

Minority Ethnic Matters Overview

*MEMO is produced by the **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities** in partnership with **BEMIS - empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities**. It provides an overview of information of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, including parliamentary activity at Holyrood and Westminster, new publications, consultations, forthcoming conferences and news reports.*

Contents

[Immigration and Asylum](#)

[Race Relations](#)

[Racism and Religious Hatred](#)

[Other Holyrood](#)

[Other Westminster](#)

[New Publications](#)

[Other News](#)

[Bills in Progress](#)

[Consultations](#)

[Job Opportunities](#)

[Events/Conferences/Training](#)

[Useful Links](#)

Note that some weblinks, particularly of newspaper articles, are only valid for a short period of time, usually around a month, and that the Scottish Parliament website has recently been redesigned, so that links published in previous issues of MEMO may no longer work. To find archive material on the Scottish Parliament website, copy the details from MEMO into the search facility at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/help/searchadvanced.aspx>.

Please send information for inclusion in MEMO to MEMO@scojec.org and requests to be added to circulation to mail@bemis.org.uk

**The Scottish and UK Parliaments are in recess until 15 April 2013.
The next issue of MEMO will be published on 15 April.**

Immigration and Asylum

Holyrood Parliamentary Motion

S4M-06101 Kevin Stewart: Abolition of UKBA—That the Parliament welcomes the announcement that the UK Border Agency is to be abolished; agrees with Theresa May's assessment of the organisation as having a secretive culture and Keith Vaz's assessment that it is not fit for purpose; believes that Home Office policies, which it considers are also unfit for purpose, have created this situation; calls for a more open structure to be set up, including allowing MSPs to represent their constituents, and hopes that this is followed by a progressive and forward-thinking immigration policy.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-06101&ResultsPerPage=10>

Immigration and Asylum (continued)

Prime Minister

David Cameron's immigration speech

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/david-camersons-immigration-speech/>

Ministerial Statement

UK Border Agency

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mrs Theresa May): I would like to make a statement on the future of the UK Border Agency. Since 2010, the Government have been getting to grips with the chaotic immigration system we inherited. We have introduced a limit on economic migration from outside the EU, cut out abuse of student visas and reformed family visas—as a result, net migration is down by a third. We have also started to get to grips with the performance of the organisations that enforce our immigration laws: through the Crime and Courts Bill, we are setting up a National Crime Agency with a border policing command; the UK Passport Service continues to operate to a high standard; and since we split the Border Force from UKBA last year, 98% of passengers go through passport control within target times and Border Force meets all its passenger service targets.

However, the performance of what remains of UKBA is still not good enough. The agency struggles with the volume of its casework, which has led to historical backlogs running into the hundreds of thousands; the number of illegal immigrants removed does not keep up with the number of people who are here illegally; and while the visa operation is internationally competitive, it could and should get better still. The Select Committee on Home Affairs has published many critical reports about UKBA's performance. As I have said to the House before, the agency has been a troubled organisation since it was formed in 2008, and its performance is not good enough.

In truth, the agency was not set up to absorb the level of mass immigration that we saw under the last Government. That meant that it has never had the space to modernise its structures and systems, and get on top of its work load. I believe that the agency's problems boil down to four main issues: the first is the sheer size of the agency, which means that it has conflicting cultures and all too often focuses on the crisis in hand at the expense of other important work; the second is its lack of transparency and accountability; the third is its inadequate IT systems; and the fourth is the policy and legal framework within which it has to operate. I want to update the House on the ways in which I propose to address each of those difficulties.

In keeping with the changes we made last year to the UK Border Force, the Government are splitting up the UK Border Agency. In its place will be an immigration and visa service, and an immigration law enforcement organisation. By creating two entities instead of one, we will be able to create distinct cultures. The first will be a high-volume service that makes high-quality decisions about who comes here, with a culture of customer satisfaction for business men and visitors who want to come here legally. The second will be an organisation that has law enforcement at its heart and gets tough on those who break our immigration laws.

Two smaller entities will also mean greater transparency and accountability, and that brings me to the second change I intend to make. UKBA was given agency status in order to keep its work at an arm's length from Ministers—that was wrong. It created a closed, secretive and defensive culture. So I can tell the House that the new entities will not have agency status and will sit in the Home Office, reporting to Ministers. In making these changes it is important that we do not create new silos. That is why we are creating a strategic oversight board for all the constituent parts of the immigration system—immigration policy, the UK Passport Service, the UK Border Force and the two new entities we are creating. That oversight board will be chaired by the Home Office permanent secretary.

Immigration and Asylum Ministerial Statement (continued)

We will also work to make sure that each of the organisations in the immigration system shares services, including IT, because the third of the agency's problems is its IT. UKBA's IT systems are often incompatible and are not reliable enough. They require manual data entry instead of automated data collection, and they often involve paper files instead of modern electronic case management. So I have asked the permanent secretary and Home Office board to produce a new plan, building on the work done by Rob Whiteman, UKBA's chief executive, to modernise IT across the whole immigration system.

The final problem I raised is the policy and legal framework within which UKBA has operated. The agency is often caught up in a vicious cycle of complex law and poor enforcement of its own policies, which makes it harder to remove people who are here illegally. That is why I intend to bring forward an immigration Bill in the next Session of Parliament that will address some of these problems. The changes I have announced today are in keeping with the successes of this Government's reforms so far. We are reducing net migration and we are improving the performance of the organisations that enforce our laws, but UKBA has been a troubled organisation for so many years. It has poor IT systems, and it operates within a complicated legal framework that often works against it. All those things mean that it will take many years to clear the backlogs and fix the system, but I believe the changes I have announced today will put us in a much stronger position to do so. I commend this statement to the House.

To read the subsequent question and answer session see

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130326/debtext/130326-0002.htm#1303265000006>

Westminster Parliamentary Questions

Immigration

Philip Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment she has made of the potential inward migration to the UK of non-EU nationals who have obtained EU passports over the next five years. [149466]

Reply from Mark Harper: The Home Office has not made such an assessment. UK population projections, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS): http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_235886.pdf assume net migration up to 2035. However, it is not possible to identify separately how much of the migration may be due to non-EU nationals who have acquired citizenship of an EU member state.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130326/text/130326w001.htm#1303268000040>

Immigrants (NHS Treatment)

Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what moves the Government intend to take to prevent the national health service becoming an international health service.

Reply from the Secretary of State for Health (Jeremy Hunt): The current system of policing and enforcing the entitlement of foreign nationals to free NHS care is chaotic and often out of control. At a time when we are having to face the challenges of an ageing society, it places a significant and unjustified burden on our GP surgeries and hospitals and may well impact on the standard of care received by British citizens.

