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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Motion

Motion S5M-19544 Rona Mackay (SNP): Refugee Women and Children in Northern France – That the Parliament acknowledges the ongoing refugee crisis in northern France where approximately 1,700 people are still living in makeshift camps that are subject to regular clearings; understands that those living in the camps continue to have extremely limited access to basic sanitation, food, health, legal services and psychological support and, as the camps are not policed, considers that women and children in particular are incredibly vulnerable; further understands that the services available to the people in camps are only possible due to donations and the work of volunteers, many of whom have travelled from Scotland, and commends the work of the Refugee Women's Centre, which is coordinating and providing vital support to the people in northern France with limited resources at a time when it considers that media coverage of the crisis has lessened.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-19544>

UK Parliament Statement

No-deal Brexit: Immigration

The Minister for Security (Brandon Lewis) [HCWS42] The Government priority remains to leave the European Union on the basis of the draft withdrawal agreement reached on 17 October 2019. However, it is appropriate that we also continue to make the preparations necessary in the event that we leave without a deal.

To that end, the Government are laying before Parliament today the Immigration (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Further to the written ministerial statement made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on 4 September 2019 (HCWS1817), this will deliver changes in immigration arrangements for EU citizens which reflect the fact that, in a no deal scenario, free movement as it currently stands will end when we leave the European Union.

In particular, to increase security and better protect the public, the measure, and associated changes in the immigration rules contained in the “Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules” (HC 170) which the Home Secretary is laying before Parliament today, will mean that a UK conduct and criminality threshold rather than an EU threshold will be applied for EU citizens and their family members moving to the UK after a no deal Brexit. The measures will also apply those thresholds to the post-exit conduct of EU citizens and their family members living here before a no deal Brexit, or who have EU settlement scheme status, and to their pre-exit conduct where their post-exit conduct results in a sentence of imprisonment. This will bring the approach to EU citizens more into line with how we treat non-EU nationals and make our system simpler and fairer.

In addition, the Immigration (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 make changes to the documentary evidence which may be relied upon by EU citizens and their family members for admission to the UK. They also remove the scope for EU citizens and their family members moving to the UK after a no deal Brexit to acquire permanent residence under EU law and the scope for UK nationals and their family members moving to the EU after a no deal Brexit to return here under current EU law-based arrangements.

The “Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules” (HC 170) establishes the European temporary leave to remain scheme, for European economic area (EEA) and Swiss citizens moving to the UK after a no deal Brexit and before the start of the new points-based immigration system from January 2021, and for their close family members, to enable them to obtain a UK immigration status so that they can continue living and working here for a temporary period after 2020. In line with previous policy announcements, it also provides access to the EU settlement scheme—under which EEA and Swiss citizens resident here before Brexit can obtain UK immigration status—for relevant family members joining them here after a no deal Brexit, by 29 March 2022 in the case of existing close family members and by 31 December 2020 for other relevant family members.

Taken together, these changes will begin the process of taking back control of our borders and preparing the way for a new, fairer immigration system which operates in the national interest. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-10-24/debates/19102438000016/No-DealBrexitImmigration>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-09-04/HCWS1817/>

The statement of changes in immigration rules referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/841695/CCS1019317048-001_Statement_of_changes_in_Immigration_Rules_Web_Accessible.pdf

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Major Incident in Essex

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): Following the tragic discovery of 39 bodies in a shipping container in Essex this morning, I want to take this opportunity to update the House on the facts that are available so far.

At 1.40 this morning, Essex police were alerted to an incident at the Waterglade industrial park on Eastern Avenue, Grays. At the scene, Essex police discovered a lorry container with 39 bodies inside. Early indications suggest that 38 of those found were adults and that one was a teenager. From what the police have been able to ascertain so far, the vehicle is believed to be from Bulgaria and to have entered the country at Holyhead in north Wales, one of the main ports for ferries from Ireland, on 19 October.

Essex police have now launched a murder investigation. A 25-year-old man from Northern Ireland has been arrested on suspicion of murder. He remains in police custody as inquiries continue.

The whole House will agree that this is a truly shocking incident. My thoughts and condolences are with the victims and their loved ones at this utterly terrible time. I am sure the whole House will convey its condolences at this sad time.

While the nationalities of the victims are not yet known, I have asked my officials to work closely with the investigation and to provide all the assistance we can in these horrific circumstances. That is on top of the joint working that is taking place already between the police, Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, the National Crime Agency and other law enforcement agencies to ascertain exactly how the incident occurred. Day in and day out, they work tirelessly to secure our borders against a wide range of threats, including people trafficking. We will continue to work with international partners to keep people safe.

This is a tragic loss of life. I and everyone in my team will continue to update the House as more facts on this dreadful incident become known.

Diane Abbott (Labour): ... Any death under these circumstances is truly appalling. The fact that there are 39 reported deaths in this incident makes it a terrible tragedy—one of the worst of its kind. Each of the 39 will have partners, family and friends who perhaps even now do not know how their loved one died and in what horrible circumstances. I am sure I speak for the whole House when I say that our thoughts, prayers and wishes go out to the bereaved and all the loved ones of the victims.

I commend the emergency services for their work and share ... the horror that these emergency service workers will have seen sights that will live with them forever.

It is important to remember that these 39 poor, unfortunate people are the victims in this; they have been preyed on by the greedy, the unscrupulous and people with a wilful disregard for the lives of others. However, we should take account of the wider context. Nobody leaves their home on such a journey, with so much risk and fear, on a whim. They often do it because they are desperate; they can be the victims of economic privation, war, famine, catastrophic climate change. There are many adverse conditions that people flee from, but we should not lose sight of the fact that these people are victims.

I would like an assurance from the Home Secretary that the co-operation with the EU27 on people trafficking, which is vital to ensure that such events do not happen in the future, will not become harder or be imperilled by our leaving the EU. It is important to raise the general conditions of refugees and asylum seekers. The Opposition have long argued that the Government should establish safe and legal routes for genuine refugees to make their way here. If they do not, I fear there may be further tragedies like this. When one thinks about the events of this incident, when one thinks about how these people died and how terrifying their deaths must have been, it should remind us that whenever we talk about migration, refugees and asylum, these people are people. There is an obligation on us to ensure that where people are moving legally, we provide safe and legal routes.

Reply from Priti Patel: I thank the right hon. Lady for her comments and reflections following the tragic incident this morning. She was, of course, right in a number of the points she made, such as about our emergency service workers who are dealing with the incident on the ground. We will work collaboratively with the investigation teams—not just with Essex police, but with the National Crime Agency, Border Force and many others—to further the investigation into this appalling incident.

