

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.*

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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 and UK Parliament and Government websites been redesigned, so that links published in back issues of MEMO may no longer work. To find archive material on these websites, copy details from MEMO into the relevant search facility.

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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Question

Unaccompanied children

Tavish Scott: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4T-01299 by Humza Yousaf on 26 January 2016 (Official Report, c. 3), whether it will provide an update on what discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding providing support to unaccompanied children from Syria. (S4W-29653)

Reply from Humza Yousaf: The UK Government announced on 28 January 2016 that it will offer refuge to unaccompanied children. They have commissioned the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to draft recommendations as to the criteria of vulnerability for unaccompanied children, and to recommend steps to serve the best interests of children in conflict areas, which would include resettlement in the UK. UNHCR have been asked to report at the end of February 2016. The Minister for Europe and International Development chaired the refugee taskforce meeting on 9 February 2016 where the Home Office

Immigration and Asylum Scottish Parliament Question (continued)

was represented and where unaccompanied children were discussed. The minister continued to make clear Scotland's commitment to providing refuge to unaccompanied children. Further to this Scottish Government officials attended a meeting on 11 February 2016 chaired by the Minister for Immigration at the Home Office where they discussed the work to be carried out by UNHCR and what preparation was needed by home countries.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4W-29653&ResultsPerPage=10>

The answer referred to above, which was included in MEMO 467, can be read at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10333&i=95042#ScotParIOR>

UK Parliament Debate

Immigration: Students

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160225-0002.htm#16022541001170>

UK Parliament Motion to Annul

Immigration Act 2014 (Commencement No. 6) Order 2016

Motion not agreed

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160224-0002.htm#16022460000396>

UK Parliament Questions

Immigration: EU Nationals

Lord Kinnock [HL5789] To ask Her Majesty's Government which statistics from local and national sources they use to measure or demonstrate pressures on public education, health, housing and other services in the UK as a consequence of migration from other EU member states.

Lord Bates: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a report based on 2011 census data, on the changing levels of the non-UK born population in every local area, available at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rpt-international-migrants.html#tab-Local-geography-of-non-UK-born-and-non-UK-nationals>

The Home Office also published a research report 'The Social and Public Service Impacts of International Migration at the Local Level' (July 2013) which shows the local authorities that have been particularly affected by international migration, including migration from the European Union member states (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210324/horr72.pdf).

International Migrants in England and Wales 2011:

[http://qna.files.parliament.uk/qna-attachments/449707/original/International%20Migrants%20in%20England%20and%20Wales%202011%20\(HL5789\).pdf](http://qna.files.parliament.uk/qna-attachments/449707/original/International%20Migrants%20in%20England%20and%20Wales%202011%20(HL5789).pdf)

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Impacts of International Migration:

[http://gna.files.parliament.uk/gna-attachments/449707/original/Social%20and%20Public%20Service%20Impacts%20Oof%20International%20Migration%20\(HL5789\).pdf](http://gna.files.parliament.uk/gna-attachments/449707/original/Social%20and%20Public%20Service%20Impacts%20Oof%20International%20Migration%20(HL5789).pdf)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-02/HL5789/>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Lord Kinnoch [HL5790] To ask Her Majesty's Government which local authority areas in the UK have been identified through official statistics as having public services that are under excessive pressure as a consequence of migration from other EU member states; which official statistics show such pressures; and in each case, what is the usual time lapse between the collection and publication of those statistics.

Lord Bates: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a report based on 2011 census data, on the changing levels of the non-UK born population in every local area, available at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rpt-international-migrants.html#tab-Local-geography-of-non-UK-born-and-non-UK-nationals>.

The Home Office also published a research report 'The Social and Public Service Impacts of International Migration at the Local Level' (July 2013) which shows the local authorities that have been particularly affected by international migration, including migration from the European Union member states (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210324/horr72.pdf).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-02/HL5790/>

Family Visas

2. **Margaret Ferrier:** If she will make it her policy to reduce the financial threshold for family visas. [903660]

10. **Martyn Day:** If she will make it her policy to reduce the financial threshold for family visas. [903669]

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (James Brokenshire): The minimum income threshold of £18,600 for sponsoring a partner under the family immigration rules ensures that couples wishing to establish their family life in the UK do not place burdens on the taxpayer and helps promote integration. It has been considered by the courts and upheld by the Court of Appeal.

Margaret Ferrier: The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants has said that these rules discriminatorily affect women, 55% of whom earn less than £18,600, compared with 27% of men. The rules also disadvantage young people. What action will the Home Secretary take to reduce these unfair rules?

Reply from James Brokenshire: The threshold was set as a consequence of advice from the Migration Advisory Committee, which carefully considered the level of income in terms of it not being a burden on the taxpayer. The gross median earnings of all employees in Scotland in 2014 were £21,725—higher than that threshold. Issues of legal challenge have obviously been raised by the Court of Appeal. They were considered carefully and the threshold was upheld.

Martyn Day: The Secretary of State will have seen Amira's story, reported by the BBC this morning. She fled Syria and gave birth to her son in the UK, but under the Government's family visa rules, her husband, a Syrian national, is unable to join them here simply because they cannot afford the visa fees. Will the Secretary of State tell us where this British national should go to enjoy her family life? Her husband's home country of Syria?

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Reply from James Brokenshire: Various different routes could be available. We have the family reunion route, which might apply in these circumstances. Obviously, I am not familiar with all the issues he highlights but, equally, the Government are under certain duties regarding the protection of the welfare of children. This was considered by the court and upheld.

Michael Fabricant: Although I take the point made so eloquently by my right hon. Friend about the burden on the taxpayer, to what extent do we take into account charges made by other countries to British nationals hoping to emigrate to them?

Reply from James Brokenshire: My hon. Friend makes the point about different immigration systems in different parts of the world. We have taken considered advice from the Migration Advisory Committee, looking at costs and at those burdens to see that someone does not place a burden on the UK taxpayer. Obviously, it is for other countries to assess what is appropriate in their own systems.

Tulip Siddiq: The financial threshold for family visas is causing particular distress to one of my constituents, who cannot work the hours required because she is a carer for her vulnerable child. This means my constituent is living without her husband and the child is living without his father. Does the Minister acknowledge that he is at risk of creating a generation of children whose only contact with one of their parents will be via Skype?

Reply from James Brokenshire: No, I do not accept that, and these issues of the welfare of the child are absolutely part of the consideration we take. This matter was considered by the Court of Appeal and our approach was firmly upheld. When the threshold was set back in November 2011, the MAC gave the lower threshold of £18,600 but also advised that the threshold could have been set as high as £25,700. The Government reflected and set the current level, which has been upheld by the courts.

