

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	Bills in Progress
Community Relations	Consultations
Equality	Job Opportunities
Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination	Funding Opportunities
Scottish Devolution	Events/Conferences/Training
Other Scottish Parliament and Government	Useful Links
Other UK Parliament and Government	

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 Motion

S4M-15803 Christina McKelvie: The EU Refugee Crisis Needs Humanitarian Action—That the Parliament notes with concern what it sees as the violent operation that has been authorised by the French Government to clear the so-called Jungle refugee camp in Calais; condemns the use of tear gas and water cannon against the people in the camp and considers this action contrary to the previous announcements by the French authorities; believes that it will result in thousands of people being displaced, with the luckiest being moved to relocation centres and many of the rest having nowhere else to go; considers this a brutal operation that will not help to solve the crisis, and calls for joint European humanitarian action to tackle this issue.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-15803&ResultsPerPage=10>

Immigration and Asylum (continued)

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Higher Education Student Support

The Minister for Universities and Science (Joseph Johnson): Today I am announcing that the Government are increasing the residency requirement for EU nationals before they can access higher education student living cost support.

In England, EU nationals and their families are able to apply for a tuition fee loan and be charged the “home” rate of fees to attend higher education. This mirrors provisions available to UK students wishing to study abroad in other EU countries. To access student finance, EU nationals need to have been resident in the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year. EU nationals who have been resident in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man for three years can also apply for support for their living costs.

The higher education student support budget is under pressure from increasing numbers of applicants from the EU and the Government are taking steps to manage the burden on the taxpayer.

The Government are therefore increasing the residency requirement that EU nationals must meet in order to be eligible for living cost support. EU nationals that start their courses in the 2016-17 academic year onwards will be required to demonstrate five years’ residency in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. This change will come into effect for applications submitted to the Student Loans Company after the amending regulations have come into force later this month. Students who are already studying will not be affected by these changes.

This change will bring us more into line with the rules set by other EU countries including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden who generally require five years’ residency in the home country before students become eligible for living cost support. The recently published student loan repayment strategy will help to ensure all borrowers repay what is due.

The increased residency requirement will not apply to UK nationals to whom the existing three year residency rule will continue to apply. EEA migrant workers and their family members are also not affected by this change. ... [HCWS559]

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-03-01/HCWS559/>

UK Parliament Questions

Immigration: Advisory Services

Tulip Siddiq [28981] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many immigration advisers were registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) in each year since 2009-10; how many complaints the OISC received about immigration advisers registered with them in each of those years; in how many of those complaints the OISC found wrongdoing on the part of the adviser; in how many such cases the OISC (i) took action against the adviser and (ii) referred the complaint; and how many immigration advisers were (A) prohibited and (B) suspended as a result of such action.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner regulates organisations, which have differing numbers of advisers operating within them. The number of regulated organisations and corresponding number of advisers are set out below.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Regulated organisations	1753	1851	1930	1971	1939	1670
No. of advisers	4150	3346	3971	3966	3989	3667

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner operates a complaints scheme in respect of regulated advisers. If a complaint is substantiated then the information obtained can be used to form the basis of a decision to refuse an application for registration or a decision to lay formal disciplinary charges. Information obtained as a result of a substantiated complaint can be used as part of less formal action including providing advice to the adviser or giving a notice to improve. There are no separate figures available for suspension or prohibition as these terms overlap with others within the OISC regulatory scheme. Details of complaints and their outcomes are set out below.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
No. of Complaints	379	291	296	290	268	195
No. Substantiated	78	88	111	155	112	130
Referral for possible prosecution	4	1	2	10	10	22
No. of decisions to refuse/lay charges	49	79	70	101	82	87

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-29/28981/>

Immigration: Applications

Catherine West [27592] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current average waiting time is for an application for leave to remain.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The average waiting time for a postal leave to remain application during the period of 05 October 2014 to 27 February 2015 was 82 calendar days. These dates have been selected to sit alongside published data and are based on operational performance reporting. The average is based on the average waiting times between the date a postal application is submitted and the length of time taken to despatch the decision to the applicant for all leave to remain routes.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27592/>

Immigration

David Lammy [27731] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many requests were made to her Department for a change of conditions of leave lifting the condition of no recourse to public funds in financial years (a) 2011-12, (b) 2012-13, (c) 2013-14 and (d) 2014-15.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The data requested is not available for each of the years requested and can only be provided from December 2014. The number of submitted applications for a change of conditions to allow recourse to public funds between December 2014 and 30 September 2015 is as follows:

Period	Number of Applications
December 2014 – March 2015	930
April 2015 – September 2015	1660

This response represents the closest reply that can be provided within the constraints of our data reporting system.

The data provided is considered Management Information and is subject to change. It has not been assured to the standard of National Statistics.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27731/>

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Immigration

David Lammy [27732] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many requests were made to her Department for a change of conditions of leave were approved in lifting the no recourse to public funds condition to the applicants conditions of leave in financial years (a) 2011-12, (b) 2012-13, (c) 2013-14 and (d) 2014-15.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The data requested is not available for each of the years requested and can only be provided from December 2014. The number of granted applications for a change of conditions to allow recourse to public funds between December 2014 and 30 September 2015 is as follows:

Period	Number of Granted Applications
December 2014 – March 2015	235
April 2015 – September 2015	680

This response represents the closest reply that can be provided within the constraints of our data reporting system.

The data provided is considered Management Information and is subject to change. It has not been assured to the standard of National Statistics.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27732/>

Visas: English Language

Alison Thewliss [28011] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to provide certified copies of identity documents to visa applicants to support their applications to undertake an approved English language test.