It is important to emphasise a few other points. This is now a murder investigation. We are still ascertaining various facts, but given the sheer humanity that we all feel following the deaths of 39 individuals in such circumstances, some fundamental points arise: potential links to criminality, and also what we should be doing as a country to make sure we stand by those who really should not be trafficked in any way.

As a country, we lead the world in many of our ways of working internationally, on modern-day slavery and through our own legislation. Fundamentally, there is always the point of international co-operation and collaboration—we must never lose sight of that—whether it is with our EU counterparts, as the right hon. Lady said, or with other international counterparts through the many multilateral forums we work with to prevent upstream migration, illegal human trafficking and all the terrible things we want to stop and prevent. At the end of the day, we must do the right thing as a country and uphold the right kind of values, to ensure that particularly for those who are fleeing war zones, conflicts and some of the most horrendous situations we see in the world, we are able to give people asylum in the right kind of way, which is exactly what we do.

Jackie Doyle-Price (Conservative): ... I thank [Priti Patel] in particular for offering to make her resources available to identify these people, because the fact of the matter is that their loved ones have no idea what has happened to them. They think that their loved ones have gone to a better life, and that is an absolute tragedy.

Sadly, this is not the first time people have been found in metal containers in my constituency. I am sorry to say that it is an all too regular occurrence. It was only a matter of time before it ended in tragedy.

I endorse what my right hon. Friend said: this is a multinational problem that we need to fix. We will not be able to stop people trafficking just in this country alone. It needs to be worked on through international partnerships to ensure that we root out these evil people who profit from people's hope while actually putting them into misery.

Reply from Priti Patel: ... we as a Government are naturally always committed to working with our law enforcement partners and multinational agencies to prevent all sorts of things of this nature from ever materialising and happening. We are committed to breaking up criminal gangs. We do, of course, work upstream and with our international partners. ...

There is so much more we can do internationally, because the fact of the matter is that where there is instability globally and a great deal of displacement, we see such awful events like this happening.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): ... I think we all share the same sense of shock and horror at this unspeakable tragedy and terrible crime. The thoughts and prayers of my party are certainly with the victims and their families. We wish Essex police and their partners every success in bringing to justice those who are culpable.

As a spokesperson for the Northern Ireland Freight Transport Association has pointed out, the route that this vehicle took in this case appears “unorthodox”, and he raised the prospect that it had been designed to avoid increased security at Dover and Calais. As she ponders a response to this horrific event, will the Home Secretary accept the general point that focusing security and checks on one route is not going to work if security and checks elsewhere are weaker? Most importantly of all, does she accept that a sole focus—

an obsession almost—on border securitisation will never stop desperate people using desperate means and routes to try to get here? In fact, such a focus simply means desperate people taking even more desperate and dangerous routes.

Finally, does the Home Secretary accept that it is crucial that we are also generous in responding to this tragedy in the way that we provide safe legal routes for those with strong connections and ties to the UK—the very people who are most likely to risk their lives? Does she accept that there is much more this country can do to provide such safe legal routes through schemes such as Dublin, family reunion, relocation and resettlement?

Reply from Priti Patel: ...On the potential route that the lorry took and the hon. Gentleman's specific remarks, it is important to reflect on the fact that across all avenues and all entries—through our ports, and our airports in fact—the UK operates intelligence-led controls, and we obviously have Border Force doing checks at every single level. However, the fundamental principle we cannot ignore is that the fact of the matter is that we are dealing with those who are using people for the most appalling purposes. What we have seen and are witnessing today is one of the most horrendous crimes against humanity and crimes against individuals. That is why, because we do not know the full facts or have the full details behind what is going on, we must give the police and other agencies the space to investigate what has happened, and then we can obviously look at what more we can do to prevent instances such as this from happening again. ...

To read this very lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-10-23/debates/864CADA-E1D78-480F-BD7A-919DB7602A90/MajorIncidentInEssex>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Visas: Overseas Students

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [826] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the effect on international student numbers of the decision to restrict UK student visas for foreign graduates to four months after completion of their studies.

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [827] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what provision has been made for international students (a) studying and (b) recently graduated that are resident on their student visa since the previous restriction was made in 2012 who are not currently entitled to remain for two years after graduation to find a job.

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [828] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department are taking to enable (a) current students and (b) recently graduated students still resident on their student visa to remain for two years after graduation in order to find a job.

Reply from Seema Kennedy: The Government welcomes international students to the UK, and recognises that they enhance our educational institutions both financially and culturally.

The recent announcement of the new Graduate route demonstrates that the UK is globally focussed and our commitment to attracting the brightest and best talent from around the world to study and work in the UK.

The UK already has an excellent and competitive visa offer for international students wanting to study at our world-class institutions and the introduction of the Graduate route is aimed at enhancing this by providing greater opportunities for talented international students who will be able to remain in the UK for two years to work once they have successfully completed their studies.

The number of university-sponsored Tier 4 student visa applications increased by 11% in the year ending June 2019, and is at its highest recorded level.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/826/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/827/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/828/>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [590] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much of the £3.75 million reserved for her Department's March 2019 marketing campaign for the EU settlement scheme was spent on (a) online and (b) offline advertising.

Reply from Brandon Lewis: In March 2019, Home Office launched a £3.75m UK wide marketing campaign encouraging EU citizens to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. The campaign ran on out of home media (billboards, stations, roadside), radio, catch up tv, online, and print. The cost breakdown is provided below.

1. Radio and digital audio: £410,000
2. Catch up tv: £1,000,000
3. Online (digital and social): £410,000
4. Print: £180,000
5. Out of home £940,000

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-15/590/>

Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Daniel Zeichner (Labour) [591] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been transferred from Pre-Settled to Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme in each month since 1 January 2019.

Reply from Brandon Lewis: The latest published information on EU Settlement Scheme applications concluded for the UK can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme monthly statistics' available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics-september-2019>.

The Home Office does not currently publish statistics on EU Settlement Scheme application outcomes where an applicant with pre-settled status applies for settled status, but is committed to publishing more detailed quarterly statistics on the EU Settlement Scheme. Home Office statisticians are currently considering the content of the next quarterly release.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-15/591/>

Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

Asylum: Uganda

Kate Green (Labour) [244] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance has been issued to staff in her Department who are dealing with applications for asylum in light of the recent decision by the Ugandan Government to reintroduce a bill that

imposes the death penalty on homosexuals.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: All asylum and human rights claims from Ugandan nationals are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw.

The Country Policy and Information Note on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, published in April 2019 and available on the Gov.uk website, points to the difficult environment for LGB persons in Uganda.

We continue to monitor the situation in light of the recent media reports and will provide an update if and when necessary.