Joanna Cherry: The Minister mentions the Court of Appeal, but of course the matter is not entirely settled because this week the Supreme Court will hear the cases of two British nationals who cannot meet the tough financial rules that would allow their non-European Union spouses to come to live with them. The hon. Member for Hampstead and Kilburn (Tulip Siddiq) mentioned Skype. According to the Children's Commissioner for England, 15,000 British children are growing up in Skype families, where the only contact they have with one parent is via Skype. How can the Minister justify the stress and anxiety caused to these children by the inflexible and unjust rules?

Reply from James Brokenshire: I do not accept the characterisation that the hon. and learned Lady presents—indeed, I do not recognise the number she proffers. This is about ensuring good integration, which is part of the overall requirement in relation to language. This is about not only not imposing a burden on the taxpayer but about promoting integration, and we believe the policy is effective in doing that.

Joanna Cherry: Last year, the Conservative think-tank, Bright Blue, called on the Government to change these rules, noting

“the significant contribution millions of low paid Britons make to our economy and society, as well as the value of having families living together in the same country.”

If the Minister will not listen to the Opposition, will he at least listen to a think-tank from his own party and get rid of these rules, which discriminate against hard-working families?

Reply from James Brokenshire: I say again that we do not believe the rules are discriminatory in the way the hon. and learned Lady suggests. The system is in place to ensure good integration. It ensures that people are not a burden on the taxpayer, and I would have thought she recognised that as being a positive aspect of the policy. If people come here, contribute and settle, we welcome that, but the

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

rules have been set in the way they have, this has been upheld by the courts and we will continue to underline those key themes.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160222/debtext/160222-0001.htm#16022210000011>

Schools: Immigrants

Ian Austin [26958] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make applications for EU structural funds for the purposes of alleviating pressure on school places caused by migration from other EU countries.

Reply from Sam Gyimah: The Government has no plans to make applications for EU structural funds to support investment in additional school places.

We have committed £23 billion to create 600,000 new school places, open 500 new free schools and address essential maintenance needs between 2016 and 2021. This includes sufficient funding to create the places required between now and the 2021/22 academic year.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26958/>

Overseas Students

Daniel Zeichner [26778] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the number of occasions on which universities have withdrawn offers from international students who have stayed in the country for up to 28 days under the visa grace period.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We do not hold information related to general offers by universities to individual international students. The offer is only formalised for Tier 4 purposes when a university generates a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). The number of CAS withdrawn from students who have overstayed by less than 28 days is not recorded by the department.

All students wishing to extend their leave in the UK must submit a valid application for further leave to remain before their visa expires. Although the Immigration Rules allow students up to 28 days after the expiry of their leave to make an application, there is no grace period within which a student can lawfully overstay. All applications for further leave to remain will fall for refusal if a student has overstayed for more than 28 days, unless there were exceptional circumstances which prevented them from applying within the 28 day period.

The number of CAS which universities have assigned to international students and then subsequently withdrawn before a decision is made by the Home Office, from 5 October 2009 to 30 September 2015, is 103,753.

This figure includes applications made overseas and in the UK and includes withdrawals for a variety of reasons. We are unable to breakdown the numbers into specific reasons without exceeding proportionate costs.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26778/>

Overseas Students

Daniel Zeichner [26779] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on universities of their financial liability for international students overstaying their visas.

Reply from James Brokenshire: There has been no assessment made as the Home Office currently places no direct financial penalties on sponsors whose students overstay their visa.

Our system of sponsorship is based on two basic principles; those who benefit

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

most directly from migration (including universities that bring in migrants) help to prevent the system being abused; and those applying to come to the UK to study are eligible to do so and a reputable education provider genuinely wishes to take them on. The ability to recruit international students is not an automatic right, but a privilege. It is right, therefore, that sponsors check that a student is genuine and that they intend to leave the UK, or switch into work route, once their visa has expired before offering them a place. Making sure that, at the end of their visa, students leave the UK at the end of their visa or remain here legally is just as important a part of running a fair and efficient immigration system as controlling who comes here in the first place.

The Government has made clear our intention to use the introduction of exit checks to place more responsibility on sponsors for migrants who overstay. We are currently considering how to best deliver this commitment.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26779/>

Entry Clearances

Vicky Foxcroft [27525] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what safeguards her Department has put in place to ensure that out-of-country entry clearance applications are rigorously checked and processed.

Reply from James Brokenshire: All out of country entry clearance applications are subject to an extensive range of mandatory and discretionary checks.

These include, but are not limited to, identity, travel document verification, searches against national and international police records and against previous Immigration history. But biographic and biometric checks can also be made.

Applications are then assessed against the Immigration Rules. Decision quality is assured both by local managers and as part of the overall Departmental audit and assurance framework. Further assurance is provided by regular third party inspections and audits.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27525/>

Refugees: Middle East

Lord Hylton [HL5930] To ask Her Majesty's Government what special education programmes are being provided for those Iraqis and Syrians who have reached the UK since 2012, broken down into those for (1) children, (2) young people, and (3) adults.

Reply from Lord Bates: Asylum seekers and those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection have access to free state schooling. Those granted refugee status have immediate access to student support for higher education courses.

Local authorities in England are responsible for providing additional educational support, such as English language training.

Where schools need to provide additional support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils the funding arrangements enable local authorities to allocate a proportion of their funding to schools on the basis of the number of pupils in each school who have EAL and who have been in the school system for a maximum of three years.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-04/HL5930/>

Refugees

Andrew Rosindell [21984] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

steps the Government is taking to ensure that recent refugee arrivals from the Middle East and North Africa are assimilated into British society and culture.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We are working towards achieving more integrated communities and creating the conditions for everyone to live and work successfully alongside each other. All those who claim asylum are reminded of their responsibilities to comply with British law. Those who are granted refugee status are given access to the labour market and benefits, and are encouraged to access organisations who can assist with integration.

The Prime Minister announced on 20 July that Louise Casey would carry out a review on how to boost opportunity and integration in Britain. In addition, the Prime Minister recently announced that £20 million of additional funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses would be introduced in October 2016. This funding will reach the most isolated communities in the UK to help them integrate into society.

Each local authority region has a strategic migration partnership that provides coordination and support services for those organisations working with migrants.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-01-11/21984/>

Refugees: Children

Dan Jarvis [26901] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied child refugees in Europe the Government expects to relocate in 2016.