Reply from James Brokenshire: There is no intention to change the current policy with regards to identity checks for Secure English Language Testing (SELT). Photocopies, whether certified or not, are not accepted when a candidate sits a test. Only original and valid documents are acceptable. This will allow test centre staff to confirm that the document is genuine and relates to the individual who is sitting the test.

The only acceptable forms of identification in the UK are:

- a passport or travel document;
- a EU Identity Card;
- a Biometric Residence Permit.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-23/28011/>

Migrant Workers: Teachers

The following ten questions all received the same answer

Tom Brake [28462] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed as teachers who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers

Tom Brake [28463] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed in England, excluding London, who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers: Northern Ireland

Tom Brake [28454] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed in Northern Ireland who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Migrant Workers: Wales

Tom Brake [28455] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed in Wales who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers: Scotland

Tom Brake [28456] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed in Scotland who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers: ICT

Tom Brake [28457] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed as IT professionals who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers: Public Sector

Tom Brake [28458] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed in roles classed as an essential public service who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers: Fire Services

Tom Brake [28459] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed by fire and rescue services who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers: Police

Tom Brake [28460] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed by police services who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Migrant Workers: NHS

Tom Brake [28461] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed by the NHS who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The Government announced in 2012 that from 6 April 2016 Tier 2 visa holders who apply for settlement in the UK will be required to meet a minimum annual salary requirement of £35,000. PhD level roles and those in recognised shortage will be exempt from the £35,000 threshold.

Data of the number of people employed in specific regions of the United Kingdom is not available. The Home Office holds individual records showing the working location of Tier 2 (General) migrants, but centralised records show the registered address of the Tier 2 Sponsor, which is normally that organisation's Head Office.

The Home Office published a full impact assessment on the changes to Tier 2 settlement rules when they were laid before Parliament on 15 March 2012. This includes the impact on the top ten occupations and is available on the gov.uk website at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117957/impact-assessment-tier2.pdf

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28462/>

and

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28463/>

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<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28454/>

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<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28459/>

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<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28460/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28461/>

Ambulance Services: Migrant Workers

Tom Brake [28453] To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on the number of people employed by ambulance services who are from non-EU countries of the salary threshold increase for Tier 2 visa applications to £35,000.

Reply from Ben Gummer: Data from the Home Office shows that no visas were issued to people employed by ambulance services in the last five years for roles other than paramedics. Paramedics were placed on the United Kingdom's shortage occupation list in April 2015 and are therefore exempt from the requirement to earn £35,000 whilst the role is on the shortage occupation list.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28453/>

Migrant Workers: Universities

Lord Smith of Finsbury [HL6312] To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost to UK universities of implementing the Immigration Skills Charge for non-EU workers recruited through the Tier 2 Visa Route, as proposed in Clause 55 of the Immigration Bill, and of the charges recommended by the Migration Advisory Committee.

Reply from Baroness Evant of Bowes Park: The Government has not estimated the cost to UK universities of implementing the Immigration Skills Charge. The cost will depend on the rate set and the Government is considering carefully the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations on rate and scope. Evidence about the likely impact of different rates on different types of

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

organisation, including universities, will be taken into account in our considerations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-22/HL6312/>

Refugees: Syria

Jon Trickett [27501] To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many Syrian nationals have resettled in each region under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme since March 2014.

Reply from Richard Harrington: My rt. hon. Friend, the Prime Minister confirmed on 7 September 2015 that the UK would resettle an additional 20,000 Syrian refugees using the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees process for identifying and resettling refugees. On 16 December he announced that the Government had met its target of resettling 1,000 Syrian refugees by Christmas.

The Home Office is committed to publishing data on the number of people resettled under the programme as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The next set of figures will be in the quarterly release on 25 May 2016 and will cover the period January - March 2016. These numbers will be updated each quarter.

Participation in the Resettlement Scheme is voluntary by local authorities, and some do not wish to have their participation published. As such, the statistics do not include the local authority or region to which people are resettled.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27501/>

Refugees: Syria

Alex Cunningham [28181] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2016 to Question 23729, what the Government's policy is on the confiscation of the belongings of Syrian refugees over a certain value to help meet the cost of their stay in the UK.

Reply from James Brokenshire: The Government does not confiscate the belongings of Syrian refugees or refugees of any other nationality to help meet the cost of their stay in the UK.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-24/28181/>

Asylum: Syria

Jon Trickett [27502] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which providers are expected to provide accommodation for the estimated 20,000 Syrian nationals to be resettled under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme by 2020.

Reply from Richard Harrington: The UK has been operating resettlement schemes for many years and we already have established and effective networks to accommodate and support resettled people.

This is a voluntary scheme whereby local authorities sign up to accept refugees on a voluntary basis. It is up to each individual local authority to decide how best to manage the resettlement of refugees in their area, and they are therefore free to choose their own delivery partners.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27502/>

Asylum: Processing of Applications

Baroness Hamwee: To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

amount of training required by employees on temporary contracts who process asylum applications, including gap-year students.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Lord Bates): My Lords, all members of staff who make decisions in asylum cases, whether on temporary contracts or otherwise, receive the same level of training. This includes a dedicated five-week foundation training programme that includes training on international and domestic law and safeguarding issues.

Baroness Hamwee: My Lords, the decisions that people dealing with asylum applications have to take are very sensitive and complex. Would the Minister agree that they require skills such as critical analysis, sensitivity and maturity? Is it appropriate for young people—by definition students, as referred to in the *Observer* article—to be taking such decisions? Is there likely to be an extra cost to the Government from incorrect decisions being taken by people who do not have those attributes?