As the Prime Minister said earlier today, the Government are determined to ensure that anyone not entitled to receive free NHS services should be properly identified and charged for the use of those services. Currently, we identify less

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

than half of those who should be paying and collect payment from less than half those we identify.

We also have some of the most generous rules in the world on access to free health care. Our rules allow free access to primary care for any visitor to the UK, including tourists, and free access to all NHS care for foreign students and temporary visitors. But ours is a national, not an international, health service, so last year, under my predecessor, we began a wholesale review of the rules and procedures on charging visitors for NHS care, with a view to making the regime simpler, fairer and easier to implement. In particular, we focused on who should be charged and how the rules can be applied and enforced more effectively. We have examined the qualifying residency criteria for free treatment; the full range of other current criteria that exempt particular services or visitors from charges for their treatment; whether visitors should be charged for GP services and other NHS services outside hospitals; establishing a more effective and efficient process across the NHS to screen for eligibility and to make and recover charges; and whether to introduce a requirement for health insurance tied to visas.

The initial phase of the review has concluded and we will shortly start a consultation on a range of options, including plans to extend charging to some visitors and temporary residents who were previously exempt so that the default qualification for free NHS care would be permanent, not temporary, residence; ending free access to primary care for all visitors and tourists; introducing a prepayment or insurance requirement for temporary visitors to pay for NHS health care; and improving how the NHS can identify, charge and recover charges where they should apply. We will retain exemptions for emergency treatment and public health issues.

We will work closely with medical professionals, NHS staff and partner NHS organisations during the consultation and then seek to introduce agreed changes as quickly as possible. We will need to take a staged approach, because some changes are likely to require primary legislation before they can be introduced, which will take longer to put in place. However, some changes can be made immediately, and we should proceed with those as quickly as possible.

To continue reading the lengthy question and answer session see

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130325/debtext/130325-0001.htm#13032510000004>

Net Migration

Nigel Mills: What progress her Department is making in reducing net migration to the UK. [149415]

Alun Cairns: What steps her Department is taking better to manage immigration. [149418]

John Baron: What progress her Department is making in reducing net migration to the UK. [149424]

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mrs Theresa May): As has already been referred to this afternoon, the latest statistics show another significant fall in net migration—down almost a third since June 2010. This shows that we are bringing immigration back under control. Our tough policies continue to have an effect, and this marks a further step towards bringing net migration down from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands by the end of this Parliament.

Nigel Mills: I welcome the fall in net migration. Can the Home Secretary confirm to the House that it was caused by fewer people coming to the UK and not more people leaving, as some have suggested?

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

Reply from Theresa May: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The figure for net migration is reached by looking at the numbers leaving and the numbers coming in. The Office for National Statistics has been absolutely clear about the statistically significant fall in immigration and net migration, and it is the fall in immigration that has led to the fall in net migration.

Alun Cairns: The new “Life in the UK” test comes into force this week. Does my right hon. Friend agree that it should focus on encouraging immigrants to play a full part in British life, rather than teaching them how best to claim benefits?

Reply from Theresa May: I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend, and that is exactly what the new “Life in the UK” test does. We have revamped the requirements for people taking the test. It is no longer about water meters and how to claim benefits, but enables people to participate fully in our society. It has sections on British history. The test enables people to understand what being resident in the United Kingdom is about and how to participate in our society, and I think that is absolutely right.

John Baron: The nation has always been tolerant of persecuted minorities—quite rightly—and, indeed, seen the benefits of immigration, but controls under the last Government collapsed into an absolute shambles. What more can the Government do to control immigration for the benefit of public services and how confident are they that the Prime Minister’s proposals, announced today, will be implemented in time for the EU transitional controls, ending at the end of the year?

Reply from Theresa May: I thank my hon. Friend for pointing out that, despite the significant falls we have seen in net migration, it is necessary for us to continue to look at the routes for migration into this country and the so-called pull factors and to ensure that we are enforcing our rules. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister’s speech today is important because it sets out the importance of embedding immigration across Government as an issue that is not just for the Home Office, but for other Departments. That includes the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health, and, indeed, local government. We are clear that we will do all we can to deliver those parts of my right hon. Friend’s speech that can be delivered before the end of this year. For anything that requires legislation that goes beyond that, we will maintain our commitment to it, despite the transitional controls coming off at the end of this year.

Diana Johnson: Can the Home Secretary confirm that net migration of British citizens has fallen by 47,000 under this Government because fewer British citizens are returning home and more are leaving? Does she regard it as a successful immigration policy if two thirds of the reduction in net migration under this Government is down to fewer British citizens in this country?

Reply from Theresa May: I have to tell the hon. Lady that her question is based on a false premise. It is not the case that two thirds of the fall in net migration is due to the number of British people leaving. The Office for National Statistics is absolutely clear that the significant fall in net migration is due to a fall in immigration.

Greg Mulholland: We need a firm, fair and sensible immigration policy, but that is confused by the inclusion of international students in the net migration figures. Those students contribute about £5 billion to the economy. America does not do that, Australia does not do it and Canada does not do it. Why do we continue to do it?

Reply from Theresa May: We continue to keep students who are staying for more than a year in the calculation of those who are immigrants into the UK because it is an international definition. It is the definition used around the world. It is very simple: those who are staying here for more than a year have an impact on public services and on the UK more generally. I am pleased to say to my hon.

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

Friend that our policy of differentiation means that we have been cutting out abuse in the student visa system, while at the same time the number of overseas students applying to our universities has gone up. We are welcoming the brightest and the best.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130325/debtext/130325-0001.htm#1303251000023>

Visas

Lord Laird: To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Taylor of Holbeach on 14 March (WA 81-2), whether they will raise the £20,000 earnings threshold figure enabling non-European Union graduates to stay in the United Kingdom, set in 2009 by the Migration Advisory Committee, to its current revalued amount; what that amount would be in 2013 values; whether they will consider imposing a cap on the numbers permitted to remain in the United Kingdom; and how they assess the efficacy of the concession without extrapolating figures on the level of its use.[HL6342]

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Taylor of Holbeach): From 6 April 2013, the £20,000 earnings threshold for all tier 2 (general) workers (including graduates) will be raised to £20,300. This increase is in line with annual wage inflation, as recorded by the Average Weekly Earnings Index (AWEI). The figure of £20,000 was considered an appropriate threshold for new graduates switching into tier 2 when the tier 1 (post study work) route was closed in April 2012. The Government have no plans to impose a numerical limit on the number of international graduates from UK universities permitted to stay in the UK, providing they have an offer of a graduate-level job, at an appropriate salary, from a licensed employer. The current arrangements for switching from tier 4 (study) into tier 2 (work) replaced the previous tier 1 (post study work) category. The exact numbers switching into tier 2 from tier 4 could only be obtained at disproportionate cost but the tier 2 data do not suggest that there are large numbers in comparison with the previous arrangements.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130325w0001.htm#13032514000398>

Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment she has made of trends in the number of student visitor visas that have been issued in the last year. [149312]

Reply from Mark Harper: In 2012, 68,372 student visitor visas were issued, 6,966 more (+11%) than 2011.