Furthermore, decision makers have access to the latest available country information through an on-demand information request service to address particular issues raised in individual claims.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-14/244/>

The Policy and Information Note referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/792036/CPIN_Uganda_SOGIE_EXT_April_2019.pdf

Human Trafficking

Chris Ruane (Labour) [1597] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of victims of trafficking or slavery who have been subject to immigration detention in each year since 2010.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Home Office record the number of all individuals referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and this information is published quarterly and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-quarter-2-2019-april-to-june>

This information does not distinguish between those detained under immigration powers and those living in the community. The reason for this is two-fold, firstly because the NRM referral is not an immigration route by which individuals should regularise their stay in the United Kingdom and secondly, because a person's status in immigration detention is not permanent and can change.

The use of immigration detention in all cases is subject to regular reviews and consequently, a change in circumstance may result in a different consideration. It is quite possible that an immigration detainee is referred to the National Referral Mechanism during a detention period and is released into the community at any point during that process.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-17/1597/>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

EU Settlement Scheme

Lord Greaves (Liberal Democrat): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the EU Settlement Scheme.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford): My Lords, the EU settlement scheme is performing well. This is demonstrated by the latest internal figures, which show that there have been more than 2 million applications. The Home Office is processing up to 20,000 applications a day and

most complete applications are being processed in around five days.

Lord Greaves: My Lords, on 1 June 2016, just before the referendum, the following statement was made: “There will be no change for EU citizens already lawfully resident in the UK. These EU citizens will automatically be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK and will be treated no less favourably than they are at present”.

That was over the signatures of Michael Gove, the present Home Secretary Priti Patel, and Mr Boris Johnson. Is it not the case that these promises have been systematically broken in some large and many small ways? At present, European Union citizens who are offered settled status in the UK possess legal rights as European Union citizens. In future, they will simply have permissions that can be withdrawn any time. Is this not a total breach of the promise made by these people and is the answer not to scrap the present system and replace it with a simple system of registration?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I could not agree less with the noble Lord. First, the EU settlement scheme is free; secondly, it provides a route to settlement that gives people the same rights as any other British citizen; and, thirdly, it is also a proof of status. I really cannot understand what the noble Lord is saying. He talks about registration: I presume he means a declaratory system. In a declaratory system, we have seen the lessons of Windrush: in years to come people might not be able to prove their status, so I think the EU settlement scheme is the best route forward.

The Earl of Listowel (Crossbench): My Lords, what progress is being made to ensure the rights of children in local authority care, who may have uncertain citizenship? Is support being given to make sure that they get their entitlements in good time?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Earl asks a very good question. There are two issues here. First, they might not realise that they can apply to the scheme. Secondly, they might be in local authority care, but we are cognisant of that. We are working with Liverpool University to ensure that children are communicated with and that they can retrospectively apply if, say, through no fault of their own their parent or carer did not manage to apply in time for June 2021.

Lord Rosser (Labour): A Government Minister has apparently said that EU citizens living in Britain risk being deported if they fail to apply by the deadline for settled status. It is highly unlikely that all will apply on time, simply because of the large number of EU citizens affected—I think the figure is some 3 million. What do the Government think this threat of deportation of potentially significant numbers of EU citizens will do to strengthen the position of British citizens living in an EU country who wish to remain in that country? I declare a family interest in this issue.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, the word “deportation” is crucial here. EEA citizens who do not apply to the EU settlement scheme by the deadline will not be acting unlawfully in the same way that clandestine entrants, arrivals or overstayers do. They will not have knowingly entered the UK in breach of the UK Immigration Acts or overstayed their leave. From 2021, EEA citizens will need to hold either an EUSS leave, a Euro TLR or an immigration status under the new immigration system.

Lord Cashman (Non-affiliated): My Lords, the evidence given to the EU Justice Sub-Committee on this very issue outlined the deep concern that members of this settled scheme will not have physical proof—a card or anything else—that proves that they are a member of this scheme. Following Windrush, they are deeply concerned that their only proof will be online, and they will not have any access online other than to refer to such a registration.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I have heard this concern time and again. I can understand how some people might feel that a physical document was somehow more secure and better proof of status. However, in actual fact everyone gets a letter or an email, and the digital status—or token, if you like—is actually a

far more secure way of proving status. I acknowledge the concerns that arise when people do not have a physical document in front of them, but they do receive a letter.

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench): My Lords, I declare that I have been registered as a resident in Portugal for the past 30 years. The question of reciprocity potentially becomes centre stage given that no deal is still on the table. Can the Government give an absolute surety that the UK will not jeopardise the rights and privileges of UK citizens on the continent with that still a possibility?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Viscount will of course be aware that as the United Kingdom, we have done our duty by EU citizens in the UK. We have done that unilaterally. We hope that the EU would do the same; therefore, we are reliant on that good will on both sides. But I am satisfied that we now have over 2 million applications out of a cohort that I estimate to be about 3 million.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, as the Minister just said, therefore 1 million people have not yet applied. What steps are the Government taking to ensure that they are aware that they now need to apply, and their applications can be got in in good time?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord will probably be quite pleased to hear that we are processing applications at the rate of about 20,000 a day. People are applying. However, it is crucial that the harder-to-reach people are aware of their rights and aware that they should be applying. In the event of a deal, they have until June 2021 to apply; there is a lot of advertising; and some of the advances in how people can upload their photo and so on have been made easier by the fact that the iPhone 8 and more up-to-date versions will be able to upload people's details.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-10-23/debates/5C4FCD97-D205-4A5F-B6EA-6139ECF27F86/EUSettlementScheme>

Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at
<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

English Language: Education

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL89] To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to launch the new national strategy for English Language learning announced this autumn; and whether that strategy will include an assessment of the efficacy of English for Speakers of Other Languages as an English language learning programme.