Reply from Lord Bates: I can understand the concern, because these are very sensitive issues that people are being asked to deal with. But I can reassure the noble Baroness that out of the 290 decision-makers currently looking at cases, two are undergraduates in law. Under this scheme we have often looked in particular at people who have an interest in law—perhaps with the possibility of their coming in to become decision-makers in future—who might get some experience doing that. They have their induction course with all of that but, crucially, they also have mentoring. An experienced person must sign off on all decisions taken by that individual. That is a very important safeguard which I hope will reassure noble Lords.

Baroness Afshar: My Lords, as a teacher of Islamic law in Strasbourg, I can tell noble Lords that even post-doctoral students take a very long time to understand the complexities of notions such as rights, entitlement, duty and obligations, which are very different from current secular or Christian laws. I am not sure that five weeks is quite enough for people to grasp that knowledge, as well as having the social abilities to know what the facilities are. It is multi-tasking.

Reply from Lord Bates: The short answer, of course, is that it is not enough—and, of course, that five weeks is then followed up by a period of at least six months when they receive close mentoring and all their decisions are checked. Also, in the cases that the noble Baroness mentioned, when there are areas of particular sensitivity, when people have been victims of torture or violence, or where there are LGBTI issues, there is also the provision of a second pair of eyes, which means that, even when an experienced person has done the evaluation, another experienced person will look at it. Of course, in the extreme situation that that person disagrees with the finding of the decision-making officer, they and their legal advisers will have the opportunity to appeal.

Baroness Gardner of Parkes: What is the position regarding the phone helplines that we discussed with regard to the Immigration Bill this week? Is the same type of education or training given to people whatever phone line they work on—health or immigration? How qualified are they? Are they like insurance companies, which have a list of answers, and if you ask a question outside the list they have no answer? I do not think that we got an answer on that from the Minister the other day.

Reply from Lord Bates: I am trying to remember the immigration phone line to which the noble Baroness refers. I assume that she means the right-to-rent checks, for which there is a helpline charged at local rates. That is simply just to check immigration status. It is almost a binary issue of whether the person is legally entitled to be here or not. We think that it can probably be dealt with at that level.

Lord Hylton: My Lords, I understand that students may well be able to carry out clerical

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

functions connected with processing, but will the Minister assure the House that they are never in a position to conduct the substantive interviews on which essential decisions depend?

Reply from Lord Bates: If they have the qualifications and the mentoring in place, they can undertake those interviews. It is very important to say that their work is overseen by the independent chief inspector. When he looked at this, he found that the decision-makers were professional and dedicated and demonstrated commitment to fairness. Perhaps it might also be of interest to noble Lords to visit the office in Croydon—I can arrange that—to see the type of people who are undertaking these very important decisions.

Lord Christopher: My Lords, this department is not the only one which is employing temporary staff to deal with complex problems. The subject of this Question is not a problem that is going to go away quickly. Who knows how many years it will be before the number of asylum seekers declines seriously? It is appalling that we have this situation. It is similar in HMRC with temporary staff. It is quite disgraceful. There has to be some reason why the Government are doing this rather than establishing posts.

Reply from Lord Bates: The reason we are doing it is to ensure that people get crucial decisions as quickly as possible. When we inherited this system, we had a backlog of 400,000 pre-2007 cases. Everyone was rightly expressing concern about that. That was we needed to bring in people who could work through that backlog. The backlog has gone. We now have professional standards of six months for simple cases and one year for more complex cases. This is not like other areas where you get a seasonal flow, such as with passports or student visas. Because of events in Syria, there is currently a 29% increase in the level of applications. So it is very difficult to manage, and the people who are doing it are doing it in a very professional, effective and sensitive way.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160302-0001.htm#16030273000443>

Immigration: Harmondsworth

Lord Roberts of Llandudno: To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the publication on 1 March of the Chief Inspector of Prisons' Report on an unannounced inspection of Heathrow Immigration Removal Centre: Harmondsworth site, what action they are taking to rectify the situation.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Lord Bates): My Lords, the Government take the welfare of detainees extremely seriously. We have independent inspections and publish service improvement plans. We will closely monitor progress towards implementing the recommendations, and have recently announced a strategic response to Stephen Shaw's report to provide greater protection for vulnerable refugees.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno: The unannounced inspection of Harmondsworth must cause us all tremendous disquiet, as it did the inspectors. What steps are the Government taking to rectify the dirty, overcrowded and poorly ventilated residential units, unsanitary toilets and showers, and disregard of mental health issues? Will the criticism that many of the 661 detainees in what is Europe's largest immigration detention centre were held for an unreasonably long time—one for five years, 18 others for over one year—prompt the Government to end the indefinite detention of immigration detainees?

Reply from Lord Bates: The report by the inspectorate that took place was very serious and disappointing. Stephen Shaw made 58 recommendations, 50 of which were accepted immediately. James Brokenshire set out in a Written Ministerial Statement on 14 January the Government's plans to deal with that, and

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

already we have posted a service improvement plan—what we are going to do to address the very points mentioned in the report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Prisons. We will continue to monitor that progress.

Lord Trimble: My Lords, have any of those being removed committed offences here or abroad? If so, how many of them?

Reply from Lord Bates: Currently in the immigration detention estate there are about 2,700 people. Of those, 40% are foreign national offenders. If one then takes into account those who have committed immigration offences, they are the overwhelming majority of all those who are held in detention. They are held in detention as a last resort in exceptional circumstances, just prior to departure.

Lord Rosser: My Lords, the Chief Inspector of Prisons states in his introduction that the report, “highlights substantial concerns in most of our tests of a healthy custodial establishment”.