Reply from James Brokenshire: My Written Ministerial Statement of 28 January set out the government's plans to reinforce its response to refugee unaccompanied children from Syria, other conflict regions and within Europe. That included a commitment to work with partners, including the European Asylum Support Office, to help identify and support unaccompanied children on arrival in the EU. The government has also created a new fund of up to £10 million to support the needs of vulnerable migrant children in Europe.

If an unaccompanied child claims asylum in a European country participating in the Dublin Regulation we will consider requests to take responsibility where there are close family members legally present in the UK. Unaccompanied minors already in Europe may also apply for family reunion under the Immigration Rules.

We have asked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to advise us on what more we can do to assist unaccompanied refugee children fleeing conflict and persecution in the Syrian region and more broadly across the globe. The number the UK will resettle will be dependent on the UNHCR's assessment and whether it is in the child's best interests and our capacity to absorb them.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26901/>

The written statement referred to above can be read at

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-01-28/HCWS497/>

Refugees: Children

The following two questions both received the same answer

Caroline Lucas [26913] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to update guidance on the implementation of the Dublin III Regulations to ensure that unaccompanied children in Calais and Dunkirk can be united swiftly with their family in the UK.

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Asylum: EU Law

Caroline Lucas [26914] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 24 of the Joint Ministerial Declaration on UK/French co-operation on managing migratory flows in Calais, published in August 2015, what progress has been made on the commitment to take stock of the operational effectiveness of the Dublin III Regulations.

Reply from Karen Bradley: The UK government supports the Dublin III principles and welcomes the swift processing of asylum claims made in Calais. For migrants to be processed under Dublin III they must first claim asylum in France. The UK government will consider any request made by the French asylum authorities under the Dublin Regulation to take responsibility for an asylum applicant in France because they have close family in the UK.

To ensure that the provisions of the Dublin Regulation are used efficiently and effectively in both countries, a joint contact group has been established in line with the commitment in the Joint Declaration. The UK has held regular discussions with French Interior Ministry colleagues, including visits to Calais and Dunkirk to examine the processes and the information made available to migrants.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26913/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26914/>

Asylum: EU Law

The following two questions both received the same answer

Lord Hylton [HL6106] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they or the EU plan to produce a simple guide to the Dublin III Regulations for potential applicants for asylum and their advisers; and if so, whether that guide will be made available, at least in English and French, at refugee camps in Calais and Dunkirk, and at other points of entry into the EU.

Refugees: France

Lord Hylton [HL6105] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Bates on 9 February (HL Deb, col GC142), which British personnel or organisations are now "search[ing] out the most vulnerable in the camps at Calais and Dunkirk".

Reply from Lord Bates: In line with the UK-France Joint Declaration of 20 August 2015, the UK and France have increased the frequency of joint communications campaigns which involve speaking to migrants in Calais and Dunkirk to inform them of their options and providing advice on their rights to claim asylum in France. This includes speaking to vulnerable people and those who claim a link to family members in the UK. But we are very clear that the primary responsibility for the welfare and treatment of migrants in Calais lies with the French authorities.

A leaflet detailing the Dublin III Regulations is provided to applicants who have claimed asylum in France and indicate that they have family members in the UK.

The UK is also funding a project to identify those in the camps who are especially vulnerable and at risk of trafficking and exploitation, and to provide them with appropriate support within the French system.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-10/HL6106/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-10/HL6105/>

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Asylum: EU Countries

Lord Higgins [HL6174] To ask Her Majesty's Government what information they have about whether government documents are being issued by EU member states to those seeking asylum in countries in the Schengen area while they await a decision on their application for asylum.

Reply from Lord Bates: Under Article 6 of the Reception Conditions Directive 2013/13, EU member states are required to ensure that asylum applicants seeking international protection within their territory are provided with a document showing their status as an applicant or testifying that person is allowed to stay in the member state whilst the application is pending or being examined.

The process for issuing such a document will vary from country to country.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-11/HL6174/>

Asylum: EU Countries

Lord Higgins [HL6175] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether EU member states within the Schengen area are issuing a standard form of passport or other document to those they accept as asylum seekers or whether individual countries decide on the format to use; whether they have examined any sample of such document; and if so, whether they will place in the Library of the House any examples they may have.

Reply from Lord Bates: Under Article 25 of the Qualification Directive asylum seekers accepted as refugees in an EU member state will be issued a refugee status travel document, in the form set out in the Schedule to the Geneva Convention, for the purpose of travel outside their territory unless there are compelling reasons of national security or public order which prevent this.

It is normal practice for member states to distribute specimen documents between states. All specimen documents are stored securely in the UK.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-11/HL6175/>

Asylum

Keir Starmer [26034] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on developing the planned annual asylum strategy; and when she expects that strategy to be published.

Keir Starmer [26046] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans that the Government's proposed annual asylum strategy will include third-country asylum application processing arrangements for people who have attempted to claim asylum in the UK at port or in-country.

Keir Starmer [26047] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what consultations her Department has undertaken in developing the proposed annual asylum strategy; and whether her Department plans to undertake any consultation on that strategy after it is published.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The asylum strategy will outline how we will focus our efforts on the most vulnerable refugees, and how we will take a tougher approach to those whose asylum claim is unfounded or could reasonably have been made in another country. This will include looking again at the end-to-end asylum process from upstream to in-country.

We will publish the strategy annually, as set out in the Home Secretary's party conference speech. There are no plans to run a formal consultation but officials are engaging with a range of partners in preparing the strategy.

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-05/26034/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-05/26046/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-05/26047/>

Asylum

Roger Godsiff [26855] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that companies with which the Government contracts to provide housing or other services for asylum seekers (a) treat such people with care and respect and (b) avoid measures which may make asylum seekers a target for hate crime.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The general principles section of the statement of requirements within the COMPASS contract is clear: asylum seekers need to be managed with sensitivity, treated in a polite and courteous manner and their safety and security is of absolute importance and must not be jeopardised.

I have asked for, and received assurances from, all accommodation providers that there are no further policies or practices that allow asylum seekers to be identified as such by the public.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26855/>

Asylum: Children

David Davies [27417] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied asylum seekers claiming to be under the age of 18 arrived in the UK for each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Reply from James Brokenshire: Figures on asylum applications for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) are published quarterly by the Home Office in the Immigration Statistics release. The attached table gives total applications for asylum from UASC aged under 18, for 2012 to 2014.

Asylum applications received from Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children under 18, excluding dependants, 2012 to 2014

Year	Total applications
2012	1,028
2013	1,197
2014	1,858

Table Notes: (1) An Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) is a person under 18, or who, in the absence of documentary evidence establishing age, appears to be under that age, is applying for asylum on his or her own right and has no relative or guardian in the United Kingdom.