Reply from Lord Agnew of Oulton: The government has committed to developing a new strategy for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in 2019. This strategy will provide a shared vision and common aims for all publicly funded ESOL.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-15/HL89/>

Press Releases

Support for EU citizens

<https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-eu-citizens/>

Separated migrant children given better access to legal aid

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/separated-migrant-children-given-better-access-to-legal-aid>

Legal pathways to Europe needed to help curb human smuggling

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2019/legal-pathways-europe-needed-help-curb-human-smuggling>

New Publications

Northern Ireland evidence relevant to the UK Government's Immigration White Paper

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Northern-Ireland-evidence-relevant-UK-Government-Immigration-white-paper.pdf>

Negotiating Brexit: Migrant spatialities and identities in a changing Europe

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/psp.2216>

News: Essex lorry deaths

Essex lorry deaths: Police probe suspected Irish people-smuggling ring after 39 migrants found frozen to death

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/23/murder-investigation-39-bodies-found-inside-lorry-container/>

Essex lorry deaths: Post-mortem examinations to start on 39 bodies

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-50177820>

Essex lorry deaths: police arrest Warrington couple

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/25/essex-lorry-deaths-police-arrest-two-more-people>

Essex lorry deaths: Driver charged with manslaughter of 39 people

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-50196265>

Four people questioned over deaths of 39 migrants in Essex

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17995669.four-people-questioned-deaths-39-migrants-essex/>

Lorry driver charged with killing 39 migrants found dead in lorry in Essex

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17995829.lorry-driver-charged-killing-39-migrants-found-dead-lorry-essex/>

Essex lorry deaths: driver charged over killing 39 migrants

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/essex-lorry-deaths-driver-charged-over-killing-39-migrants-1-5033676>

Lorry driver charged with manslaughter of 39 migrants

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-26/news/lorry-driver-charged-with-manslaughter-of-39-migrants-tjx6wbsm3>

Essex lorry deaths: Police continue to question driver

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-50162617>

Lorry driver arrested over the death of 39 migrants 'passed out' when he discovered his human cargo, it's claimed

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/24/lorry-driver-arrested-death-39-migrants-passed-discovered-human/>

Police begin moving 39 bodies from trailer as man held on suspicion of murder

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17992857.police-begin-moving-39-bodies-trailer-man-held-suspicion-murder/>

Truck horror migrants had been dead 'at least 10 hours'

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17992206.truck-horror-migrants-dead-at-least-10-hours/>

39 bodies found in shipping container in Essex

<https://www.paih.org/39-bodies-found-in-shipping-container-in-essex/>

Fears for more migrant tragedies after 39 bodies found 'frozen to death' in container

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17989034.fears-migrant-tragedies-39-bodies-found-container/>

People-smuggling checks at UK ports inadequate, hauliers say

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/23/people-smuggling-checks-at-uk-ports-inadequate-hauliers-say>

How often do migrants die entering the UK?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-50154883>

Essex lorry deaths: Dunkirk migrants 'all scared of lorries'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50174534>

Essex lorry deaths: How are lorries checked for concealed migrants?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-50166447>

Murder of refugees by evil people smugglers demands global action

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/murder-of-refugees-by-evil-people-smugglers-demands-global-action-leader-comment-1-5031672>

Careless talk costs lives when migrants are demonised

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/crime/dani-garavelli-careless-talk-costs-lives-when-migrants-are-demonised-1-5033693>

Essex lorry deaths: The Vietnamese risking it all to get to the UK

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50190199>

Why do Vietnamese people make hazardous journeys to the UK?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-50194118>

Parents of Vietnamese woman feared dead claim she was fooled into paying smugglers £30,000 for 'VIP' trip to the UK

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/26/20-vietnamese-migrants-feared-families-among-39-found-dead-lorry/>

How one Vietnamese woman's last text home highlights the tragedy of the migrant lorry found in Essex

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/25/one-vietnamese-womans-last-text-home-highlights-tragedy-migrant/>

'I can't breathe': Vietnamese family's fears after migrant lorry deaths

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-25/news/i-cant-breathe-vietnamese-familys-fears-after-migrant-lorry-deaths-frc57vjh9>

Essex lorry deaths: Youngest victim, 19, whose hopes died agonisingly in the back of a refrigerated vehicle

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/essex-lorry-deaths-youngest-victim-19-whose-hopes-died-agonisingly-in-the-back-of-a-refrigerated-vehicle-3ljvvd6gb>

'I'm sorry, Mom, I'm dying': Last text of woman feared among 39 dead in Essex lorry trailer revealed

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/essex-lorry-deaths-dead-vietnamese-woman-chinese-nationals-trafficking-pham-thi-tra-my-a9171326.html>

Essex lorry deaths: Chinese migrants' terrifying final hours

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-24/news/terrifying-final-hours-of-chinese-migrants-trapped-in-freezing-lorry-l2x6jqbh9>

Lorry deaths: Gangs make fortune from desperation to reach UK

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-23/news/migrants-willing-to-risk-all-for-a-new-life-in-britain-gqgnzlh9>

Lorry deaths: Smuggling is so rife there's a migrant minibus service, say Purfleet residents

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-24/news/lorry-deaths-smuggling-is-so-rife-theres-a-migrant-minibus-service-say-purfleet-residents-5h5rr6q5l>

Lorry deaths: Warnings over people smuggling in freezer trucks went unheeded

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-24/news/lorry-deaths-warnings-over-people-smuggling-in-freezer-trucks-went-unheeded-0p0mblmxt>

Lorry deaths: Zeebrugge targeted by people smugglers amid security fears

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-24/news/lorry-deaths-zeebrugge-targeted-by-people-smugglers-amid-security-fears-l0wk3nfzm>

Lorry deaths: Grim trade that exploits the vulnerable

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-24/news/lorry-deaths-grim-trade-that-exploits-the-vulnerable-927jq88gb>

Lorry horror highlights risks migrants take to try to reach UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/23/lorry-horror-highlights-risks-migrants-take-to-try-to-reach-uk>

Europe cannot be complacent over people smugglers and must galvanise efforts to tackle this pernicious problem

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/10/23/europe-cannot-complacent-people-smugglers-must-now-galvanise/>

Expect more bodies after the 39 in a truck in Essex. EU desperation to keep out migrants has left it in a helpless position

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/essex-lorry-deaths-thurrock-grays-migrants-eu-turkey-mediterranean-a9168126.html>

The deaths in Essex remind us of the bruising reality of immigration

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/essex-deaths-immigration-migrants-truck-belgium-a9168426.html>

Essex lorry deaths a grim reminder of horrific fate of 58 Chinese migrants 19 years ago

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/essex-lorry-deaths-people-smuggling-bulgaria-china-snakeheads-dutch-a9169171.html>

Essex Lorry Deaths

<https://www.paih.org/comment-essex-lorry-deaths/>

If we continue to prevent safe and legal routes to the UK, more people will die in refrigerator trucks at our border

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/essex-lorry-deaths-migrants-human-trafficking-theresa-may-human-rights-a9172366.html>

Dozens of bodies found in Essex lorry serve as a brutal reminder of Britain's hidden crisis

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bodies-lorry-essex-dead-migration-border-security-smuggling-a9168616.html>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Nicola Sturgeon: EU citizens will always be welcome in Scotland

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-eu-citizens-will-always-be-welcome-in-scotland-1-5032743>

Priti Patel plan to send migrants to north England must not stop at border, says Stuart McDonald