He also states that many of the concerns that were identified in 2013, when Harmondsworth IRC was run by the GEO Group, have not been rectified, and in some respects matters have deteriorated since then, even though since September 2014 the Harmondsworth site has been run for the Home Office by the care and custody division of the Mitie Group. What penalties under the terms of their contracts have been, and will now be, incurred by the two contractors concerned, since presumably the Minister can confirm, in the light of the adverse reports from the chief inspector in 2013 and again in his latest report, that neither contractor has run or is now running the Harmondsworth site in accordance with the terms of their contract?

Reply from Lord Bates: That is something that is under active review at this point in the light of Stephen Shaw’s report. He identified that there had been some improvement in a number of areas since 2013, particularly in the physical infrastructure of the site, but nowhere near enough. There are very strict criteria set out for performance in the contract, and they are being reviewed by the Home Office. We will of course make public what actions will be taken when a decision has been reached.

Lord Greaves: Yesterday I visited some houses in a Home Office scheme in a street in West Drayton, run by an adjoining hotel, Heathrow Lodge, which provides a few days’ initial short-term accommodation for asylum-seeker arrivals before they are dispersed. There are very basic bedrooms, with communal bathrooms and no kitchens. Will the Minister look personally into the numerous problems that I found there? I will send him a briefing, but they included people who seemed to have been effectively abandoned there for up to three months instead of three days; the quality of food provided; a lack of necessary Home Office communication and documents; ridiculous rules; a lack of facilities for a one year-old child who had been there for some time, and much more.

Reply from Lord Bates: I am very happy to look at those issues, just as we looked at the issues raised by cases in Cardiff and Middlesbrough recently. If the noble Lord supplies me with information, I am very happy to look at it more closely.

Lord Lea of Crondall My Lords, can the Minister throw a little more light on the remarkable statistic referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Roberts of Llandudno, that someone has been in there for five years? How can that be?

Reply from Lord Bates: It is certainly the case that 92% have been there for less than four months, and the time is reducing. Of course, those who have been there for longer than four months—in fact, for longer than 28 days—are often people who are working very hard to avoid their removal. They are perfectly entitled to do so, but they are trying to frustrate the system. We have concerns about public safety. That is the reason why they are there and have not been granted bail.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160303-0001.htm#16030339001105>

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Asylum: Deportation

The following two questions both received the same answer

Charlotte Leslie [27893] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that failed asylum claimants who have spoken out against the government of their country of origin are not deported in such a way as to draw the case to the attention of immigration officials in the destination country.

Asylum

Charlotte Leslie [27894] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of her Department's policy of providing information on failed asylum claims to the government of their country of origin on the safety of those claimants on their return to that country.

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 under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This includes an assessment about whether a person who has spoken out against their government is likely to be at risk of persecution or serious harm on return.

We do not provide any information relating to an asylum claim to the government of a claimant's country of origin. 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/2016-02-23/27893/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-23/27894/>

Deportation

Charlotte Leslie [27388] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on the possibility of establishing third party agreements to enable the deportation of foreign nationals who refuse or who cannot safely be returned to their country of origin to return to a neighbouring country.

Reply from James Brokenshire: Discussions continue to take place between a number of Government departments on a regular basis on how we tackle illegal migration, including solutions to enable the return of foreign nationals.

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.

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 logistically to undertake enforced removals.

We are in discussions with EU partners on how to take forward proposals to return those who travel through safe third countries back to those areas they transited through, or to establish zones of protection to which failed asylum seekers could be returned when return to their country of origin is not possible.

The UK also participates in a number of EU readmission agreements, some of which include clauses for returning third country nationals.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-19/27388/>

Immigration and Asylum UK Parliament Questions (continued)

Human Trafficking

Julian Knight [28270] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to counter people trafficking.

Karen Bradley: We are committed to tackling people trafficking and all forms of modern slavery. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 gives law enforcement agencies the tools they need to tackle modern slavery, ensures that perpetrators can receive suitably severe sentences up to life imprisonment, enhances support and protection for victims and places a duty on large businesses to report on what they are doing to stop modern slavery occurring in their global supply chains. We have successfully lobbied for the establishment of the first ever UN Sustainable Development Goal to end modern slavery and are working with a range of international partners to tackle slavery and its causes. We are also piloting a new approach to identifying and supporting potential victims of slavery through the National Referral Mechanism and we have appointed an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to spread best practice in the UK and overseas.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-24/28270/>

Habitual Residence Test

Lord McColl of Dulwich [HL6497] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bates on 29 June 2015 (HL541), what action they have taken to make it easier for human trafficking victims whose circumstances make it difficult to provide evidence that they have been habitually resident in the UK for three months to provide such evidence.

Reply from Lord Bates: A significant number of victims of modern slavery who are identified in the UK are provided support through the government funded victim-care contract for 90 days or longer. Where this is the case, we have ensured that the support provider is able to supply the Department for Work and Pensions with a letter as evidence that the individual has been habitually resident in the UK for more than three months. For the remaining cases where they receive support for less than 90 days, evidence may be provided by the police or other statutory agencies involved in the case confirming the victim has been living in the UK for more than three months, where such evidence exists.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-26/HL6497/>

Press Releases

Cross party consensus on post study work

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Cross-party-consensus-on-post-study-work-2351.aspx>

Record number of over 1.2 million first time asylum seekers registered in 2015

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/790eba01-381c-4163-bcd2-a54959b99ed6>

New Publications

Post Study Work Steering Group Evidence of Reputational Damage Following Closure of Post Study Work Route

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00495018.pdf>

Immigration and Asylum New Publications (continued)