A copy of the latest release, Immigration Statistics July to September 2015, is available from

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/series/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27417/>

Asylum: Children

David Davies [27500] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

many asylum seekers who claim to be under the age of 18 have undergone independent testing to determine their age in each of the last three years.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We publish statistics on cases where the claimant's age has been disputed and a formal age assessment has been carried out. The table below shows the number of cases in each of the last 3 years.

Asylum Claims by Year with a disputed age	
Year of Claim	Totals
2012	337
2013	323
2014	318

Data is taken from published statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2015/asylum>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27500/>

Asylum: Fraud

David Davies [27788] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of asylum seekers who have been found to have fraudulently claimed to be under the age of 18 in each of the last years.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We publish statistics on cases where the claimant's age has been disputed and a formal age assessment has been carried out. The table below shows the number of cases in each of the last 3 years.

Asylum Claims by Year with a disputed age	
Year of Claim	Totals
2012	337
2013	323
2014	318

Data is taken from published statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2015/asylum>

Whilst we do hold information on the results of these assessments and whether they were found to be under the age of 18 the way corresponding data is held means that to obtain the data could only be achieved at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case files.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27788/>

Asylum: Fraud

David Davies [27499] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers were suspected of making fraudulent claims to be under the age of 18 in the last 12 months.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We publish statistics where the claimant's age has been disputed and a formal age assessment has been carried out. In the twelve months to September 2015 there were 590 such cases. Data is taken from published statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2015/asylum>

The results of these assessments and the Home Office's eventual finding as to age are recorded on the immigration casework database but this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case files.

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27499/>

Immigrants: Detainees

Lord Patten [HL6145] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bates on 22 January (HL4915), what is the longest period that any individual detainee has been held in an immigration detention centre.

Reply from Lord Bates: Information on the length of detention has been published since quarter 1 (January to March) 2010.

The longest time a person has been detained in the immigration estate - a foreign criminal who left detention and was returned to Algeria in Q1 2012 - was 2,319 days. The individual in this case had accumulated 14 convictions from 32 offences committed between 1998 and 2004, including - but not limited to - convictions for firearms/ shotguns/offensive weapons, drug offences, offences relating to police/courts/prisons and theft. He was continuously non-compliant with the Home Office and Algerian authorities, using a false identity and nationality, which frustrated attempts to obtain travel documentation to facilitate his deportation. His continued non-compliance, deception and a history of absconding led to detention being prolonged. This information does not include those held in prisons solely under Immigration Act powers.

The Home Office publishes quarterly and annual statistics on the number of people detained in the United Kingdom for immigration purposes, within the Immigration Statistics release on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/series/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-10/HL6145/>

Asylum: Deportation

Charlotte Leslie [27389] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of asylum claimants whose asylum claim has been refused, but who cannot be legally deported because their destination country is deemed unsafe (a) in each of the last five years and (b) in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We do not routinely collect such statistics. Each asylum case is considered on its individual merits. Where it is accepted that an individual would face persecution in their country of origin or it would be otherwise unsafe for them to return, some form of protection would normally be granted in the UK. If protection is not granted, then whether or not removal can be enforced, we expect failed asylum seekers to return home. The Home Office closely monitors developments in all countries of return and will take decisions on a case-by-case basis in the light of international obligations and the latest available country information. Generally, there are no countries to which, as a matter of immigration policy, we cannot remove. However there may be some countries where at any one time it is difficult practically to undertake enforced removals.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27389/>

Asylum: Deportation

The following two questions both received the same answer

Charlotte Leslie [27390] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claimants whose asylum claim had been refused but who could not be

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

legally deported because their destination country was deemed unsafe were admitted to prison in each year between 2006-07 and 2009-10.

Charlotte Leslie [27391] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claimants whose asylum claim has been refused but who cannot be legally deported because their destination country is deemed unsafe have been admitted to prison in each of the last five years.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We carefully consider all asylum claims on their individual merits and provide protection for those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations. No one who is at risk of serious harm in their country is expected to return there, but we do expect those who do not need our protection to return home voluntarily. Neither the Home Office nor the Ministry of Justice holds data on the number of failed asylum seekers who are admitted to prison as the information is not captured in that way.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27390/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27391/>

Asylum: Deportation

Charlotte Leslie [27392] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the risk of radicalisation of asylum claimants whose asylum claim has been refused but who cannot legally be deported because their destination country is deemed unsafe.

Reply from James Brokenshire: Those claiming asylum in the UK undergo a series of checks against immigration and police databases. Asylum claimants are screened to identify individuals who may have been involved in serious criminality outside of the UK, this includes (but is not limited to) war crimes, crimes against humanity and terrorism. Asylum claimants are also screened for indicators of national security interest and where identified further checks and investigations are undertaken.

The Prevent statutory duty has made it a legal obligation for specified public bodies, including the police, local authorities, and health services, to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into, or supporting, terrorism. We would expect authorities in contact with asylum claimants to have due regard to the risk of radicalisation in the same way that they would any other safeguarding issue.

No one who is at risk of serious harm in their country is expected to return there, but we do expect those who do not need our protection to return home voluntarily.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27392/>

Asylum: Deportation

Charlotte Leslie [27393] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the number of cases in which asylum claims are refused on the basis that the claimant is not judged to have a sufficient case but the claimant cannot be deported because their home country is deemed to be unsafe.

Reply from James Brokenshire: We carefully consider all asylum claims on their individual merits and provide protection for those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations. No one who is at risk of serious harm in their country is expected to return there, but we do expect those who do not need our protection to return home voluntarily.

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27393/>

Asylum: Deportation

David Hanson [1933] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been removed from the UK under the Dublin Convention in each year since 2010.

Reply from James Brokenshire: Our records indicate that the number of people transferred under the Dublin Convention and the later Dublin II and Dublin III Regulations were as shown in the following table:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total	1,150	980	740	800	520

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10; are based on the latest management information so are subject to change; and have not been quality assured under national statistics protocols.

Transfers to other Member States under the Dublin Regulations fell in the last three years because we stopped transferring asylum claimants to Greece in 2010. This was because it was found conditions there amounted to a breach of article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights. There then followed similar litigation around conditions in Italy, but we are still able to effect transfers there.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-06-10/1933/>

Asylum: Deportation

The UK Government has now corrected the original answer given to this question which appeared in MEMO 446 (27 July 2015)

Philip Hollobone [4942] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers were removed from the UK under the Dublin Convention in (a) 2005, (b) 2010 and (c) 2014.