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-21/scotland/priti-patel-plan-to-send-migrants-to-north-england-must-not-stop-at-border-says-stuart-mcdonald-d52bk292l>

Refugee age rows having 'devastating impact' on children

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/23/refugee-age-rows-having-devastating-impact-on-children>

'Crossing is dangerous, but so was staying'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/lorry-migrants-refugees-uk-france-channel-crossing-calais-dunkirk-camps-a9166091.html>

'It could have been me': refugees describe their journeys to the UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/24/it-could-have-been-me-refugees-describe-their-journeys-to-the-uk>

Nine people found in back of lorry on M20 in Kent

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lorry-migrants-found-kent-ashford-closed-police-home-office-a9168471.html>

Bishop expresses concern for the situation at the UK border

<https://scmo.org/news-releases/perma/1572015600/article/bishop-expresses-concern-for-the-situation-at-the-.html>

Politically correct discrimination against Christian refugees is an indefensible scandal

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/26/politically-correct-discrimination-against-christian-refugees/>

Relief for Windrush sisters as removal threat overturned

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/23/relief-for-windrush-sisters-as-removal-threat-overturned>

Home Office reverses visa decision for second Oxford academic

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/22/home-office-reverses-visa-decision-second-oxford-academic-leicester-no-help>

Sorry, but Britain does have to get tougher, and show that it is tougher, on illegal entry

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/migrants-essex-truck-39-chinese-immigration-asylum-border-a9170046.html>

Edinburgh is shining example of benefits of immigration

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/edinburgh-is-shining-example-of-benefits-of-immigration-donald-anderson-1-5030899>

'Disgraceful that Scotland can't control own migration'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-scotland-50162436/disgraceful-that-scotland-can-t-control-own-migration>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Scotland Office: Islam

Naz Shah (Labour) [2793] To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many staff in his Department reported their religion as Islam in the latest period for which figures are available; what the reported ethnicity of those staff was; and how many of those staff were employed at each grade.

Reply from Alister Jack: The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not employ staff directly. All staff that join do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies, principally the Ministry of Justice and the Scottish Government, who remain the employers.

Detailed information in relation to the ethnicity of staff is not held by the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland; this information is held by the parent employers.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2793/>

Wales Office: Islam

Naz Shah (Labour) [2794] To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many staff in his Department reported their religion as Islam in the latest period for which figures are available; what the reported ethnicity of those staff was; and how many of those staff were

employed at each grade.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales is not an employer in its own right. The Ministry of Justice is the employer of staff working in the Office. As at 30 September 2019, fewer than five staff had recorded Muslim as their religion or belief. To protect the identification of staff, an exact number cannot therefore be provided nor their ethnicity or grade disclosed.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2794/>

Northern Ireland Office: Islam

Naz Shah (Labour) [2795] To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many staff in his Department reported their religion as Islam in the latest period for which figures are available; what the reported ethnicity of those staff was; and how many of those staff were employed at each grade.

Reply from Julian Smith: Due to there being fewer than five members of staff reporting their religion as Islam in my Department, figures cannot be provided in order to protect the privacy and identity of individuals concerned.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2795/>

Department for Education: Islam

Naz Shah (Labour) [2776] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many staff in his Department reported their religion as Islam in the latest period for which figures are available; what the reported ethnicity of those staff was; and how many of those staff were employed at each grade.

Reply from Chris Skidmore: As at 30 September 2019, 304 employees reported their religion as Islam.

The reported ethnicity of these employees is included in table a, which has been attached. The reported grade of these employees is included in table b. To prevent the identification of individuals, totals have been rounded to the nearest 10.

[2776 table](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2776/>

Ministry of Justice: Islam

Naz Shah (Labour) [2775] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff in his Department reported their religion as Islam in the latest period for which figures are available; what the reported ethnicity of those staff was; and how many of those staff were employed at each grade.

Reply from Chris Philp: Table 1 - MoJ Muslim¹ staff by ethnicity¹ and grade, as at 30 June 2019

Grade	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed or Mixed British	White	Other	Unknown²	Total
SCS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Band A	31	~	~	~	~	~	37
Band B	95	~	~	~	~	~	114
Band C	140	12	5	4	7	13	181
Band D	209	10	7	6	5	13	250
Band E	729	54	14	24	38	38	897

Band F	77	16	3	4	8	4	112
NPS (No Equivalent) & unknown	198	19	14	10	6	13	260
Total	1479	116	46	56	71	83	1851

Note

1. Ethnicity and religion are self-declared optional fields.
2. Includes "Prefer not to say", and non-responses.
3. ~ denotes values of 2 or fewer, suppressed for reasons of data protection, or values suppressed for reasons of secondary suppression to prevent disclosure in cases where totals would reveal suppressed values.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2775/>

Publication

Understanding pay gaps

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/speech/2019/understanding-pay-gaps-speech-by-andy-haldane.pdf>

News

Ethnic minorities in UK earn 10% less than white workers, Bank of England research shows

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/ethnic-minority-pay-gap-uk-bank-of-england-research-bame-a9165071.html>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Religious Hatred: Trials

Richard Burgon (Labour) [1752] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) mean and (b) median waiting times were in weeks for trials where the defendants entered a not guilty plea for a racially or religiously aggravated harassment charge in each Crown Court in England and Wales in (i) 2010 and (ii) 2018.

Reply from Chris Philp: The information requested about the waiting times for trials where the defendant has entered a not guilty plea for a racially or religiously aggravated harassment charge in 2010 and 2018 can be found in the attached Excel document.

Due to the small number of defendants pleading not guilty to these offences at individual Crown Courts, we have not supplied the average waiting times for courts where fewer than five defendants pleaded not guilty. Basing an average on such small numbers can skew the mean and result in the figures being unrepresentative. Performance, demand and waiting times in the courts are constantly reviewed to balance sitting days with waiting times, disposals and receipts. Resources are

adjusted when appropriate. Demand has been falling in recent years and sitting days have been reduced accordingly. The abolition of committal hearings in 2013 transferred the file preparation period from the magistrates' court to the Crown Court and so comparisons between pre-2013 data and post-2013 data do not compare like with like.

We will continue to review demand and performance in the Crown Courts and will ensure they have the resource they require.

[Table](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-17/1752/>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Badminton and Football: Racial Discrimination

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [2754] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Football Association on racism in football and (b) Badminton England on racism in badminton.

Football and Badminton: Racial Discrimination

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [2755] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of levels of racism in local (a) football and (b) badminton clubs.

Reply from Nigel Adams: We strongly condemn the recent incidents of racism in sport both at home and abroad. There is no place anywhere for racism in sport and we want it stamped out at every level of competition.