Post Study Work Steering Group Evidence of Financial Cost of Post Study Work Closure
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00495034.pdf>

Post Study Work Steering Group Report of Final Recommendations
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00494988.pdf>

Statistics on migrants and benefits
<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7445/CBP-7445.pdf>

The work of the Immigration Directorates
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmhaff/772/772.pdf>

News

UK fights to retain Dublin law to deport asylum seekers
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/02/uk-fights-to-retain-dublin-law-to-deport-asylum-seekers>

Prisons inspector calls for time limit on immigration detention
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/01/prisons-inspector-calls-for-time-limit-immigration-detention>

Asylum seekers allegedly locked out of homes
<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-35639585>

MPs to look into allegations asylum seekers in Glasgow locked out of their homes
<http://www.scotsman.com/news/uk/mps-to-look-into-allegations-asylum-seekers-in-glasgow-locked-out-of-their-homes-1-4040750>

Tory ministers to be questioned over alleged mistreatment of asylum seekers in Glasgow
http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/14313136.Tory_ministers_to_be_questioned_over_alleged_mistreatment_of_asylum_seekers_in_Glasgow/

Refused asylum seekers allegedly locked out of their homes in Glasgow
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/01/glasgow-asylum-seekers-allegedly-locked-out-of-homes>

Asylum seekers to leave Glasgow hostel after claims of ill-treatment
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/scotland/article4706451.ece>

'Swathes' of UK refusing asylum seekers includes Theresa May's constituency
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/swathes-of-uk-refusing-asylum-seekers-includes-theresa-mays-constituency-a6911381.html>

Commons committee calls for asylum seekers to be housed in Tory shires
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/04/commons-committee-calls-for-asylum-seekers-to-be-housed-in-tory-shires>

'Swathes' of Britain not accommodating asylum seekers, MPs reveal
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3475796/Swathes-Britain-not-accommodating-asylum-seekers-MPs-reveal.html>

Immigration and Asylum

News (continued)

British military bases could be used to house asylum seekers for YEARS as the migrant crisis in Europe continues to spiral 'out of control'

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3476580/British-military-bases-used-house-migrants-YEARS-crisis-Europe-continues-spiral-control.html>

Stripping criminals of their UK passports – even terrorists and sex abusers – is dangerous

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/01/stripping-criminals-uk-citizenship-racisrt-sex-abusers-terrorists-two-classes-citizens>

Britain cannot deport asylum seekers who have 'no place to go', says minister

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/12183475/Asylum-seekers-arriving-in-Europe-doubled-to-1.2-million-last-year.html>

Surrender on illegal migrants: Britain cannot deport thousands of failed asylum seekers because there is nowhere to send them, admits Home Office minister

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3477481/Surrender-illegal-migrants-Human-rights-mean-s-deport-admits-Home-Office-Minister.html>

Thousands of illegal migrants can't be deported, says minister

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/europe/article4706243.ece>

How many migrants applied for asylum in the EU in 2015?

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/12183326/Mapped-How-many-migrants-entered-the-EU-and-applied-for-asylum-in-2015.html>

Refugee resources now online to help congregations act

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/recent/refugee_resources_now_online_to_help_congregations_act

How to welcome refugees in your community

http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news_and_events/blogs/2824_how_to_welcome_refugees_in_your_community

Laggan village shopkeepers face deportation after visas run out

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/laggan-village-shopkeepers-face-deportation-after-visas-run-out-1-4043257>

'Our kids don't matter': Dad fights for his family as wife faces being forced to leave the country - because he lost his job

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/incoming/our-kids-dont-matter-dad-7491685#SZewhgZGyP65G0Eg.97>

Threat of deportation of 92-year-old Myrtle Cothill is lifted

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-35736295>

Myrtle Cothill: 92-year-old widow will not be removed, UK says

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/05/myrtle-cothill-92-year-old-widow-will-not-be-deported-uk-says>

Widow, 92, wins deportation battle following social media campaign

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/12184910/Widow-92-wins-deportation-battle-following-social-media-campaign.html>

[TOP](#)

Community Relations

Scottish Parliament Motion

S4M-15832 Hanzala Malik: Studying Together Brings Tolerance—That the Parliament congratulates Glasgow schools on welcoming 252 new international students in January 2016; understands that new figures show the wide variety of countries and cultures settling in the city and that Glasgow has the UK's largest English as an additional language service to cope with the influx; further understands that every one of Glasgow's 29 secondary schools has a small number of children enrolling from all over the world, and believes that working and studying together helps to foster tolerance and become a more diverse and inclusive society.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-15832&ResultsPerPage=10>

News

Muslim Council of Scotland holds Seminar to tackle Extremism

<http://www.mcscotland.org/home.aspx>

Muslim leader warns counter-terror strategy 'inhibits community'

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/homenews/14315123.Muslim_leader_warns_counter_terror_strategy_inhibits_community/

Muslim leader warns counter-terror strategy 'inhibits community'

<http://www.thecourier.co.uk/news/scotland/muslim-leader-warns-counter-terror-strategy-inhibits-community-1.926939>

Scottish Muslim leader says UK's counter-terrorism strategy prevents open discussion and makes it harder to find and root out extremists

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scottish-muslim-leader-says-uks-7478636#Uj6XY522fpT6yBsu.97>

Glasgow's international pupils: 'Studying together brings tolerance'

http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/14320921.Glasgow_s_international_pupils_Studying_together_brings_tolerance/

[TOP](#)

Equality

Scottish Parliament Parliamentary Motion

S4M-15830 Hanzala Malik: Underrepresented Groups Encouraged to Find Work in Construction—That the Parliament recognises that the Glasgow construction firm, City Building, and Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland, have, with the support of the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council, organised a series of taster sessions for young people from ethnic minorities as part of Scottish Apprenticeship Week; understands that the events will also aim to help women and people who are long-term unemployed or from minority groups gain employment in the construction industry, and believes that the apprenticeship week is a great opportunity to help underrepresented groups across Scotland to find work.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-15830&ResultsPerPage=10>

Equality (continued)

UK Parliament Questions

Civil Servants: Ethnic Groups

The following three questions all received the same answer

Keith Vaz [27694] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of Senior Civil Service roles are occupied by people from BME backgrounds.