Reply from James Brokenshire: Our records indicate that in 2010 1,150 people were removed from the UK with reference to the Dublin Regulation, which replaced the Dublin Convention in 2003. This figure includes people who claimed asylum in the UK and those who did not, but had asylum claims in other States, as the Dublin Regulation applies in both cases. Our records indicate that in 2014 520 people were removed, and in 2005 1,890 people were removed. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10, and are based on the latest management information and so are subject to change. This information has not been quality assured under National Statistics protocols.

Removals from the UK under the Dublin Regulations have fallen since 2010 primarily because all Member States are unable to make transfers to Greece following the ruling on 21 January 2011 from the European Court of Human Rights in the case of MSS vs Belgium and Greece. The Court found that Greece had violated Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) that prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment both because of the poor living conditions for applicants and the failure by the Greek authorities to properly consider his asylum claim. This ruling prevents further transfers to Greece until the situation improves.

Since the Court ruling the UK has helped Greece significantly to improve its asylum system, both bilaterally and as part of interventions under the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The UK has contributed more working days in asylum expert deployments under EASO support plans to countries such as Greece than any other Member State.

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-06-30/4942/>

Asylum: Deportation

The UK Government has now corrected the original answer given to this question which appeared in MEMO 450 (17 September 2015)

Gareth Thomas [9116] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been removed to a third country under the terms of the Dublin Convention in each month of 2014 and 2015 to date; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The following table shows the information requested, as indicated by our records:

Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14
50	40	40	30	40	30	30	30	50	50	30	20
Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15						
30	40	40	40	20	50						

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10; are based on the latest management information so are subject to change; and have not been quality assured under national statistics protocols.

These figures include people who have claimed asylum in the UK (main applicants), who applied on or after 01 October 2006.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-09-07/9116/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motions

Anne McLaughlin (1153) Scottish Refugee Council's Key Principles of Protection – That this House welcomes the Scottish Refugee Council's Key Principles of Protection launched to mark the end of its 30th anniversary year, which witnessed ever greater numbers of people fleeing for their lives in pursuit of safety, and the highest number of displaced persons since records began; believes that the six principles set a benchmark for how asylum seekers' and refugees' rights should be respected, ensuring that they are welcomed, treated with dignity and empowered to play a full and equal role in their new communities; notes that the Key Principles of Protection are consistent with international, European and domestic human rights and refugee law and are based on the Scottish Refugee Council's 30 years' experience of working with and for refugees in Scotland, the UK and Europe; and further believes that we should be a beacon for the rest of Europe and the world in how to respond and work with refugees, and put these principles into practice.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2015-16/1153>

Stuart C. McDonald (1156) Independent investigation into Compass asylum contracts – That this House expresses its serious concern about the allegations in The Times Scotland on Thursday 18 February of dehumanising treatment, neglect and poor standards of accommodation for those seeking asylum in the UK who have been dispersed to Glasgow; notes that these allegations pertain to Orchard and Shipman in particular, who have been sub-contracted by Serco, itself under contract from the Home Office, to deliver the lifeline public service of housing for women, children and men, many

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Early Day Motions (continued)

of whom come from war-torn countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea; emphasises that we must always remember these are resilient but also deeply vulnerable fellow women, men and children who may have lost everything precious to them and made perilous journeys to seek refuge here and find a secure home; recommends that the seriousness of the allegations in The Times Scotland merit the fullest independent investigation; considers that a full and comprehensive inquiry or review into the Compass asylum accommodation contracts across the UK is now required, particularly given recent allegations concerning performance of the Compass contracts in Middlesbrough and Cardiff; and believes that all local authorities and communities, and the devolved governments where applicable, must be fully involved in any Home Office decisions to widen asylum dispersal including who they are expected to contract and work with in the provision of accommodation to asylum seekers.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2015-16/1156>

Press Releases

Tackling human trafficking

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Tackling-human-trafficking-22f8.aspx>

Trafficking prosecutions on the rise as British prosecutors sign up to new anti-trafficking commitments

http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/trafficking_prosecutions_on_the_rise_as_british_prosecutors_sign_up_to_new_anti-trafficking_commitments/

Europe's restrictive measures place added hardships on refugees and asylum-seekers

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53293#.VsybSWR96nY>

Agreement on systematic controls of EU external borders

<http://english.eu2016.nl/latest/news/2016/02/25/dijkhoff-at-jha>

New Publications

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is a new joint faiths project between the main representative Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Interfaith bodies which aims to co-ordinate responses to issues facing asylum seekers and refugees. Find out more on the website www.sfar.org.uk and follow the project on Twitter [@WithRefugees](https://twitter.com/WithRefugees)

Migrant journey: sixth report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migrant-journey-sixth-report/migrant-journey-sixth-report>

Time to Deliver: Considering pregnancy and parenthood in the UK's response to human trafficking

http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/files/news/atmg_time_to_deliver_report_for_web_FINAL.PDF

Admissions data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501987/admissions-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Immigration and Asylum

New Publications (continued)

Asylum data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 1

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501988/asylum1-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Asylum data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 2

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501989/asylum2-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Asylum data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 3

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501990/asylum3-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Asylum data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 4

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501994/asylum4-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Citizenship data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501997/citizenship-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Detention data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501999/detention-q4-2015-tabs.ods

European Economic Area data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502000/eea-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Entry clearance visas granted outside the UK data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 1

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502002/entry-visas1-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Entry clearance visas granted outside the UK data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 2

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502004/entry-visas2-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Entry clearance visas granted outside the UK data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 3

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502010/entry-visas3-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Extensions of stay data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502011/extensions-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Removals and voluntary departures data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 1

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502024/removals1-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Immigration and Asylum New Publications (continued)

Removals and voluntary departures data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 2

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502027/removals2-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Removals and voluntary departures data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015 volume 3

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502028/removals3-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Settlement data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502030/settlement-q4-2015-tabs.ods

Sponsorship data tables immigration statistics October to December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502033/sponsorship-q4-2015-tabs.ods

News

SNP to launch joint offensive over work visas for international graduates

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/14306428.SNP_to_launch_joint_offensive_over_work_visas_for_international_graduates/

Families to challenge minimum income visa rules in supreme court

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/21/families-challenge-minimum-income-visa-rules-supreme-court-non-eu-partner>

'Absurd' visa rules on income force UK citizens into exile, court told

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/22/absurd-minimum-income-visa-rules-forcing-uk-citizens-into-exile-court-told>

