to see material if it has not already been shared, especially in relation to sensitive topics.

The review will also consider how to make sure all RSHE teaching is factual and does not present contested views on sensitive topics as fact. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-of-relationships-sex-and-health-education-to-protect-children-to-conclude-by-end-of-year>

Crown Prosecution Service

Teenager sentenced for posting racist material online

A teenage boy has been sentenced to a community order after posting extremist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and racist material online including a 'how to' manual covering a range of subjects relating to anarchy and criminality.

Oliver Riley, 19, was arrested on 12 October 2021 and later admitted five offences leading to his sentencing at Westminster Magistrates Court ...

Searches of his electronic devices showed he had developed an extremist right-wing mindset and had shared racist and homophobic material, some of which glorified Nazism and terrorist attacks.

Nick Price, Head of the CPS Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division, said: "It was criminally reckless for Oliver Riley to post this racist and extremist material online for others to view.

"By his actions others were being encouraged to assist or engage in terrorist activity.

"We carefully considered his age and learning difficulties before bringing these charges but concluded a prosecution should be brought. The CPS takes all cases involving hate crime extremely seriously and will continue to prosecute those who pose a threat to our society." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/teenager-sentenced-posting-racist-material-online>

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Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answer

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Lord Lee of Trafford (Liberal Democrat) [HL6863] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Scott of Bybrook on 24 March (HL6409), whether they will publish a comprehensive list of the bodies and individuals from whom they have received views opposed to the planned siting of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: Those opposed to the scheme were able to submit their comments to Westminster City Council. All comments are publicly available on the planning inquiry [website](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-27/hl6863>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-13/hl6409>

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House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Kim Leadbeater (Labour) [171605] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support progress towards a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine.

Leo Docherty: The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution, resulting in a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states. The Prime Minister met his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 24 March and emphasised the risk of undermining efforts toward the two-state solution. The Foreign Secretary and Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, Minister for the Middle East, met Israeli Foreign Minister, Eli Cohen, during his recent visit to London on 21 March. They discussed our strong bilateral relationship and also the vital importance of de-escalating the rising tension in the West Bank.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-22/171605>

Iran: Lions' Den

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [172384] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policy funding of the Lion's Den terrorist group by Iran.

Leo Docherty: The UK Government regularly assesses the impact of Iran's destabilising activity throughout the Middle East, including its political, financial and military support to several militant and proscribed groups. We work closely with our partners to deter destabilising Iranian activity in the region, including through a range of sanctions designations. We are aware of the activities of the Palestinian militant group Lions' Den and other militant organisations and we are working hard to de-escalate tensions in order to achieve a peaceful negotiated solution for Israel and the Palestinians.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-23/172384>

Israel: Palestinians

Beth Winter (Labour) [172529] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral statement on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 23 March 2023, Official Report, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on the impact of unilateral action by that country on the potential for peace talks.

Leo Docherty: 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 are disappointed with the recent repeal of the 2005 Disengagement Plan Implementation Law by the Israeli Knesset. The Foreign Secretary met Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen on 21 March, and in his phone calls with him on 10 January and 7 March, he also emphasised the need for de-escalation and the need for both sides to refrain from unilateral actions that make it harder to secure a sustainable and just peace based on a two-state solution.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-23/172529>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-23/debates/6C08B551-F8ED-42EA-B324-22DDC249C9FD/IsraelAndTheOccupiedPalestinianTerritories#contribution-D16026E0-7C02-4E9B-8AE9-07F819CDF70A>

Israel: Palestinians

Beth Winter (Labour) [172530] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his policy is on the making of a request to the International Court of Justice to provide an opinion on the legal consequences of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Leo Docherty: The UK is a strong supporter of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and we respect the independence of the Court. The UK believes that the latest ICJ referral on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict represents an inappropriate recourse to the advisory opinion mechanism as this undermines the efforts to achieve a settlement through direct negotiations between the parties, which remains the only viable path to a lasting peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-23/172530>

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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>

**** Holocaust Memorial Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

Representations on behalf of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50672/documents/3263>

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>

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438>

Schools Bill

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

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

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

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

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

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

Prospective Scheme of Delegation for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (closing date 15 May 2023)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-prospective-scheme-delegation-charity-commission-northern-ireland>

Review of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (closing date 18 June 2023)

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-review-race-relations-ni-order-1997>

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