Keith Vaz [27695] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the Civil Service workforce is from BME backgrounds.

Keith Vaz [27696] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of applicants to the Civil Service Fast Stream are (a) from BME backgrounds and (b) successful and from BME backgrounds.

Reply from Matthew Hancock: In 2015, the proportion of senior civil servants from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds was 4.1%; and the proportion of the whole civil service workforce from BAME background was 10.6% as I set out in my recent speech <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/addressing-inequality-in-the-public-sector-and-beyond-matt-hancock-speech>.

While BAME representation throughout the civil service workforce is consistent with the economically active population, in order for the civil service to reflect diversity of Modern Britain we need to do more to increase BAME representation in the senior civil service. We have increased capacity of summer diversity internships and the Positive Action Pathway programme and will soon launch 'Accelerate' (a development programme for SCS from BAME backgrounds to reach the most senior grades within the Civil Service). We anticipate that over time these and other initiatives will result in an increase in the proportion of the SCS coming from BAME backgrounds.

The proportion of applicants and appointments from BME backgrounds to the Civil Service Fast Stream from 2012 to 2014 are listed in the table below.

Data on the 2015 cohort is due to be released later this year in the 2015 Fast Stream Annual Report.

Proportion from an ethnic minority background – Civil Service Fast Stream (all schemes)	Applicants	Appointments
2014	19.40%	14.20%
2013	18%	13.60%
2012	16.90%	12.80%

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27694/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27695/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27696/>

Cabinet Office: Senior Civil Servants

Tom Watson [28482] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to improve Black and minority ethnic representation in the Senior Civil Service his Department.

Reply from Matthew Hancock: The Cabinet Office promotes a number of cross Government talent schemes to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and disabled staff, to accelerate their promotion to Senior Civil Service roles. This includes Civil Service wide talent schemes such the Future Leaders Scheme (aimed at G6&7 staff) and the Senior Leaders Scheme (aimed at SCS Pay Band 1). Additionally, it promotes development schemes aimed specifically at BAME

Equality (continued)

UK Parliament Questions

and disabled staff including the Accelerate talent programme (for SCS) and the Positive Action Pathway (for staff below SCS).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-25/28482/>

Higher Education: Ethnic Groups

Keith Vaz [27693] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps the Government is taking to increase representation of BME students in leading universities.

Reply from Joseph Johnson: The Prime Minister has a goal of increasing by 20% the number of BME students in higher education. In our new guidance to the Director of Fair Access, which we published on 11 February, we ask him to maximise the contribution of Access Agreements towards this ambition. The share of BME enrolments at UK institutions has already risen from just over 20% to 23% between 2009/10 and 2014/15. Entry rates for 18 year olds in each ethnic group increased in 2015, reaching the highest recorded values for each group. Between 2009 and 2015, the entry rate for young people in the Black ethnic group increased by over 40 percent proportionally.

Investment by the higher education sector through Access Agreements is expected to reach £746 million in 2016/17 up from £404 million in 2009/10.

The Government accepts that selective institutions already do much to widen participation. We also acknowledge the work that they already do. Nonetheless, we are convinced that more could and should be done. In our recent guidance to the Director of Fair Access, www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/11-02-2016-OFFA-Guidance.pdf we asked him to secure more progress. Institutions must use evidence and good practice to lever better results and there needs to be more innovation in this area. As the Director of Fair has also said, 'it should not be beyond institutions themselves to find ways of making more progress.'

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-02-22/27693/>

New Publication

Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre film: Baby Steps to Gender Equality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwyTfN14TvY>

News

Ethnic minorities urged to find out about construction careers

http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/14320899.Ethnic_minorities_urged_to_find_out_about_construction_careers/

[TOP](#)

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Question

Bullying

Ken Macintosh: To ask the Scottish Government how it ensures that staff, practitioners and agencies have the confidence and willingness to record and report bullying incidents. (S4W-29761)

Reply from John Swinney: As an employer, the Scottish Government is committed to providing a workplace free from discrimination and to ensuring the fair treatment of staff. We are committed to dealing with staff grievances fairly, consistently, quickly through our robust Fairness at Work policy. We also recognise the potential value to all parties of being able to resolve a dispute in an alternative way. Therefore in addition to the informal and formal processes we have introduced the opportunity to resolve issues through mediation. Through our People Strategy and Fairness at Work policy we set out clearly the culture and behaviours we as an organisation expect to see from our staff and managers. We recognise that, if concerns are not dealt with in a way that is perceived as fair or are left unresolved, the working relationship may deteriorate and impact on all individuals involved. We therefore have various methods in addition to the informal and formal policy through which we encourage people to record and report bullying and harassment, including via our trades unions and staff diversity networks. We capture through our People Survey areas where levels of bullying or harassment are higher and our diversity manager works with these areas to build confidence of both staff and managers to tackle the issues directly. Our Equality Outcome – Equality And Diversity Matters sets out our ambition to raise the confidence of managers and staff to deal with issues around diversity and equality. As part of our improvement process we will be undertaking analysis to measure over time the level of knowledge about human resources policies and how staff feel about unfair treatment as well as to better understand the issues on which our staff most regularly require information.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4W-29761&ResultsPerPage=10>