MPs to debate controversial £35k migrant pay threshold for first time

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/mps-to-debate-controversial-35k-migrant-pay-threshold-for-first-time-a6893586.html>

Theresa May criticised for 'compassion quota' in asylum strategy

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/27/theresa-may-criticised-for-compassion-quota-in-asylum-strategy>

Humane approach to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants undermined by the UK Government

http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/14306431.Keven_McKenna_Humane_approach_to_refugees_asylum_seekers_and_migrants_undermined_by_the_UK_Government/

New laws to tackle human trafficking to be introduced in May

http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/14303317.New_laws_to_tackle_human_trafficking_to_be_introduced_in_May/

Refugee children starved of access to education

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/14307404.Refugee_children_starved_of_access_to_education/

Immigration and Asylum

News (continued)

Gap-year students deciding asylum claims

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/27/gap-year-students-deciding-asylum-claims>

Nominations now open for Refugee Festival Scotland Media Awards 2016

http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2821_nominations_now_open_for_refugee_festival_scotland_media_awards_2016

Net migration to UK falls for first time in almost two years

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/25/net-migration-to-uk-falls-for-first-time-in-almost-two-years>

Is there a cover-up over UK migration figures?

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/reality-check/2016/feb/26/cover-up-uk-migration-figures-reality-check>

Net migration to the UK up but increase 'not statistically significant' for EU and non-EU immigrants

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/net-migration-to-the-uk-up-but-increase-not-statistically-significant-for-eu-and-non-eu-immigrants-a6894891.html>

UK migration: Six myths about immigration debunked as latest figures show fall in non-EU arrivals

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-migration-six-myths-about-immigration-debunked-as-latest-figures-show-fall-in-non-eu-arrivals-a6895341.html>

Net migration is 200,000 higher than Cameron's promise - and we're right to be outraged. It should be more

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/net-migration-is-200000-higher-than-camerons-promise-and-were-right-to-be-outraged-it-should-be-a6897586.html>

Blow for Cameron as migration reaches 'new norm' of 320,000

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article4699211.ece>

Ministers 'hiding full scale of EU immigration'

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/12173817/Ministers-hiding-full-scale-of-EU-immigration.html>

More than 100,000 migrants reach Europe in 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/12170806/Over-100000-migrants-have-reach-Europe-so-far-in-2016.html>

Overall net migration down from record levels, official figures show

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3463595/Overall-net-migration-record-levels-official-figures-show.html>

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Community Relations

News

Councillor launches culture celebration after discovering 32 languages are spoken in one area alone

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/councillor-launches-culture-celebration-after-7444875#kxb7Jvbrwm78Aki4.97>

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Equality

UK Parliament Questions

Race Inequality

1. **Steven Paterson:** What steps the Government are taking to tackle race inequality. [903735]

12. **Roger Mullin:** What steps the Government are taking to tackle race inequality. [903747]

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Marcus Jones): The Prime Minister has set out challenging Government targets to increase black, Asian and minority ethnic opportunities by 2020, including take-up of apprenticeships, employment and recruitment to the police and armed services.

Steven Paterson: The Scottish Government have launched a programme entitled, “New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scottish Communities”, in order to ensure that refugees have every opportunity and support to rebuild their lives in Scotland. What similar initiatives are the UK Government taking to support refugees and fight racism?

Reply from Marcus Jones: The Under-Secretary of State for Refugees, my hon. Friend the Member for Watford (Richard Harrington), who works across the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Home Office, is working extremely hard to support refugees in a way similar to the programme that the hon. Gentleman mentions.

Roger Mullin: Research suggests that people with ethnic-sounding names have to make twice as many job applications as do white Britons to get job interviews. Will the Minister therefore discuss with the Business Secretary and others how to strengthen guidance to companies on their recruitment practices?

Reply from Marcus Jones: I agree with the hon. Gentleman, and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has made a significant commitment in that area. Many of the country’s top employers, including the civil service, are committing to name blind recruitment processes, and UCAS will be making university applications name blind from 2017.

Andrew Stephenson: I join my hon. Friend in congratulating the Government on introducing name blind recruitment in the civil service, the NHS, and other large graduate employers. Will he join me in encouraging other large companies across the UK to follow suit?

Reply from Marcus Jones: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We should certainly encourage companies across the country—not just FTSE 100 companies, which seem to be making significant efforts, but companies large and small—to look at diversity and how they can use it to improve their business.

Andrew Gwynne: People from black and minority ethnic backgrounds make up 26% of apprenticeship applications but only 9.6% of the apprenticeships that are taken up. What is the Minister doing to improve those disappointing statistics?

Reply from Marcus Jones: Apprenticeships are an extremely important part of the Government's agenda. We have a target of 3 million apprenticeship starts during this Parliament. Within that, the Prime Minister has clearly set out the Government's commitment to ensure that 20% of those apprenticeship starts are for BME young people, which I think is a great step forward.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160225/debtext/160225-0001.htm#16022537000022>

Universities: BME Students

3. **Matthew Pennycook:** What steps the Government are taking to increase the number of BME young people receiving a university education. [903737]

Reply from the Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise (Anna Soubry): The Prime Minister, as we have just heard in respect of apprenticeships, has set a goal of increasing by 20% the number of BME students in higher education. In our new guidelines to the director of fair access, which we published on 11 February, we ask him to maximise the contribution of access agreements towards that ambition. The share of BME enrolments at the United Kingdom's institutions has already risen by just over 20% to 23% between 2009 and 2015. Expenditure to widen access through agreements is expected to reach £746 million in 2016-17, up from £444 million in 2011.

Matthew Pennycook: Many gifted BME young people in my constituency and across the country who have lived here all their lives and are lawfully and legally resident in the UK, and who have made their way through the UK education system, are effectively prohibited from accessing the student finance support that would allow them to progress to higher education because they do not have settled immigration status. Will the Minister take steps to ensure that the Government introduce new eligibility criteria as a matter of urgency, to ensure that all our young people have the opportunity to make the most of their talents this academic year?

Reply from Anna Soubry: The hon. Gentleman seems to be making a very good point, which I am more than happy to discuss with the Home Office. I see that one of the relevant Ministers is already here, and we will have those conversations.

Lucy Frazer: I welcome what the Minister has said about the figures for university applications. Does she agree that we must not take our eye off the ball when it comes to other routes, and that we must also encourage BME students to take courses such as apprenticeships and ensure that they have equal status in those routes?