Government ministers and officials regularly meet the football authorities and other sports governing bodies, including the Football Association and Badminton England, to discuss a wide range of issues, including how we can work together to tackle racism.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2754/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2755/>

Press Releases

Tougher hate crime sentences at record levels

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/tougher-hate-crime-sentences-record-levels-0>

Man pleads guilty to anti-Muslim abuse following New Zealand mosque shootings

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/man-pleads-guilty-anti-muslim-abuse-following-new-zealand-mosque-shootings>

New Publications

Crown Prosecution Service Hate Crime Report 2018–19

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/CPS-Hate-Crime-Annual-Report-2018-2019.PDF>

Diversity & Inclusion Study 2019

<https://about-content.glassdoor.com/app/uploads/sites/2/2019/10/Glassdoor-Diversity-Survey-Supplement-1.pdf>

News

Scottish Labour dumps election candidate after anti-semitism probe

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/scottish-labour-dumps-westminster-candidate-20724881.amp>

Surge in recorded hate crime a good thing because it means police are doing their job, home secretary claims

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-hate-crime-rise-police-home-secretary-office-a9168216.html>

Racism is rife in modern Britain. Nothing can change until we admit it

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/black-history-month-racism-institutional-britain-slavery-education-employment-culture-colonialism-a9170841.html>

One in three adults have experienced or witnessed racism at work, study finds

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/racism-work-discrimination-gender-lgbt-sexuality-ageism-glassdoor-a9167256.html>

University racism inquiry criticised for including anti-white abuse

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/racism-university-students-equality-human-rights-commission-a9167286.html>

Racism in universities is a systemic problem, not a series of incidents

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/23/racism-in-universities-is-a-systemic-problem-not-a-series-of-incidents>

Universities must stop covering up racism in order to protect their own reputations

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/23/universities-must-stop-covering-up-racism-in-order-to-protect-their-own-reputations>

Universities ignoring racism, says Equality and Human Rights Commission

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-23/news/uk-universities-ignoring-racism-says-equality-and-human-rights-commission-jzm6ktj6>

Reaction to Nazi salutes is moral panic, says lecturer

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-23/scotland/reaction-to-nazi-salutes-is-moral-panic-says-lecturer-dlns7kz78>

Scots history teaching 'reinforces racism'

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-23/scotland/scots-history-teaching-reinforces-racism-mvj9mbz6g>

Community Security Trust supporting the traveller community against hatred

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2019/10/25/cst-supporting-the-traveller-community-against-hatred>

Neil Lennon: Celtic boss says players must be protected from racism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/50158438>

Lazio urge fans to stop making Nazi salutes at Celtic Park

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-24/scotland/lazio-urge-fans-to-stop-making-nazi-salutes-at-celtic-park-p3xxkfgt8>

Lazio Ultras bring fascism to Glasgow

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2019-10-26/scotland/lazio-ultras-bring-fascism-to-glasgow-wndcgqdfn>

Neil Lennon pledges to support Celtic players if racism mars Lazio match

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/oct/23/neil-lennon-celtic-lazio-europa-league-support-players-racist-abuse>

Liverpool condemn fans for 'racist' Divock Origi banner

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/50159587>

Bradford City latest club to launch racism investigation following incident against Port Vale

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2019/10/23/bradford-city-latest-club-launch-racism-investigation-following/>

Liverpool made 'massive mistake' in backing Luis Suarez in the 2011 racism row, admits Jamie Carragher

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2019/10/22/liverpool-made-massive-mistake-backing-luis-suarez-2011-racism/>

Premier League declares 'No Room For Racism' but experience of U12s in grassroots game suggests otherwise

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2019/10/22/premier-league-declares-no-room-racism-experience-u12s-grassroots/>

'We're not that sort of club': Yeovil in shock over racism claims

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/oct/21/were-not-that-sort-of-club-yeovil-in-shock-over-racism-claims>

TOP

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Release

St Andrew's Day

St Andrew's Day is Scotland's national day and is the perfect opportunity for everyone right across the country to come together and celebrate some of the shared values that unite us: kindness and fairness.

This year we are determined to make St Andrew's Day more special than ever before. That's why we're encouraging one kind act and supporting the global Fair Saturday movement – giving you plenty of options when it comes to choosing how you celebrate the day. ...

To get involved there are three simple steps:

- Choose your act of kindness – Whether it's helping an elderly neighbour or popping into your local food bank with some donations, anyone can make someone's day this St Andrew's Day.
- Do the act – commit to one kind act and help make someone's day – no matter how big or small, it will help make a difference.
- Inspire other acts of kindness – Share your support and inspire others online by

using #onekindact and #WeAreScotland this #StAndrewsDay on social media and together we can bring the whole country together through our acts of kindness. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://onescotland.org/campaigns/st-andrews-day/>

New Publication

St Andrew's Day 2019 Stakeholders' Toolkit

<https://onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/St-Andrews-Day-Stakeholder-Toolkit.pdf>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Public Holidays

Gareth Thomas (Labour Co-op) [2643] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of making (a) Diwali and (b) Eid national public holidays; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kelly Tolhurst: We welcome the celebration of Diwali, Eid, Vaisakhi and other religious festivals. All faiths have a home in this country.

The Government regularly receives requests for additional bank and public holidays to commemorate a variety of occasions – such as cultural, history, military and religious events. The current pattern of bank holidays is well established and accepted.

There is a significant cost to business of creating additional public holidays. The estimated cost to the economy of the one-off bank holiday for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was £1.2 billion.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for employers to treat staff from a particular religious group less favourably than those from other religions when considering requests for leave, or requests to refrain from work on particular days.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-21/2643/>

Census: Sikhs

Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [1117] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291409 on Census: Sikhs, what estimate he has made of the number of people among the 20 million that answered no religion or did not answer the optional religious question in the 2011 census who belong to the Sikh ethnic group.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

For the question on religion in the 2011 Census for England and Wales, an estimated 14,097,229 people identified as having no religion and an estimated 4,038,032 did not state their religion.

Of the 14,097,229 people who identified as having no religion, an estimated 901 identified with Sikh ethnicity in the ethnic group question. Of the 4,038,032 people who did not state their religion, an estimated 1,479 identified with Sikh ethnicity in the ethnic group question.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published the following table with data from the 2011 Census: CT0740_2011 Census - Religion - Numeric and percentage for Sikh ethnic group - EW¹.