Press Release

Supreme Court Judgement: Employer should be held responsible for a racist and threatening attack on a customer by a member of staff

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2014-0087-press-summary.pdf>

News

Black MP says racism rife in House of Commons

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/black-mp-says-racism-rife-in-house-of-commons-1-4041594>

Man fined over racist email to MP

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/scotland/article4702825.ece>

Labour MP calls for the party's youth wing to be suspended amid allegations of anti-semitism and bullying

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/Jeremy_Corbyn/12178439/Labour-MP-calls-for-the-partys-youth-wing-to-be-suspended-amid-allegations-of-anti-semitism-and-bullying.html

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

News (continued)

Labour students 'jeered Jewish victims in Paris'

http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/article1675419.ece

We cannot allow British universities to become bastions of religious segregation

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/12180020/We-cannot-allow-British-universities-to-become-bastions-of-religious-segregation.html>

Met told to reinvestigate 'racist abuse' of Gypsies and Travellers on 'secret' police Facebook page

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/met-told-to-reinvestigate-racist-abuse-of-gypsies-and-travellers-on-secret-police-facebook-page-a6908036.html>

Is racism in the force still being whitewashed by the Met Police?

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/is-racism-in-the-force-still-being-whitewashed-by-the-met-police-a6908156.html>

Indian man convicted of racial abuse after calling shopkeeper a 'pi' because he was two pence short for his groceries**

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/indian-man-convicted-racial-abuse-7495366#rz59A3dWr3DAwRy8.97>

Former Celtic women's team player claims bigoted 'Orange b***' Facebook post was 'a bit of banter'**

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/former-celtic-womens-team-player-7499434#eAL5HWqbMzqKxRRZ.97>

[TOP](#)

Scottish Devolution

Press Release

Scotland Bill

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Scotland-Bill-2340.aspx>

News

Swinney urges Holyrood to approve Scotland Bill

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-35697399>

[TOP](#)

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Parliamentary Question

Lobbying

Murdo Fraser: To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on introducing restrictions on charities and other third sector organisations in using public funds to lobby

Other Scottish Parliament and Government Parliamentary Question (continued)

(a) it, (b) local government and (c) the Scottish Parliament. (S4W-29923)

Reply from Alex Neil: A key theme of the Programme for Government is encouraging and facilitating participation by everyone in the debates and decisions that matter to them most, regardless of circumstances or backgrounds. We recognise that third sector and equalities organisations play an important role in this, providing a voice for communities on public policy, and bringing a deep level of insight into the issues faced by communities and the most vulnerable people in society. We have no wish to deter this important part of our democratic process, and have no intention of adding a clause to our grant offer letters, as the United Kingdom Government is planning to do. Existing Scottish Government grant provisions give the required protection and would prevent the use of grants for party political lobbying activity. We therefore already have appropriate and well-designed controls in place to ensure that public money is spent for approved purposes only.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4W-29923&ResultsPerPage=10>

[TOP](#)

Other UK Parliament and Government

Debate

Human Rights Framework: Scotland

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160302/halltext/160302h0002.htm#16030288000005>

Parliamentary Questions

Student Loans: Muslim Students

Lord Sharkey: To ask Her Majesty's Government what help they provide to Muslim students whose religious beliefs prevent them from taking interest-charging student loans.

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Lords, the Government are aware that some students whose religious beliefs may prevent them from taking out a loan that bears interest may feel unable to take advantage of student loans. In April 2014, the Government conducted a consultation on a sharia-compliant alternative finance product for students. Upon review of consultation responses the Government supported the introduction of a takaful alternative finance product available to everyone. Work on this product is ongoing and, subject to Parliament, the Government hope to introduce the new system through legislation.

Lord Sharkey: I asked the Minister the Question because the head teacher of the Preston Muslim Girls High School asked me the question and I could not answer it. I am not sure that the head teacher and his students will find much present comfort in the Minister's reply. Every year that passes without a solution, thousands of Muslim students are disadvantaged. As she said, the Government identified the solution two years ago but still cannot say when it will be delivered. Will she agree to meet me so that we can discuss how to have a sharia-compliant system in place without further delay?

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: As I said, the Government did a consultation in 2014 and are continuing to work closely with experts in Islamic

Other UK Parliament and Government Parliamentary Questions (continued)

finance to develop the product but, at the moment, the Secretary of State does not have the power to just introduce it. We need primary legislation, which is why we are hoping and looking for a suitable opportunity to bring it forward.

Reply from Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town: My Lords, given that the student maintenance grants are now to be ended, this will be far more urgent because it means that a whole swathe of students will not have grants available to them. It really is not any good saying that the Government have been doing this for two and half years now; it has to be in place by the time the grants are withdrawn. Can we have that commitment from the Government?

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: As I said, we will be looking for a suitable vehicle with which to attempt to introduce the system. There is strong interest in it: of the consultation responses, 94% believed that there would be demand for such a system and 81% thought that the proposed scheme being developed was acceptable. We of course want to ensure access for all students to higher education, which is why we would be the first Government to introduce such a scheme, but we need primary legislation to do so.

Lord Pearson of Rannoch: My Lords, talking of the growing influence of sharia law in this country, is there any truth to the press reports that the Government have mortgaged Richmond House and other buildings with sharia bonds, which ban alcohol on those premises? If true, how would that affect the habits of Members of the House of Commons if they move into those premises during refurbishment of this Palace?