Reply from Anna Soubry: I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend. In the city of Nottingham, I have also seen the great success of mentors and the hugely important role that they can play not only for BME youngsters but for women. Mentors do excellent work, and there is good evidence of their importance. I encourage all Members of this place to go out and make sure that in our schools, everything possible is being done to make sure that there is fairness and equality.

Ruth Cadbury: Research shows that while BME students are over-represented in university entrance figures, they tend to go to the new, post-92 universities. The Women and Equalities Committee heard this week that the Russell Group universities are poor at doing outreach to encourage students from disadvantaged and BME backgrounds to apply to their universities compared with the Ivy League universities in the US, which have a far better record on that. Will the Minister join me in seeking to address this issue?

Reply from Anna Soubry: The hon. Lady makes a very good point, if I may say so. I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, who makes the point that the London Academy of Excellence is a very good example. I must say that my nearest

Equality

UK Parliament Questions (continued)

university, the University of Nottingham is—like Nottingham Trent University and many other universities—making a really positive effort to get into all our schools to make sure that all our pupils have every opportunity and that they, if I may put it this way, aim high.

Kate Osamor: The Government talk the talk of encouraging more black and minority ethnic students into university; yet, according to the Government's own impact assessment, their recent decision to scrap maintenance grants will disproportionately affect those very same students. Does the Minister believe that this disproportionate impact is acceptable?

Reply from Anna Soubry: I am not familiar with the impact assessment, but I have to say that I am quite surprised by it. I reiterate the point: it is absolutely imperative that we make it very clear that everybody should aim high. That is what we want to do and that is what we are seeking to do.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160225/debtext/160225-0001.htm#16022537000023>

Press Release

Unlawful adverts jeopardise job opportunities says Commission

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/unlawful-adverts-jeopardise-job-opportunities-says-commission>

New Publications

What equality law means for advertisers and publishers

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/EHRC%20Advertising%20-%20Equality%20Law%2012.pdf

Advertising: A good practice checklist for advertisers and publishers

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/EHRC%20Advertising%20-%20Checklist%2012.pdf

Advertising: Making an enquiry about a discriminatory advert

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/EHRC%20Advertising%20-%20Make%20Inquiries%2012.pdf

Advertising: Frequently asked questions about what is lawful advertising for jobs, facilities and services and accommodation

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/Advertising%20-%20FAQ.pdf

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Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Question

Tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination

Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government how it will ensure accountability and

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination Scottish Parliament Question (continued)

transparency in relation to tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination in organisations that it commissions or funds. (S4W-29732)

Reply from Alex Neil: Organisations are expected, as part of the conditions of grant from the Scottish Government, to ensure that in relation to the purpose of the funding provided, they are compliant with the requirements of existing law, which includes equality legislation protecting individuals from discrimination and harassment. Similarly organisations contracted by the Scottish Government are expected to be compliant with the law. The Scottish Government worked with the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the publication of their guidance on procurement and equality and we have acted on the provisions contained in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 that help encourage fair work practices and living wage through public bodies' procurement activity. The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities accelerated the publication of new statutory guidance on Addressing Fair Work Practices, including the Living Wage, in Procurement, which was published on 6 October 2015. Further we have started working in partnership with public bodies to develop best practice which will be published in the future.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4W-29732&ResultsPerPage=10>

News

Lack of visibility 'fostering anti-Muslim sentiment'

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/irishnews/article4697094.ece>

Labour launches fresh anti-Semitism inquiry amid accusations of a 'cover-up'

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/12176070/Labour-launches-fresh-anti-Semitism-inquiry-amid-accusations-of-a-cover-up.html>

Police appeal for witnesses after family suffer racial abuse on train between Aberdeen and Dundee

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/police-appeal-witnesses-after-family-7425220#uuehQRjY3DDLqR4C.97>

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Scottish Devolution

Scottish Parliament First Minister's Statement and Q&A

Fiscal Framework

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10380&i=95515#ScotParIOR>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Scotland's Fiscal Framework

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160224/debtext/160224-0001.htm#16022449000004>

Scottish Devolution (continued)

Press Release

Fiscal Framework

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Fiscal-Framework-22e8.aspx>

New Publication

The Agreement Between the Scottish Government and the United Kingdom Government on the Scottish Government's fiscal framework

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00494765.pdf>

News

Fiscal framework: Scottish and UK governments agree deal

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-35641714>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Debate

SNAP: Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights—Year Two Report

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10380&i=95518#ScotParlOR>

Press Releases

Criminal Proceedings in Scotland 2014-15

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Criminal-Proceedings-in-Scotland-2014-15-22d6.aspx>

Decrease In Scottish Electorate

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Decrease-In-Scottish-Electorate-22ec.aspx>

New Publications

Criminal Proceedings in Scotland, 2014-15

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00494474.pdf>

New website: Scottish Parliament Election 2016

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/96797.aspx>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

Parliamentary Question

Charities: Islam

Shabana Mahmood [26701] To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has had discussions with Muslim charities on a possible restriction of banking facilities for such charities.

Reply from Harriett Baldwin: There are no general restrictions on providing banking facilities for Muslim groups. Ministers and officials hold discussions with a wide variety of organisations in the public, private and third sectors. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on Treasury departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-10/26701/>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Burial and Cremation Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/92664.aspx>

Education Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/87330.aspx>

**** Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/90125.aspx>

Supplementary Financial Memorandum

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Higher%20Education%20Governance%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill74AFMS042016.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Higher%20Education%20Governance%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill74AFMS042016.pdf)

**** Lobbying Bill**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/93324.aspx>

Proposed amendments

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/intranet/97003.aspx>

Transplantation (Authorisation of Removal of Organs etc.) Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/89893.aspx>

Bills in Progress

UK Parliament

Asylum (Unaccompanied Children Displaced by Conflict)

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/asylumunaccompaniedchildrendisplacedbyconflict.html>

Bills in Progress

UK Parliament (continued)

Child Victims of Human Trafficking (Central Government Responsibility) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/childvictimsofhumantraffickingcentralgovernmentresponsibility.html>

Illegal Immigrants (Criminal Sanctions) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/illegalimmigrantscriminalsanctions.html>

Immigration Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/immigration.html>

Scotland Act 1998 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/scotlandact1998amendment.html>

**** Scotland Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/scotland.html>

Scottish Parliament Devolution (Further Powers) Committee

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10384&i=95583#ScotParlOR>

and

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10385&i=95589#ScotParlOR>

Committee Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160222-0001.htm#1602228000440>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160222-0002.htm#16022232000110>

Bill as amended in Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2015-2016/0097/16097.pdf>

