



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Schools: Blasphemy

Lord Godson (Conservative) [HL7123] To ask His Majesty's Government whether the new blasphemy guidance being developed by the Home Office and the Department for Education will be legally binding upon schools; how they are planning to make schools aware of their new responsibilities under that guidance; and how that guidance will be enforced.

Baroness Barran: In response to recent incidents, the Government has been clear that there is no blasphemy law in the UK. The Department has no plans to produce specific guidance on blasphemy for schools.

Head teachers are best placed to make the decisions on how to meet the needs of their pupils. In doing so, there are a range of considerations, supported by existing departmental guidance. This includes ensuring political impartiality and promoting respect and tolerance between people of different faiths and beliefs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-17/hl7123>

Ministry of Justice

Terrorist prisoners to face tougher limits behind bars

... Convicted terrorists will be banned from taking a leading role in religious services and face more rigorous checks for extremist literature as the government redoubles efforts to crackdown on dangerous radicalisers behind bars.

New rules will prevent terrorist prisoners leading the call to prayer or delivering sermons – positions they could exploit to gain authority or influence over other offenders and spread their poisonous ideology.

This will strengthen existing measures preventing the most dangerous prisoners leading Friday prayers by extending the ban to all faiths and not just those in high-security prisons – protecting frontline staff and the public.

The government also confirmed ... limits on prisoners' property that will prevent extremists circumventing prison rules to hide and spread extremist texts.

While under prison rules there are no limits on the number of books prisoners can own, the government will toughen these restrictions by stating that they must fit into two medium size boxes with a maximum weight of 15 kilograms.

This follows instances where prisoners have gathered hundreds of books in their cells – in one case an offender had more than 200 books – in an apparent attempt to thwart prison officers searching for extremist material. ...

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary, Alex Chalk said: Faith can play a vital part in prisoners' rehabilitation but we must never tolerate terrorists who seek to exploit religious services to advance their own sinister agenda.

These changes, alongside tougher sentences for terrorists who commit crimes behind bars and our work to separate more of the most radical terrorists, will better protect our hardworking staff, other prisoners and the public.

There are currently around 200 convicted terrorists in custody, many of whom attempt to justify their offences through their flawed interpretation of religion. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/terrorist-prisoners-to-face-tougher-limits-behind-bars>

HM Prison and Probation Service

Guidance: Faith and pastoral care for prisoners: PSI 05/2016

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1154017/psi-05-2016-faith-and-pastoral-care-for-prisoners.pdf

TOP

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://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0279/amend/highered_day_cclm_0502.pdf

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

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

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50905/documents/3352>

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>

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454>

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>

TOP

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>

Supporting earlier resolution of private family law arrangements (closing date 15 June 2023)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/private-family-law-consultation/>

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>

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/charities-tax-compliance/consultation-charities-tax-compliance>

**** JPR 2023 Antisemitism in the UK Survey** (closing date not stated)

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/panel/UKantisemitism2023> (UK except Scotland)

and

<https://bit.ly/3Vg7DDH> (Scotland)

TOP

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