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: This proposed scheme has nothing to do with sharia law. It is about ensuring that all young people have access to university. We are very keen to try to ensure that we can provide a product that will help them to do so.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (: My Lords, can my noble friend explain exactly how this product will work?

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: I am happy to. The takaful model will operate as a type of mutual fund. Students will apply for finance from the fund the same way that they would apply for an equivalent student loan and will enter a contract promising to repay a contribution. When they are earning above the repayment threshold, as with an equivalent student loan, they will make their contributions, which will be used to fund the education of future students. It is a type of mutual fund, which is why BIS cannot introduce it without primary legislation, as the Secretary of State does not have those powers.

Lord Elton: My Lords, the Secretary of State does have the power to initiate legislation. I ask my noble friend to urge him to take the opportunity as soon as Parliament reassembles after State Opening to introduce a Bill—a small Bill—for the simple purpose of introducing this change, rather than waiting for some great wagon train to assemble for the next 18 months.

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: As I have said to noble Lords, the Government hope to introduce the system and will be looking at the appropriate legislative way to do so. As my noble friend says, the up-and-coming Session will be detailed in the Queen's Speech in due course.

Lord Pearson of Rannoch: My Lords, can the Minister explain the difference between takaful and paying interest?

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: As I said, this model operates as a mutual fund so the contributions that a student pays go into that fund to be refunded. The idea of borrowing and paying back interest is absent from this model.

Lord Newby: My Lords, could I follow up the comments of the noble Lord, Lord Elton, about the passivity of the Government on this issue? The Minister has said on several

Other UK Parliament and Government Parliamentary Questions (continued)

occasions that they were looking for a suitable vehicle, as if they were waiting for a bus to come round the corner. Can I underline the views that I think the whole House has on this issue? It would be a minor legislative tool but, in terms of the life chances of very many Muslim students, this change could make all the difference to whether they get a proper education or not.

Reply from Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: I thank the noble Lord for his comments. The strength of the feeling in the House is quite clear, which I am sure will be noted by the Secretary of State.

Lord Tebbit: My Lords, will this product be available to persons of all religions or none?

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: Yes, this product will be open to everybody.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160303-0001.htm#16030339001102>

Female Genital Mutilation

The following two questions both received the same answer

Sarah Champion [29228] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) police forces and (b) local authorities in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland have made applications for female genital mutilation protection orders to date.

Sarah Champion [29229] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many girls have been issued with female genital mutilation protection orders to date.

Caroline Dinéage: Statistics on FGM Protection Orders are publicly available as part of the Family Courts Statistics Quarterly series at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-court-statistics-quarterly>.

FGM Protection Orders were introduced on 17 July 2015 and statistics are only currently available for the period 1 July to 30 September 2015.

The number of applications made by police and local authorities in England were as follows:

- 5 applications were made by local authorities; and
 - 11 applications were made by police.

No applications were made by local authorities or police in Wales.

As justice is a devolved matter, statistics on the number of applications made for an FGM Protection Order in Northern Ireland is a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-03-01/29228/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-03-01/29229/>

[TOP](#)

Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

** Burial and Cremation Bill

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

Proposed amendments

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/intranet/97172.aspx>

and

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/intranet/97217.aspx>

Bills in Progress

Scottish Parliament (continued)

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>

Revised Explanatory Notes

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Higher%20Education%20Governance%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill74AENS042016.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Higher%20Education%20Governance%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill74AENS042016.pdf)

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_16-22_Higher_Education_Governance_Scotland_Bill-Stage_3.pdf

Proposed amendments

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/intranet/97084.aspx>

and

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/intranet/97128.aspx>

**** Lobbying Bill**

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

Revised Explanatory Notes

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Lobbying%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill82AENS042016.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Lobbying%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill82AENS042016.pdf)

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_16-23_Lobbying_Scotland_Bill_Stage_3.pdf

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>

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>

Bill as introduced

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2015-2016/0040/16040.pdf>

Second Reading

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm160304/debtext/160304-0001.htm#16030476000003>

Bills in Progress

UK Parliament (continued)

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: Supplementary Legislative Consent Motion

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/LegislativeConsentMemoranda/ScotlandBillLCM010316.pdf>

Report Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201516/ldhansrd/text/160229-0002.htm#16022933000099>

Bill as amended on Report

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2015-2016/0100/160100.pdf>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated this week

** closes this week!

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>

** closes this week!

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/>

[TOP](#)

Job Opportunities

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

[TOP](#)

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:

- 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/zq3nqsp>

New Beginnings Fund

closing date for applications: 29 March 2016

Foundation Scotland grants to recognise and support local groups working to integrate

Funding Opportunities (continued)

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>

[TOP](#)

Events/Conferences/Training

**** new or updated this week**

**** 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/>

**** this week!**

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

17 March 2016 in Glasgow

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.

**** Shaping a Better Future with Refugees in Scotland - What Next?**

17 March 2016 in Glasgow (9.30-2.30)

Scottish Refugee Council workshops to discuss support and services in Scotland for refugees, asylum seekers and their children, policy influencing, and work with communities. For information contact events@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk / 0141 248 9799 or see <http://bit.ly/1njmXy6>

**** Race Equality Framework for Scotland Launch**

21 March 2016 in Edinburgh (10.00-1.00)

Scottish Government launch of the new Race Equality Framework for Scotland that will

Events/Conferences/Training (continued)

guide the Scottish Government's work on race equality from 2016 to 2030. For information and to book a place see <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/race-equality-framework-for-scotland-launch-event-tickets-22538201367>

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.

[TOP](#)

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/>

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>

Useful Links (continued)

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

[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/>



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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