Report Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160224-0001.htm#16022450000489>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160224-0003.htm#16022461000023>

Proposed amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2015-2016/0097/amend/ml097-II.htm>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

Hate Crime in Scotland (closing date 29 February 2016)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KDVLKYR>

Consultations (continued)

Overseas visitors and migrants: extending charges for NHS services (closing date 7 March 2016)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/overseas-visitors-and-migrants-extending-charges-for-nhs-services>

Unaccompanied minors in the EU (10 March 2016)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-home-affairs-subcommittee/news-parliament-2015/unaccompanied-minors-launch/>

Tackling migrant smuggling: is the EU legislation fit for purpose? (closing date 6 April 2016)

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/public-consultation/2015/consulting_0031_en.htm

Fife Third Sector Equality and Diversity Mapping Exercise (no closing date given)

<http://files.ctctcdn.com/1b154e99301/feb61f61-2119-499f-9591-cfe96044bd63.pdf>

Experiences and opinions about having been a volunteer (no closing date given)

<http://survey.bupnet.de/index.php/survey/index/sid/738838/newtest/Y/lang/en>

Experience and practice about working with young volunteers (no closing date given)

<http://survey.bupnet.de/index.php/survey/index/sid/454824/newtest/Y/lang/en>

Creating A Fairer Scotland: What Matters To You? (no closing date given)

<http://fairer.scot/get-in-touch/>

Primary care for new migrants (no closing date given)

<https://newmigrantsinprimarycare.wordpress.com/survey/>

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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund (PECF)

closing date for applications: 16 March 2016

Scottish Government fund to support projects that work with or on behalf of, people who are disadvantaged due to their protected characteristics. The fund outcomes are:

- Discrimination against people who share protected characteristics is reduced, and multiple discrimination is addressed so that barriers to participation are reduced.
- People covered by hate crime legislation experience lower levels of hate crime.
- People and communities are supported to participate in and engage with services and civic society; their contribution is recognised and community cohesion is increased.
- Current imbalances in representation in all aspects and levels of public life, including education and employment, are addressed to better reflect our communities.

For detailed information and an application form contact equalitiesenquiries@vaf.org.uk or see <http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/funding-and-support/equality-fund/>

Violence Against Women and Girls Fund (VAWGF)

closing date for applications: 16 March 2016

Scottish Government fund to assist the development of measures to tackle all forms of violence against women and girls. The fund outcomes are:

Funding Opportunities (continued)

- The harmful effects of violence and abuse against women and girls are minimised due to an increased focus on prevention.
- The harmful effects of violence and abuse against women and girls are reduced due to the provision of early interventions and appropriate, high quality services.
- The harmful effects of violence and abuse against women and girls are reduced due to services working together to maximise their effectiveness.
- The harm to women and children with protected characteristics and other vulnerabilities is reduced through increased inclusive service provision.
- Service design and delivery is improved as a result of the participation of women and children affected by violence and abuse.

For detailed information and an application form contact vawenquiries@vaf.org.uk or see <http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/funding-and-support/violence-against-women/>

**** Creative Communities Fund – Refugee Festival Scotland**

closing date for applications: 21 March 2016

Scottish Refugee Council fund to assist community groups that are planning to hold an event during Refugee Festival Scotland (14-26 June 2016). The theme of this year's festival is "Solidarity". For detailed information see contact 0141 248 9799 / festival@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk or see <http://tinyurl.com/gwjyu5e>. Application forms can be downloaded from <http://tinyurl.com/zq3ngsp>

**** New Beginnings Fund**

closing date for applications: 29 March 2016

Foundation Scotland grants to recognise and support local groups working to integrate refugees and asylum seekers into local communities to help dispel tensions and prevent misconceptions on both sides. For detailed information and application forms see <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/new-beginnings/>

Volunteering Support Grant

closing date for applications: 31 March 2016

Voluntary Action Fund grants to support third sector organisations to create new volunteering projects to increase the diversity of their volunteers (especially those experiencing disadvantage); and improve opportunities, skills and personal development through volunteering. For detailed information and an application form contact VSFenquiries@vaf.org.uk / 01383 620780 or see <http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/funding-and-support/volunteering-development-grants>

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Events/Conferences/Training

**** new or updated this week**

Understanding the implications of the new Children and Young People (Scotland) Act

9 March 2016 in Glasgow

Gathered Together / BEMIS workshop for community practitioners and parents to share their experiences and explore changes to the legislative framework around children in Scotland with a particular focus on understanding the "Getting It Right For Every Child" approach (GIRFEC). For information contact Judy Wasige judy.wasige@bemis.org.uk / 0141 548 8047 or see <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk/event/keeping-children-safe-healthy-and-happy/>

Events/Conferences/Training (continued)

**** Working Effectively with Diversity**

10 March 2016 in Glasgow (9.30-11.30)

Kinharvie Institute workshop to explore how diversity in the workplace and approaches to deal with it more effectively. For information contact Jamie Spurway jamiespurway@gmail.com or the Kinharvie Institute 0141 337 1070, or see <http://www.kinharvie.org.uk/training-events/working-effectively-with-diversity-1>

New Scots: Working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Thursday 17 March 2016 in Glasgow

Wednesday 25 May 2016 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council training to provide an introduction to the issues and legal systems affecting people seeking safety in Scotland. For information contact Martha Harding train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk / 0141 223 7951.

Working with Interpreters

Tuesday 22 March 2016 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council training to provide an understanding of how to communicate clearly and effectively with people when working with interpreters. For information contact Martha Harding train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk / 0141 223 7951.

Facilitating events with Interpreters

Tuesday 22 March 2016 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council training to provide an understanding of how to communicate clearly and effectively when facilitating events with interpreters. For information contact Martha Harding train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk / 0141 223 7951.

Your Scottish Parliament: Your Voice

24 March 2016 at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh (10.00-12.30)

Scottish Parliament workshops providing an opportunity to learn more about how the Parliament works and how to make your voice heard. For information see <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/95009.aspx> or contact your_SP@scottish.parliament.uk

Engaging Hard to Reach Groups

Thursday 21 April 2016 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council training about engaging with hard to reach groups For information contact Martha Harding train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk / 0141 223 7951.

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Useful Links

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

Scottish Government <http://www.gov.scot/>

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

GovUK (links to UK Government Departments) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>

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

Useful Links (continued)

One Scotland <http://onescotland.org/>

Scottish Refugee Council <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk>

Interfaith Scotland <http://www.interfaithscotland.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/>

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) www.volunteerscotland.net/disclosure-services

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

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

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

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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/>



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://onescotland.org/>

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