Further detail is given in the Home Office Immigration Statistics October—December 2012. This states that although there has been a 6,966 increase in student visitor visas issued in 2012 at the same time as a fall in Tier 4 study visas of 52,066, the pattern of these changes for individual nationalities does not indicate a clear or consistent relationship. The nationalities accounting for most of the 52,066 fall in study visas issued (Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) have seen only very slight changes in the number of student visitor visas issued (+73, +20, +8 and -12 respectively).

The Home Office Immigration Statistics October-December 2012, including a summary of trends is available at:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research/immigration-q4-2012/study-q4-2012

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130325/text/130325w0001.htm#13032532000008>

Immigration and Asylum

Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

International Students

Richard Fuller: What recent assessment he has made of the costs and benefits of international students to the UK economy. [149141]

Reply from the Minister for Universities and Science (Mr David Willetts): International students provide enormous economic and cultural benefits to the UK. Education exports from further and higher education contribute some £9 billion to the economy. We therefore stated in January that we will place no cap on the number of genuine students coming from across the world to study in this country.

Richard Fuller: I thank the Minister for that answer. We all understand the importance of clearing up the chaotic mess of immigration left by the last Government and the attention that the public pay to reducing the total numbers, but many of us would like to see student numbers excluded from our migration statistics. The economic case has been made by Universities UK and the 1994 Group. Will the Minister reassure me that he is sensitive to these representations?

Reply from David Willetts: My hon. Friend is right. The first priority was to eliminate abuse so that people can have confidence that students are legitimate. We have now said that we will disaggregate the statistics so that students are separately identified. The next step is a positive education export strategy, which we will produce before the summer.

Mark Lazarowicz: The Royal Botanic Gardens in my constituency carries out world-leading research that benefits the UK in many ways. International students and interns are an important part of that work, but the gardens' particular organisational status sometimes makes it difficult to obtain visas for them. If I write to the Minister with the details, will he, perhaps in conjunction with his colleagues in the Home Office, look at this issue to help support its important work?

Reply from David Willetts: I am always happy to work with the Minister for Immigration, my hon. Friend the Member for Forest of Dean (Mr Harper), to iron out such problems, but the general point is very simple: genuine, legitimate students are allowed into this country and there is no limit on the numbers.

Shabana Mahmood: The Minister tries to paint a rosy picture, but the facts are that the recent drop in net migration is due to 38,000 fewer international students coming to this country. His policy is choking growth in our seventh-largest export industry, worth billions of pounds, at a time when our economy is flatlining. It is clear that the Minister is too weak to make the case for our world-class universities around the world and too weak to lobby his Government colleagues to change course. Does he agree with me that the one genuine achievement of the net migration pledge has been a net decrease in his own credibility?

Reply from David Willetts: The hon. Lady should understand that we have a clear policy: there is no limit on the number of students. I went with the Prime Minister on his most recent trade mission to India, accompanied by leading vice-chancellors, to communicate clearly and directly to one of our most important markets for overseas students that they are welcome to come and study in the UK.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130321/debtext/130321-0001.htm#1303216100028>

Student Visas

Lilian Greenwood: What assessment she has made of the number of student visitor visas issued in the last year for which figures are available. [149419]

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Mark Harper): In 2012, 68,372 student visitor visas were issued, 11% more than in 2011. Such visitors come to take short courses or to attend university summer schools. Most can stay for up to

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

six months, but in order to support English language schools, we now allow those taking specialist English courses to stay for up to 11 months on extended student visit visas.

Lilian Greenwood: The UK Border Agency's border inspector has warned that student visitor visas are open to abuse, so why has the number of people entering the UK with them risen by 76% under this Tory-led Government?

Reply from Mark Harper: The hon. Lady ought to check what the chief inspector actually said. All he said was that the UKBA should monitor the route to ensure that it was not being exploited, and that is exactly what it is doing. If the hon. Lady looks at the nationalities in relation to which we have reduced the number of tier 4 visas, she will see that there is no sign of any increase in student visitor visas. In fact, nearly 50% of the people using the student visitor route are non-visa nationals, and a large proportion of those coming here with six-month student visitor visas are from the United States of America. There is no risk of abuse, but we remain alert to it and will ensure that we catch it out.

Andrew Bridgen: Does my hon. Friend agree that the fact that the number of university visas has increased by 3% while at the same time the number of student visas is actually falling shows that it is possible to strip abuse from the system while also ensuring that the UK is open to the brightest and the best?

Reply from Mark Harper: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There has been a big drop in the number of students coming here, but that is because we have stripped abuse from the system. Five hundred fewer colleges are able to bring in foreign nationals, but, as my hon. Friend says, there has been an increase in the number entering our excellent universities sector.

[149429] **William Bain:** The Government have been caught napping by allowing the number of student visitor visas to rise by 30,000 since June 2010. Moreover, does the Minister accept that, in the words of Universities Scotland, he is damaging the brand of higher education by ensuring that genuine overseas students are included in the Government's net migration target?

Reply from Mark Harper: That is a very good example of a Member reading out a question without having listened to my previous answer. The hon. Gentleman clearly did not listen at all to what I said in response to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for North West Leicestershire (Andrew Bridgen). The number of students entering our excellent universities sector has risen, both in the United Kingdom and in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman should also know that the student visitor visa is credibility-based. Entry clearance officers have full powers to say no to students if they believe that they are not genuine student visitors to the United Kingdom.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130325/debtext/130325-0001.htm#13032510000026>

Foreign Nationals (Employment Status)

Gordon Henderson (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con): What steps she is taking to record the employment status of foreign nationals who reside in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [149409]

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Mark Harper): We are rolling out biometric residence permits to non-European economic area nationals in the UK granted leave for more than six months to make it easier for them to prove their entitlement to live and work. From next year, all non-EEA nationals will require a biometric residence permit, and we expect employers to check a migrant's right to work prior to offering employment.