Table 1 below summarises the data from CT0740. For the 2021 Census, the ONS has made a number of recommendations in the White Paper (Help Shape Our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales²) to ensure that the need for high-quality data for those who identify as Sikh is met. The recommendations fully recognise the need for good data on the Sikh community, both in terms of the need for high-quality data from the Census and also more widely across all public services. I want to assure you that everyone who wishes to identify as Sikh will be able to do so under the published proposals for the 2021 Census. Alongside the White Paper, the ONS published some initial exploratory analysis of Sikh names. Specifically, the Sikh names research attempted to assess whether surnames captured in the 2011 Census could be used to improve our understanding of Sikh communities from what is already derived from the religion question in the census. The report “Sikh names research report 2018”³ provides fuller information on this.

Table 1: Religion - Numeric and percentage for Sikh ethnic group

Religion	All usual residents with Sikh ethnic identity (write-in response)	Percentage
Total: Religion	83,362	
01 No religion	901	1.1
02 Christian	2,062	2.5
04 Hindu	749	0.9
06 Muslim	1,467	1.8
07 Sikh	76,500	91.8
08 Other religion	204	0.2
09 Religion not stated	1,479	1.8

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/adhocs/007584ct07402011censusreligionnumericandpercentageforsikhethnicgroupew>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-2021-census-of-population-and-housing-in-england-and-wales>

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/2021censusopicresearchupdateddecember2018>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/1117/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-09-26/291409/>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Sharia Law: Marriages

Baroness Cox (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty’s Government what progress they have made in implementing the first recommendation of *The independent review into the application of sharia law in England and Wales*, published in February 2018, in order to protect Muslim women in Islamic marriages which are not civilly registered.

Reply from the Advocate-General for Scotland (Lord Keen of Elie): My Lords, the review recommended creating an offence that would apply to celebrants of religious marriages that do not confer legal rights. We continue to explore across

government the practicality of such an offence among other potential options and whether it would achieve the change of practice intended.

Baroness Cox: My Lords, I thank the Minister for his reply, but we have seen no evidence of any progress on this crucial issue, which causes so much suffering to so many Muslim women in this country. Is he aware that many noble Lords were deeply concerned by his response to a similar Oral Question in July, in which he suggested that the plight of Muslim women, “is more of a social issue than a legal one”?—[*Official Report*, 4/7/19; col. 1516.] Given the recommendations of the sharia law review, the Casey review and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the number of Private Member’s Bills that I have submitted since 2011, will the Minister give an assurance that the government legislation will at last be introduced with great urgency, as so many Muslim women are suffering in ways which would make our suffragettes turn in their graves?

Reply from Lord Keen of Elie: My Lords, I fully understand the concern about this issue in relation to marriage law. We do not agree with the recommendations in the sharia review. The Council of Europe’s view on this was, I regret to observe, inept in so far as it used the concept of “civilly registered”, which is not a legal concept in the context of the marriage laws of England and Wales. On 29 June, it was announced that the Law Commission would undertake work in relation to the law on how and where marriages may take place in England and Wales. The commission will not consider directly the sharia review’s recommendations, but it will consider rationalising the system of offences within marriage law.

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour): My Lords, the Minister may understand the concern, but the question is what the Government are going to do about it, having set up this commission. Are they content with a situation where, under sharia courts, women are constantly discriminated against in terms both of inheritance and particularly evidence, the weight of their evidence being half that of a man’s?

Reply from Lord Keen of Elie: My Lords, we do not recognise sharia courts in this country; we do not recognise sharia law in this country. It is necessary that people carry through their relationships in accordance with the law of England and Wales. However, the Government do not prevent individuals seeking to regulate their lives through their religious beliefs.

Lord Cormack (Conservative): My Lords, as one who has supported the noble Baroness, Lady Cox, and admires her persistence and courage, I ask my noble and learned friend to ensure that action is taken soon to give these women—I have met some of them with the noble Baroness—the basic equality that they are denied, and which everyone in this country deserves.

Reply from Lord Keen of Elie: My Lords, one is clearly concerned where equality of treatment is not available as it should be under our law, but I repeat a point that I made on a previous occasion, albeit the noble Baroness, Lady Cox, may take issue with it: this is as much a social issue as it is a legal issue. Many people in this country choose to cohabit rather than go through any form of marriage but, within the Muslim community, cohabitation is severely frowned upon. It is for that reason that we find that many go through this informal form of marriage, which is not recognised under our law.

Baroness Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, religious marriages that are not legally recognised is an issue that affects women and girls from many faiths and backgrounds. A third of cases dealt with by the UK’s Forced Marriage Unit involved children under the age of 17. The Minister will be aware that, under existing law, children can be married and, shockingly, an adult marrying a child in this way is not in itself a crime; it is simply not legally binding. Will the Government take action to close this loophole by increasing the minimum age of any marriage to 18 and protect all children from all backgrounds?

Reply from Lord Keen of Elie: My Lords, forced marriage is a criminal offence in

this country and has been since 2014. Indeed, in 2017 we introduced lifelong anonymity for the victims of forced marriage to encourage more people to come forward and report it. The age of marriage is 16 but, in the period from 16 to 18, marriage can of course be carried out only with the consent of the parent. There are no immediate plans to increase the age in respect of marriage.

Baroness Afshar (Crossbench): My Lords, are the Government aware that these courts deprive Muslim women of not only their rights but their Islamic rights? They do not give them the rights that the Koran gives to women: to independence, to charge for housework and to charge for motherhood. It is high time that someone who is familiar with the Koranic teachings of Islamic rights intervened to prevent this façade of sharia courts imposing absolutely unjust and unlawful demands on women. What will this Government do about that?

Reply from Lord Keen of Elie: My Lords, we do not recognise sharia courts and we do not recognise sharia law. We recognise the law of England and Wales, and it is that to which we must look for protection of rights and to which individuals must have recourse. Of course, I understand the social inhibitions that exist in parts of the Muslim community in seeking to vindicate their rights. That is why, for example, we introduced anonymity in the context of forced marriage.

Lord Elton (Conservative): My Lords, the Government may not recognise the courts but a great many people in this country do, of whom a large proportion cannot speak, read or understand the English language. Do the Government realise that there is a huge barrier around this problem, which needs to be solved quickly to avoid terrible injustice?