Gordon Henderson: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's answer, which I find encouraging,

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

but will he explain how the success of that initiative can be monitored unless records are kept of where and by whom foreign workers are employed?

Reply from Mark Harper: I have two things to say to my hon. Friend. First, the sponsorship system provides a good mechanism for employers to track and record who is working for them when they come to fill skills shortages. Secondly, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions will, with the roll-out of universal credit, collect as a routine matter the nationality of those who claim benefits.

Pete Wishart: On the issue of foreign nationals and all others, is the Government's response simply determined by the rise and threat of the United Kingdom Independence party?

Reply from Mark Harper: No, not at all—the speech that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made earlier today was informed by work that has been going on for a number of months in the cross-ministerial committee that I chair. It is a well thought-through policy area as we further tighten the immigration system. The hon. Gentleman will know that, since the Government came to power, we have reduced net migration to the UK by a third and will continue to reduce it.

David Davies: Does the Minister agree that the vast majority of people in this country will support his work and the emphasis in the Prime Minister's speech? Nevertheless, there is still a net increase in immigration of 160,000 every year. Will the Minister assure us that he will continue to do all he can to reduce that number further?

Reply from Mark Harper: My hon. Friend is right. We committed to reducing net migration from the unsustainable hundreds of thousands that it was under Labour to tens of thousands, which is much more sustainable. That is supported by the vast majority of British people, whomever they vote for. I am glad my hon. Friend also supports that policy.

Chris Bryant: I wonder whether the Minister could help me to spot the difference. Currently regulations and Department for Work and Pensions guidance for jobcentres state that EU migrants cannot claim benefits after six months unless they are “genuinely seeking work, and have a reasonable chance of being engaged”. The Prime Minister today, in what is supposedly a new announcement, said that migrants can claim after six months only if they “can prove not just that you are genuinely seeking employment...but also that you have a genuine chance of getting a job.” Is that not exactly the same? There is no difference at all—it is not a new announcement. How many people exactly does the Minister believe will be affected by this supposed change?

Reply from Mark Harper: The Prime Minister set out a number of changes today. The one the hon. Gentleman mentions ensures that there is a statutory presumption in the system, which does not exist today, that, after six months, people have to demonstrate that they are taking all possible steps to seek work and that they have a reasonable prospect of getting it. At the moment, there is no presumption that they must do so. That is a weakness in the system, which is why we will strengthen it.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130325/debtext/130325-0001.htm#1303251000017>

Refusals of Leave to Remain

Simon Hughes: How many requests for a reconsideration of a decision to refuse leave to remain are outstanding; and what the oldest such cases currently being reconsidered are. [149416]

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Mark Harper): The UK Border Agency

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

has approximately 14,000 requests for reconsiderations outstanding. The oldest request dates back to 3 March 2010. It is worth reminding the House that these are all people who have had a decision on their application and have either exhausted their appeal rights or chosen not to appeal, so they have no right to be in the United Kingdom and they should leave.

Simon Hughes: I am grateful for the Minister's answer. Now that the Home Office has agreed to reconsider all the cases in this category as soon as possible, will the Minister and his colleagues look at whether there could be a system for prioritising those cases that are clearly in urgent need rather than simply working through a date system, which I have to say has been pretty random in the past?

Reply from Mark Harper: The point I made at the beginning still stands. These are all people who have had a decision and have been refused the right to remain in the UK after going through the full appeal process. For those who submitted a reconsideration request prior to our policy change last November, we will work through all their cases in order. If the right hon. Gentleman has a clear case of where there is a particularly compassionate reason for looking at it earlier, I would welcome him getting in touch with me; otherwise, we will work through the cases in date order.

Julian Brazier: Given those answers, will my hon. Friend confirm that the greatest single reason for the backlog in the UK Border Agency is the tendency of courts to go on allowing more and more appeals, thereby lengthening the process?

Reply from Mark Harper: My hon. Friend is right that when the UKBA makes decisions, people in settlement cases frequently have a right of appeal. Some of those processes can often be very lengthy, so we will keep on considering whether there are ways of making the system smoother and more streamlined.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130325/debtext/130325-0001.htm#1303251000024>

Immigrants: Detainees

Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost has been of transferring detainees from Northern Ireland to immigration removal centres in England and Scotland in each of the last five years. [148778]

Reply from Mark Harper: The escorting contract prior to May 2011 has a fixed price and it is therefore not possible to disaggregate the costs of removing detainees from Northern Ireland to immigration removal centres in England and Scotland.

Since May 2011, the costs are subject to commercial confidentiality restrictions since disclosure of this information would release price sensitive information. Under the Government's transparency agenda, we are committed to publishing details of any new tenders for contracts and new contracts over £10,000 and publishing new items of spend over £25,000. As such the UK Border Agency publishes monthly all payments to all of its suppliers at the following link:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/non-personal-data/transparency/>
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130326/text/130326w001.htm#1303268000039>

Asylum

Bridget Phillipson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans she has to increase the ring-fenced allocation for asylum cases on the Fast Track process on the immigration detention estate; and what estimates she has made of the size of the ring-fenced allocation for asylum cases on the Fast Track process on the immigration detention estate by 1 December 2013. [148665]

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

Reply from Mark Harper: Entry to the detained fast track procedure is determined by reference to published policy available on the UK Border Agency website at:

http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/asylumprocessguidance/detention/guidance/detained_fast_processes

The Detained Fast Track process deals with applications for asylum that appear, after screening, to be ones where a quick decision can be made. The system operates flexibly and in cases where it becomes apparent that an application is more complicated and cannot be determined within the Detained Fast Track time-scale, the case is taken out of the process and the claimant normally released from detention. The Government believes that the process provides claimants with the necessary time and opportunity to enable their applications to be justly decided and heard. The Agency will continue to seek to process as many cases that fall within the criteria through this process. Numbers of eligible cases and therefore detention requirements are difficult to predict given that entry levels rely on intake.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130326/text/130326w0001.htm#13032680000031>

Asylum: Females

Madeleine Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment she has made of the effect of dispersal on the health of (a) pregnant women seeking asylum and (b) new mothers seeking asylum; and if she will make a statement. [149497]

Reply from Mark Harper: Asylum seekers who are homeless are placed in an initial accommodation centre, where there are medical teams on site. An assessment is then made of their longer term accommodation needs. Any decision to disperse the person to accommodation in another part of the country takes account of the outcome of the medical examination carried out in the centre. There has been no specific assessment of the effect of dispersal on the health of pregnant women seeking asylum, but the dispersal policy is kept under regular review and changes made from time to time in light of the views of health professionals and other interested parties. The policy was most recently revised in August 2012 following an extensive consultation exercise. All asylum seekers have full access to the United Kingdom's health care system.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130326/text/130326w0001.htm#13032680000032>

Human Trafficking

Baroness Doocey: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of the children referred by the UK Border Agency in 2012 to the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking entered the United Kingdom without a parent or legal guardian.[HL6263]

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of the children referred by the UK Border Agency in 2012 to the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking first arrived in the United Kingdom by air travel.[HL6265]

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Taylor of Holbeach): The UK Border Agency will normally encounter a potential victim during an enforcement operation or once a claim for protection has been received. Many have not entered the UK using genuine documentation or do not retain the documentation that they used to travel to the UK so confirming the details of their arrival and whether they were accompanied is often not possible.

Baroness Doocey: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of the female children

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

referred by the UK Border Agency to the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in 2012 were victims of sexual exploitation.[HL6267]

Reply from Lord Taylor of Holbeach: In 2012, UK Border Agency referred 22 female children into the national referral mechanism as potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Of these, seven female children have so far received a conclusive decision, and less than five have been conclusively accepted as victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. In order to maintain the anonymity of those individuals conclusively accepted, the precise figure is not given in this response.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130321w0001.htm#13032162000279>

Human Trafficking

Baroness Doocey: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children have been referred to the National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking since it was launched in 2009.

Reply from Baroness Stowell of Beeston: My Lords, the national referral mechanism is a multi-agency framework designed to make it easier for organisations involved in a human trafficking case to co-operate, share information about potential victims and facilitate their access to tailored support. Between 1 April 2009 and 31 December 2012, 939 children were referred to this system by a range of front-line agencies.

Baroness Doocey: I thank the Minister for that response. Will she join me in welcoming the steps that Eurostar is taking to improve measures to prevent child trafficking at St Pancras International station? Will she ensure that the UK Border Agency co-operates more fully with both Eurostar and the British Transport Police and does nothing to hinder any of these initiatives?

Reply from Baroness Stowell of Beeston: My Lords, human trafficking of adults and, especially, children is one of the vilest crimes. I congratulate my noble friend on her tireless efforts in this area. I most definitely welcome the steps being taken by Eurostar to improve prevention via St Pancras and will of course ensure that the UK Border Agency and the UK Border Force continue to work closely with all parties trying to prevent this crime. Indeed, UKBA is committed to developing its practices in support of victims. I can announce to the House today that from 1 April the UKBA team that handles trafficking decisions will be exclusively dedicated to that task and will not combine its work in this area with any other.

Baroness Butler-Sloss: My Lords, I declare an interest as co-chairman of the parliamentary group against human trafficking. I am delighted to hear what the Minister has just said about UKBA and its concentration. Is she aware that many children do not go through the NRM but those who do go through are accommodated by local authorities, which do not have parental responsibility for those children under the Children Act 1989. Does she accept that it is very unsatisfactory that these children have no one with parental responsibility in this country other than, potentially, the traffickers themselves?

Reply from Baroness Stowell of Beeston: The noble and learned Baroness, Lady Butler-Sloss, highlights an important point, which is that we need to ensure that victims of trafficking are referred into what we call the NRM, the national referral mechanism, because it is through that mechanism that they then receive the support and care that they need. She might like to know-I am sure she is already aware of this-that, as part of the Government's ongoing efforts to improve the way in which we support the victims of this terrible crime, we have commissioned the Refugee Council and the Children's Society to review our

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

arrangements in this area so we can ensure that best practice in certain local authorities is repeated in all areas. Their report is due to reach us some time later this year.

Lord Skelmersdale: My Lords, is it not time that we called a spade a spade and described human trafficking as slavery, which is what it is and which has been illegal in this country for many years?

Reply from Baroness Stowell of Beeston: I like to think of myself as a plain speaker and I understand very much the point that my noble friend is making. However, the term "human trafficking" is one that is recognised internationally. Whether it is called "human trafficking" or "slavery", the most important thing is that it is a vile crime and we need to stop it.

Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale: My Lords, in this week when many of us have been celebrating the role of Dr David Livingstone in ending slavery in east Africa in the 19th century, will the Government make that association between human trafficking and slavery in the 21st century and ensure that international institutions, such as the European Union, the United Nations and others, give appropriate attention to global action, not just national action, to end this horrendous trade in human misery?

Reply from Baroness Stowell of Beeston: The noble Lord is right. This crime crosses borders and is based on international gangs. In the UK, our law enforcement agencies continue to work with their counterparts overseas on joint investigations to ensure that we tackle this by prevention and not just support people once they are victims of this terrible crime.

Baroness Howarth of Breckland: My Lords, as the Minister will know, and as my noble and learned friend Lady Butler-Sloss mentioned, children who are accommodated in care are not made the responsibility of the local authority. When they then go missing, the police often do not follow them up with great astuteness. I have just read in the newspaper that there are to be two categories of missing person for the police. There will be those who have just gone missing and are lost and those who are worth following up. Will the Minister ensure that these children are in the category of those who are worth following up and are the responsibility of a local authority?

Reply from Baroness Stowell of Beeston: The Home Office is working with partners to address the issue of all children going missing from home and care through its missing children and adults strategy. In addition, work is being taken forward by the Department for Education to improve the quality and consistency of data about when and why children go missing from care. We are very much aware that children who are victims of trafficking sometimes go missing when they go into care because they come into contact again with those who trafficked them. Our priority is to ensure that that does not happen. Those children are very much our priority.

To continue reading the lengthy question and answer session see
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130321-0001.htm#13032165000686>

Human Trafficking

Fiona Mactaggart: What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of prosecutions for human trafficking and related offences; and if he will make a statement. [149746]

Reply from the Solicitor-General (Oliver Heald): As a member of the interdepartmental ministerial group on human trafficking, I keep the effectiveness of prosecutions for that very serious form of crime under review. Wherever possible, the Crown Prosecution Service brings prosecutions for human trafficking or other related offences.

Fiona Mactaggart: Has the Solicitor-General asked for advice on the letter signed by a

Immigration and Asylum Westminster Parliamentary Questions (continued)

dozen charities on 28 April, which predicts that when the EU trafficking directive comes into force on 6 April the UK will be in breach of the following: the protection of victims during criminal procedures, access to compensation and legal assistance, and the provision of a guardian for trafficked children during legal proceedings? What is he going to do about that?