Reply from Lord Keen of Elie: My Lords, I entirely concur with the observations of my noble friend. There is a very real need for education and information in this area. If we can achieve that, we can take strides to deal with this inequality and injustice, which we readily recognise, but which is more difficult to cure than to identify.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-10-23/debates/D7C380E1-3F77-4BE0-BF60-89B390587A7D/ShariaLawMarriages>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/678478/6.4152_HO_CPFGR_Report_into_Sharia_Law_in_the_UK_WEB.pdf

The oral answer referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-07-04/debates/942B3D60-0C64-412A-9710-4967D39CFDB6/ShariaLawMarriages#contribution-6F86D243-63C1-403C-88E2-D00CE332C022>

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Other News

Muslim Schools Show Greatest Improvements as GCSE League Tables Published

<https://mcb.org.uk/press-releases/celebrating-the-achievement-of-our-students/>

Maryport honours UK's first black policeman, John Kent

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cumbria-50172545>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Children (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112632.aspx>

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

Disclosure (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/111895.aspx>

Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/111850.aspx>

UK Parliament

Immigration Detention Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/immigrationdetention.html>

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (Legal Advice and Appeals) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/unaccompaniedasylumseekingchildrenlegaladviceandappeals.html>

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Consultations ** new or updated this week

Children (Scotland) Bill (closing date 15 November 2019)

<https://www.parliament.scot/gettinginvolved/112981.aspx>

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (closing date 17 November 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/looked-after-children-unit/independent-child-trafficking-guardians/>

Freedom of Information extension of coverage (closing date 22 November 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/constitution-and-cabinet/freedom-of-information-extension-of-coverage/>

Widening the scope of the current victim statement scheme (closing date 24 November 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/justice/current-victim-statement-scheme/>

Financial Redress for Historical Child Abuse in Care (closing date 25 November 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/redress-survivor-relations/financial-redress-historical-child-abuse-in-care/>

Use of interpreters in the asylum process (closing date not stated)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/call-for-evidence-use-of-interpreters-in-the-asylum-process>

Experiences of Islamophobia (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/amina-islamophobia>

Raising skills and standards of supporters of refugees and asylum seekers

(closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3R8SDYN>

Police Scotland: Your view counts (open all year)

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/decision-making/public-consultation/local-policing-consultation>

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Job Opportunities

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

[Click here](#) to find out about Graduate, Modern, and Foundation Apprenticeship opportunities.

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Black History Month

until 31 October 2019

Black History Month illuminates Scotland's 'hidden history', and brings into sharp relief the various strands of suffering, humiliation, exploitation and denigration of African, Caribbean and Asian people, as well as being about solidarity and the building of allies in relation to experiences of racism in Scotland. To read the full programme of events see

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/7ec2e5_bee1dd34a1e849af9dba0c7afc3112d5.pdf

**** this week!**

Brexit: EU Settlement Scheme Information Session

29 October 2019 in Falkirk (5.30-7.30)

Central Scotland Regional Equality Council information session for EU citizens to find out what the EU Settlement Scheme is, when and how to apply, your rights as an EU citizen living in Scotland, and services and resources to support you. For information see

<https://tinyurl.com/yxnz8h2h>

**** this week!**

Working with refugees and the asylum process

31 October 2019 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council course to examine why people might need to flee their own country, how they seek asylum in the UK, and what opportunities exist for rebuilding their lives here in Scotland. Reduced fees available for relevant organisations. For information see

<https://tinyurl.com/z68a5k8> or contact Martha Harding 0141 248 9799 / martha.harding@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

St Andrew's Multi-Cultural Cup

Closing date for applications 4 November 2019

1 December 2019 in Glasgow

A 7v7 football tournament hosted by the Scottish FA and BEMIS that will see teams from across Scotland compete for the St. Andrew's Multi-Cultural Cup.

This year's event is themed around [St. Andrews Fair Saturday](#). After Black Friday, thousands of artists and cultural organisations around the world get together in a unique festival and support social causes through their show. Scotland is joining the celebration of Fair Saturday as part of the wider celebration of St Andrew's Day and everyone is invited to take part in St Andrew's Fair Saturday. St Andrew's Fair Saturday is a Scottish Government initiative which is being delivered by the Fair Saturday Foundation. Application form available from <https://bemis.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/sa-mcc-application.docx>

Refugee rights to housing

7 November 2019 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council course identifying the different groups of asylum seekers and refugees most likely to seek housing in Scotland, their legal rights, and the duties and obligations on local authorities and other housing organisations towards them. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y9pvpl5r> or contact Martha Harding 0141 248 9799 / martha.harding@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

**** Scottish Interfaith Week: Eat Share Love**

10-17 November 2019

Scottish Interfaith Week connects communities through a series of events encouraging dialogue, understanding, and co-operation between Scotland's religious communities. Get involved either by organising or attending an event and sharing your experience online using #SIFW19 For information see <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

Age assessment awareness

13 November 2019 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council course to give social workers and other relevant staff an awareness of the components that are used to build a picture of a person's age. It draws on a variety of existing Age Assessment practice guidelines and demonstrates how these apply in Scotland. Reduced fees available. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y8f2z7p4> or contact Martha Harding 0141 248 9799 / martha.harding@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

20 November 2019 in Stirling (9.30-12.30)

PAiH training to explore fundamental issues of settled and pre-settled status, welfare and housing entitlements of EEA nationals. For information see <http://www.paih.org/training>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

20 November 2019 in Stirling (1.30-4.30)

PAiH training to explore how the asylum system works, the process involved in making a claim for asylum, barriers faced by both refugees and asylum seekers building a new life in Scotland, and their respective entitlement to services. For information see <http://www.paih.org/training>

Working with refugees and VPRS resettlement

21 November 2019 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council course to examine the issues facing Syrian refugees as they

move from countries around Syria to the UK, and highlight the challenges and opportunities they face as they build new lives in Scotland. Reduced fees available. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/zy436qr> or contact Martha Harding 0141 248 9799 / martha.harding@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Engaging with seldom heard voices

5 December 2019 in Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council course looking at the various approaches, tools and techniques we can adopt to reach out to people who are seldom heard. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y8tg2x4k> or contact Martha Harding 0141 248 9799 / martha.harding@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Refugee community sponsorship

11 December 2019 in Glasgow

For information see [http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/what we do/training](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/training) or contact Martha Harding 0141 248 9799 / martha.harding@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

No Recourse to Public Funds

11 December 2019 in Glasgow (1.30-4.30)

PAiH training to help frontline workers identify a tenant's current status, clarify what this means in terms of access to public funds and plan effective support where difficulties arise. For information see <http://www.paih.org/training>

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Useful Links

Scottish Parliament <http://www.parliament.scot/>

Scottish Government <https://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/portal/en>

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

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

Refugee Survival Trust <https://www.rst.org.uk/>

Freedom from Torture <https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/>

Interfaith Scotland <https://interfaithscotland.org/>

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

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

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

ACAS <http://www.acas.org.uk/>

SCVO <https://scvo.org.uk/>

Volunteer Scotland <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/>

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

Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel <https://www.goodfundraising.scot/>

Disclosure Scotland <https://www.mygov.scot/working-jobs/finding-a-job/disclosure/>

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services
<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/>

BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news>

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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) <https://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. (Scottish Charity, no. SC027692) <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://www.gov.scot/>*

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