Reply from the Solicitor-General: As the hon. Lady will know—I hope she will forgive me—we do not, as Law Officers, explain when and where we have given advice. Her point is very important, however. Victims of human trafficking need to be identified and it is important that they should not be prosecuted or treated disrespectfully once that is known. That is one of the points being discussed in the interdepartmental ministerial group and she is right to highlight it.

Peter Bone: My hon. Friend referred to the interdepartmental ministerial group. Is not one of the problems that there are lots of different Acts of Parliament? Would there be any merit in pulling all the different Acts together in a consolidation Act on modern day slavery?

Reply from the Solicitor-General: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend for his work in this area. It is possible to consider putting a number of laws into a consolidating statute, but the problem is that we tend as a House of Commons to say, “We have these laws. Do we want to spend time consolidating them when we might have other matters to deal with?” Taking such an action was recommended in the recent report from the Centre for Social Justice, however. I have discussed it with the authors and the interdepartmental ministerial group will consider it.

Jim Shannon: Northern Ireland has had a number of convictions for human trafficking, and there are cases pending. Legislation will soon be introduced in the Northern Ireland Assembly by my colleague, Lord Morrow. Will the Solicitor-General outline the co-operation across all regions of the United Kingdom to tackle human trafficking?

Reply from the Solicitor-General: As the hon. Gentleman will know, there has been considerable co-operation and co-ordination of effort, particularly over intelligence and how those offences can be disrupted. Of course, there is an issue about the new National Crime Agency and exactly how it will operate—he will be aware of the situation and the ongoing discussions. It is important that there is that co-ordination of effort, which happens across the United Kingdom and the wider world, in trying to tackle the problem.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130326/debtext/130326-0001.htm#13032655000035>

Press Releases

UK Border Agency to split into two new groups

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-border-agency-to-split-into-two-new-groups>

Scottish Refugee Council response to the abolition of the UK Border Agency

http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news_and_events/latest_news/1963_uk_border_agency_to_be_abolished_our_response

Immigration fees change on 6 April 2013

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2013/march/45-april-fees>

New Life in the UK test

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2013/march/41-new-test>

Immigration and Asylum Press Releases (continued)

Asylum applicants registered in the EU27 rose to more than 330 000 in 2012

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-13-48_en.htm?locale=en

Statement by EU Commissioner Cecilia Malmström on the endorsement by Coreper of the Asylum Procedures Directive and the EURODAC regulation

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-293_en.htm

New Publications

The work of the UK Border Agency

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmhaff/792/792.pdf>

Monthly asylum application tables

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175511/asylum-jan2013.xls

Children entering detention under Immigration Act powers

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175512/child-detention-feb2013.xls

Back to basics: Towards a successful and cost-effective integration policy

http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/03/back-to-basics-integration_Mar2013_10525.pdf

News

UK Border Agency 'not good enough' and being scrapped

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21941395>

Under-fire Border Agency to be axed

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/under-fire-border-agency-to-be-axed.20624317>

UK Border Agency axed after litany of failure

<http://www.scotsman.com/the-scotsman/uk/uk-border-agency-axed-after-litany-of-failure-1-2859583>

Theresa May's big gamble: 'Troubled' UK Border Agency scrapped and split in two as Home Secretary takes personal charge

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-mays-big-gamble-troubled-uk-border-agency-scrapped-and-split-in-two-as-home-secretary-takes-personal-charge-8550249.html>

UK Border Agency to be abolished, Theresa May announces

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/mar/26/uk-border-agency-broken-up>

Theresa May splits UK Border Agency to end secretive culture

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9955458/Theresa-May-splits-UK-Border-Agency-to-end-secretive-culture.html>

Immigration and Asylum News (continued)

Theresa May abolishes 'troubled' UK Border Agency

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article3723565.ece>

Enough is enough! Theresa May breaks up 'troubled' UK Border Agency and returns power to Home Office after immigration backlog which would take 24 years to clear

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2299404/UK-Border-Agency-split-Theresa-May-breaks-troubled-body-returns-power-Home-Office-immigration-backlog-24-years-clear.html>

The UKBA's astonishingly troubled history

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21940901>

Border agency condemned over backlog

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21920116>

David Cameron accused of 'scaremongering' as new crackdown on immigration unravels

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-accused-of-scaremongering-as-new-crackdown-on-immigration-unravels-8547596.html>

Prime Minister under fire over crackdown on immigration

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/political-news/prime-minister-under-fire-over-crackdown-on-immigration.20618628>

Britain will have the 'toughest immigration rules in world'

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9950827/Britain-will-have-the-toughest-immigration-rules-in-world-after-reforms-says-minister.html>

PM: Immigrants can't expect 'something for nothing'

<http://www.scotsman.com/the-scotsman/uk/pm-immigrants-can-t-expect-something-for-nothing-1-2855695>

Jobless immigrants from Europe could lose benefits after six months says David Cameron

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9951431/Jobless-immigrants-from-Europe-could-lose-benefits-after-six-months-says-David-Cameron.html>

Unemployment benefits for migrants to be tightened

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21921089>

New immigrants told: You must pay to see a GP - and will move to the back of the queue for council homes

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2298188/New-immigrants-told-You-pay-GP--council-home.html>

Social housing residency test introduced by David Cameron

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21914540>

Migrants to wait 5 years for council housing

http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/National/article1235005.ece

Immigration and Asylum News (continued)

David Cameron to announce tougher tests for social housing, including keeping immigrant families off council house waiting lists for five years

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-to-announce-tougher-tests-for-social-housing-including-keeping-immigrant-families-off-council-house-waiting-lists-for-five-years-8547330.html>

Ministers planning immigration crackdown on 'education tourists'

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2013/mar/27/ministers-immigration-crackdown-education-tourists>

Doctors refuse to vet immigrants

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article3723055.ece>

Nick Clegg abandons illegal immigrant amnesty proposal

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/mar/22/clegg-abandons-amnesty-immigrants>

Paywall UK: Nick Clegg's security bonds for immigrants attacked as 'unworkable, impractical and discriminatory'

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/paywall-uk-nick-cleggs-security-bonds-for-immigrants-attacked-as-unworkable-impractical-and-discriminatory-8545919.html>

Nick Clegg proposes immigration 'security bonds'

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21884415>

Cabinet split on immigration as Vince Cable condemns net migration target

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/mar/22/immigration-cabinet-split-vince-cable-net-migration>

Ministers admit trying to forcibly remove tens of thousands of people

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/mar/22/ministers-forcibly-remove-people>

Immigration fears are being stoked by politicians, says bishop

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/mar/23/immigration-fears-stoked-politicians-bishop>

Glasgow's destitute asylum seekers: The people who 'don't exist'

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-21835432>

'Culture of disbelief'

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/culture-of-disbelief.20612984>

Leading music college loses border licence

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-21885347>

Apartheid row over students from overseas

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/apartheid-row-over-students-from-overseas.20593935>

Romanians face giving fingerprints

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9949520/Romanian-immigrants-face-giving-fingerprints.html>

Immigration and Asylum

News (continued)

120,000 Romanians and Bulgarians have already moved to Britain: Census shows in some parts of the country one in ten are Eastern European

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2299630/Census-finds-120-000-Romanians-Bulgarians-moved-Britain-parts-country-Eastern-European.html>

Up to 145,000 Romanians and Bulgarians could come to Britain, official study suggested in 2011

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9955713/Up-to-145000-Romanians-and-Bulgarians-could-come-to-Britain-official-study-suggested-in-2011.html>

Here come the Romanians – or not? Talk of a housing crisis is a scare story

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/housing-network/2013/mar/27/romanians-housing-scare-story>

[TOP](#)

Race Relations

Holyrood Debate

Kurdish Contribution to Scotland

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7896&mode=html#job_71889

News

Runnymede Trust invitation to tender ideas and proposals for website design, films, social surveys and project evaluation for their new campaign 'End Racism This Generation'

<http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/projects/end-racism-this-generation/invitations-to-tender-itts-2.html>

[TOP](#)

Racism and Religious Hatred

Holyrood Parliamentary Motion

S4M-06109 Neil Findlay: Shattered Walls—That the Parliament congratulates the pupils of the Armadale learning community who have been recognised as Champions for Change by the anti-sectarianism charity, Nil By Mouth, following their role in the film, Shattered Walls, which is an educational resource that explores sectarianism, discrimination and inequality; understands that the film does not sensationalise the issue or confine it to football but instead focuses on sectarianism in the workplace and on its impact on families; acknowledges the contribution of the pupils from Armadale, Blackridge, Eastertoun, St Anthony's, Westfield and Windyknowe primary schools along with pupils from Armadale Academy, who developed the script and performed in the film; notes what it sees as the grassroots work by the schools in the learning community area over a number of years to tackle sectarianism and promote greater respect between

Racism and Religious Hatred Holyrood Parliamentary Motion (continued)

communities; understands that the award was presented at a screening of the film in Armadale Academy on 27 March 2013, and commends the pupils, teachers, parents and production team who were involved in its production.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-06109&ResultsPerPage=10>

Press Release

No place for hate: Government gives its support to youth education on the dangers of racism

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/no-place-for-hate>

News

Is racism in online gaming the fault of the games – or the players?

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/shortcuts/2013/mar/22/is-racism-online-gaming-fault-industry-players>

Top universities face accusations of discrimination

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/mar/26/university-private-school-discrimination>

Labour peer Lord Ahmed apologises to Jewish community

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21965489>

Lord Ahmed apologises for 'twisted' Jewish conspiracy outburst

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article3725312.ece>

Lord Ahmed apologises for 'Jewish friends' comment

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2013/mar/28/lord-ahmed-apologises-jewish-friends-comment>

My comments were completely unacceptable': Lord Ahmed apologises for blaming Jewish conspiracy for dangerous driving jail term

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/my-comments-were-completely-unacceptable-lord-ahmed-apologises-for-blaming-jewish-conspiracy-for-dangerous-driving-jail-term-8553235.html>

The Lord Ahmed Interview: Peer 'Completely And Unreservedly' Apologises To Jewish Community

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/03/26/lord-ahmed-interview_n_2954621.html?1364468003

[TOP](#)

Other Holyrood

Press Release

Committee demands Ministerial leadership on Gypsy/Travellers

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/newsandmediacentre/61550.aspx>

Other Holyrood (continued) New Publication

Where Gypsy /Travellers Live

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/eor-13-01w.pdf

News

Nation starts countdown to appointment with destiny

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/referendum-news/nation-starts-countdown-to-appointment-with-destiny.20582485>

Scottish independence referendum date:September 18

<http://www.scotsman.com/the-scotsman/politics/scottish-independence-referendum-date-september-18-1-2849108>

[TOP](#)

Other Westminster

Parliamentary Question

Forced Marriage

Lord Lester of Herne Hill: To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Governments of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan about measures to combat British citizens being taken to those countries and forced into marriage against their will.[HL6063]

Reply from the Senior Minister of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Warsi):

We enjoy a good working relationship with local authorities in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh on implementing our strategy for tackling forced marriage, and we co-operate closely in providing assistance to British victims in those countries. At ministerial level, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my honourable friend the Member for North East Bedfordshire (Mr Burt), has raised the issue of forced marriage with the Pakistani High Commissioner in London. The issue has also been raised recently at senior official level, by the director of consular services at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during visit to Bangladesh in July 2012. We keep the subject under close review as part of planning for forthcoming ministerial conversations with their counterparts in these countries.

The Forced Marriage Unit has also established an International Partnership Board which is aimed at sharing the UK approach to tackling forced marriage with other London missions.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130326w0001.htm#13032659000652>

Press Releases

Prime Minister's Passover message

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/passover-message-2013/>

Other Westminster Press Releases (continued)

Foreign Secretary wishes Jewish communities a Happy Passover

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-wishes-jewish-communities-a-happy-passover>

News

Plan for separate votes by English MPs

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/plan-for-separate-votes-by-english-mps-8547702.html>

[TOP](#)

New Publication

The State of The Nation 2013: Education

<http://www.crer.org.uk/attachments/article/SOTN13/SOTN2Education.pdf>

[TOP](#)

Other News

Umbrella body Cemvo goes into liquidation

http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/finance/news/content/14782/umbrella_body_cemvo_goes_in_to_liquidation

Edinburgh Airport security ask passengers religion

<http://www.scotsman.com/edinburgh-evening-news/transport/edinburgh-airport-security-ask-passengers-religion-1-2852219>

White British children outperformed by ethnic minority pupils, says thinktank

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/mar/22/white-british-children-outperformed-by-minorities>

[TOP](#)

Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Holyrood

** Post-16 Education Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/56717.aspx>

Stage 1 debate

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7893&mode=html#iob_71863

Scottish Independence Referendum Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/61076.aspx>

Bills in Progress

Holyrood (continued)

**** Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/60464.aspx>

Scottish Parliament Information Centre briefing

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_13-18.pdf

Stage 1 evidence

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7897&mode=pdf>

and

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7885&mode=pdf>

**** Victims and Witnesses Bill**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/59133.aspx>

Stage 1 evidence

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7895&mode=pdf>

Bills in Progress

Westminster

Draft Communications Data Bill

Draft Bill as published

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm83/8359/8359.pdf>

**** Crime and Courts Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/crimeandcourts.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2012-2013/0090/amend/ml090-i.1-7.html>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2012-2013/0090/amend/ml090-iman.pdf>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2012-2013/0156/2013156.1-4.html>

House of Lords consideration of Commons amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130325-0001.htm#13032511000850>

Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/enterpriseandregulatoryreform.html>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

**** new or updated this week**

**** closes this week!**

National Action Plan for Human Rights (closing date 29 March 2013)

<http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/actionplan/participatesnap>

**** closes this week!**

All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into electoral conduct in the UK

(closing date 29 March 2013)

<http://www.antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Call-For-Papers.pdf>

Consultations (continued)

**** closes next week!**

Victims and Witnesses Bill (closing date 9 April 2013)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/59875.aspx>

**** closes next week!**

Carriers' liability charge: consultation on proposals to increase the level of charge and introduce a new incentives scheme (closing date 9 April 2013)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/carriers-liability-charge/>

Asylum (closing date 15 April 2013)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/asylum/>

Making Justice Work - Courts Reform Bill (closing date 24 May 2013)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/02/5302/downloads>

Beyond 2011: user requirements for future population and socio-demographic information (closing date 10 June 2013)

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/beyond-2011/consultations-events/consultations/user-requirements.html>

Design of the Data Sharing and Linking Service (closing date 29 May 2013)

<http://www.isdscotland.org/Products-and-Services/eDRIS/DSLS-consultation/>

Scottish Independence Referendum Bill (closing date 6 June 2013)

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ReferendumScotlandBillCommittee/RefBill_call_for_evidence_21_March_2013.pdf

Tackling Racism Through Youth Work (no closing date given)

<http://www.crer.org.uk/survey-for-youth-workers>

Our Communities, Your Duties (no closing date given)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KN9FT6N>

[TOP](#)

Job Opportunities

[Click here](#) to find out about job opportunities

[TOP](#)

Events/Conferences/Training

**** new or updated this week**

**** next week!**

Funding Workshops

8 April 2013 in Castle Douglas (1.30)

9 April 2013 in Melrose (10.00)

12 April 2013 in Edinburgh (9.30am and 1.30)

15 April 2013 in Glasgow (9.30am and 1.30)

17 April 2013 in Aberdeen (10.30)

Events/Conferences/Training (continued)

18 April 2013 in Inverness (11.00)

Voluntary Action Fund workshops to promote its new grant schemes; answer enquiries from potential applicants; and hold surgery sessions to discuss individual project proposals. For information contact 01383 620 780 / VSFenquiries@vaf.org.uk or see http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/files/3013/6327/3641/Roadshow_flyer.pdf

**** Meet the Charity Regulator**

16 April 2013 in Aberdeen (2.00 – 4.15)

25 April 2013 in Oban (6.00 – 8.15)

1 May 2013 in Wick (10.00 – 12.15)

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator events to provide an opportunity to hear about the latest developments in charity regulation, equality and fundraising. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/c8f7kh8> or contact Lorna Edwards communications@oscr.org.uk / 01382 220446.

An introduction to working with asylum seekers and refugees

30 April 2013 in Glasgow (9.15 – 4.30)

Scottish Refugee Council training to identify fundamental issues facing asylum seekers and refugees today, and highlighting current legislation and entitlements. Reduced fees available for small voluntary organisations. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/burro73> or contact Jamie Spurway 0141 248 9799 / train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk.

**** The Human Rights Question: What sort of Scotland, and what sort of constitutional future?**

1 May 2013 in Glasgow (10.00 – 4.00)

Seminar to examine how those involved in civil society groups are working to promote and protect rights, and consider the extent to which the referendum context affects this work. For information see <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/event/5386404882>.

UKBA asylum support

8 May 2013 in Glasgow (9.15 – 4.30)

Scottish Refugee Council course to explore the support arrangements available to asylum seekers from the beginning to the end of the asylum process. Reduced fees available for small voluntary organisations. For information contact Jamie Spurway 0141 248 9799 / train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk or see <http://tinyurl.com/9l2b3te>.

The housing journey from seeking asylum to settling in Scotland

30 May 2013 in Glasgow (1.15 – 4.45)

Scottish Refugee Council course for those who work with people seeking asylum and refugees to provide an introduction to core issues affecting those seeking sanctuary in Scotland. Reduced fees available for small voluntary organisations. For information contact Jamie Spurway 0141 248 9799 / train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk or see <http://tinyurl.com/c9wuzp9>.

Working with interpreters

30 May 2013 in Glasgow (1.15 – 4.45)

Scottish Refugee Council course for those who work with non-English speaking service users, including asylum seekers and refugees, who need a comprehensive understanding of how to work with interpreters. Reduced fees available for small voluntary organisations. For information contact Jamie Spurway 0141 248 9799 / train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk or see <http://tinyurl.com/c8k983b>.

[TOP](#)

Useful Links

Scottish Parliament <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/home.htm>

Scottish Government <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Home>

Westminster Parliament <http://www.parliament.uk/>

Directgov (links to UK Government Departments)

http://www.direct.gov.uk/DI1/Directories/AToZOfCentralGovernment/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=10013528&chk=8b2gQw

European Parliament <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/>

One Scotland Many Cultures <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>

Scottish Refugee Council www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Scottish Inter Faith Council <http://www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

Equality Advisory Support Service <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com>

Scottish Human Rights Commission <http://scottishhumanrights.com/>

ACAS www.acas.org.uk

SCVO <http://www.scvo.org.uk/scvo/Home/Home.aspx>

Volunteer Development Scotland www.vds.org.uk

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) <http://www.oscr.org.uk/>

Central Registered Body for Scotland (CRBS) <http://www.crbs.org.uk/>

Disclosure Scotland <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/>

BBC News24 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/default.stm>

BBC Parliament online

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/bbc_parliament/default.stm

[TOP](#)



The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438) <http://www.scojec.org/>



BEMIS is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. <http://www.bemis.org.uk/index.html>



The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>

The copyright of each article belongs to the publisher on whose website it appears, and it may only be copied or reproduced in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions. Full details of these, and the publisher's contact information, are available on each website.