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Note that some weblinks, particularly of newspaper articles, are only valid for a short period of time, usually around a month, and that the Scottish and UK Parliament and Government websites have been redesigned, so that links published in previous 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

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Immigration

Chris Stephens (SNP) [130777] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether external bodies were consulted in advance of publishing new Immigration rules changes; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: We have laid changes to the Immigration Rules that are vital to curb irregular migration, which is often facilitated by criminal gangs seeking to arrange dangerous journeys for profit. We have been absolutely clear that we will do all we can to make the use of small boats to cross the Channel an unviable option for reaching the UK.

It is a longstanding principle that asylum seekers should claim at the earliest opportunity in the first safe country they reach. Under existing Rules, any claimant

who travelled through a safe country before claiming asylum in the UK could expect their claim to be considered inadmissible.

This is a technical change to the existing Rules which were already coming into effect from January. For these reasons, changes to the Rules on place of claim and third country inadmissibility have not been subject to formal public consideration.

I made a statement on the Rules changes on 16 December.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130777>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-16/debates/06EA3DD8-026C-4AAF-BCBA-60F1B5D2E3F6/ImmigrationRulesSupportedAccommodation#contribution-B9395357-011D-47B4-9C2F-59F03FCFD38F>

Immigration

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [130267] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that point 11.4 of the Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules (10 December 2020) is compliant with the UK's commitments to the UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 3).

Reply from Kevin Foster: Point 11.4 of the Statement of Changes is part of the overall clarification of the places and circumstances in which a Home Office officer is capable of receiving an asylum claim. It makes clear that an asylum claim cannot be received in the territorial waters of the United Kingdom.

I am satisfied the Rules are compatible with our international obligations. No individual will be refouled to a place where they would be harmed.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-15/130267>

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/943127/CCS207_CCS1220673408-001_Statement_of_changes_in_Immigration_Rules_HC_1043_Web_accessible_.pdf

and an associated explanatory memorandum at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943128/CCS207_CCS1220673408-002_Explanatory_Memorandum_to_HC_1043_Web_Accessible_.pdf

Immigration

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [130753] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will review the effectiveness of the Minimum Income Requirement, as recommended by the Migration Advisory Committee in its annual report of 15 December 2020.

Reply from Kevin Foster: In February 2017 the Supreme Court upheld the lawfulness of the minimum income requirement, which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration, ruling it strikes a fair balance between the interests of those wishing to sponsor a partner to settle in the UK and of the community in general. The Court found the minimum income requirement is not a breach of the right to respect for private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and is not discriminatory.

We continue to keep the family Immigration Rules under review, including taking into account recommendations made in the Migration Advisory Committee's annual report of 15 December 2020, and will make adjustments should these prove necessary. However, our overall assessment is the Rules, including the minimum income requirement, are having the right impact and are helping to ensure public

confidence in the immigration system by ensuring family migration is not based on access to the welfare system paid for by taxpayers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130753>

The annual report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/944234/Annual_Report_2020_BB.pdf

Information about the Supreme Court Ruling referred to above can be read at

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2015-0011-press-summary.pdf>

and the judgement can be read at

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2015-0011-judgment.pdf>

Immigration Enforcement Directorate

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [132945] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the reasons why British citizens were stopped by immigration enforcement teams more than any other nationality over the last two years in Leeds, Nottingham, Cardiff, Manchester, Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool and London; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: Immigration Enforcement operations including visits, crime reduction and street operations play a critical role in detecting and deterring immigration abuse and reducing the harm caused by illegal immigration, such as modern slavery, people trafficking and smuggling. Immigration Enforcement do not carry out random visits and nor do they stop individuals at random; all operational activity is intelligence-led.

Immigration Enforcement officers are empowered to carry out an in-country examination of a person to establish their immigration status where they reasonably suspect that the person is in breach of immigration law. Where a person shows an adverse reaction to an immigration presence, typically attempting to flee from premises when Immigration Officers arrive, an Immigration Officer may arrest a person if that adverse reaction gives them reasonable grounds to suspect they may be in breach of immigration law. The person, if British, would be de-arrested as soon as their nationality was established. An arrest of a British citizen could also occur following a criminal offence such as the obstruction of an Immigration Officer in the execution of their duty and for assaulting an Immigration Officer.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132945>

UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services

Catherine West (Labour) [134035] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many appointments UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services are available each week at Core sites which do not require a fee.

Reply from Kevin Foster: UKVI continue to work closely with Sopra Steria to monitor progress against their plan to ensure sufficient capacity at their service points in the UK to service projected demand forecasts and for increases to service point capacity to be flexed upwards or downwards where required. As a result the number of appointments available each week varies based on weekly capacity. This is monitored through Key performance indicators.

Provision of sufficient capacity to meet demand is measured against KPI metrics. The KPI for free appointments is 56% of total appointment availability and assures business capacity made available to customers at UKVCAS service points. This metric is designed to ensure, within capacity provided, more than half of all appointments at core sites (Cardiff, Croydon, Belfast, Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester) will be free to access by our customers.

Details on the relevant performance indicators to measure appointment availability

has been published and can be found in Schedule 7 of the UKVI Front End Services contract available here:

[https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/ec5031ea-021e-471a-86cf-af540e8d8efa\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/ec5031ea-021e-471a-86cf-af540e8d8efa(opens in a new tab))

The specific KPI level can be found at the following page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-performance-indicators-kpis-for-governments-most-important-contracts>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/134035>

UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services: Coronavirus

Catherine West (Labour) [134034] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to assist people who are unable to attend UKVCAS centre appointments as they are shielding.

Reply from Kevin Foster: UKVI and Sopra Steria Limited reopened UKVCAS in June in locations with COVID-19 secure measures in place.

If anyone needs to attend a physical UKVCAS appointment but is unable to travel because of COVID-19, they should contact UKVI through the Coronavirus Immigration Hotline (CIH) which can be reached via email or on the phone, on 0800 678 1767.

Further details for customers impacted by COVID-19 can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/134034>

British Nationality: Applications

Hilary Benn (Labour) [133712] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications for British citizenship were concluded within (a) three months, (b) six months, (c) nine months and (d) more than 12 months of those applications being received by her Department in the last 12 months for which information is available.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office is committed to routinely publishing data as part of the transparency data in the Immigration Statistics quarterly release. The latest data can be found on Gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visas-and-citizenship-data-november-2020>

The available data includes performance against the six-month service standard and applications remaining unresolved, it does not break down the timescales for reaching a decision in any further detail.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/133712>

Immigration: Applications

Virendra Sharma (Labour) [133768] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the proportion of (a) entry clearances, (b) applications for biometric residency permits and (c) leave to remain applications are processed within the published service standards.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Performance against service standards, where service standards apply, are included in the Migration Transparency data which is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visas-and-citizenship-data-november-2020>

Please see data table tab VC_01a, which includes data on the percentage of applications for each route processed within service standards. Where we are not able to process within the target processing time, we write to the applicant to explain

this. For Biometric Residence Permits, we routinely publish this as part of the Transparency data.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/133768>

Immigration: Applications

Virendra Sharma (Labour) [133769] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the proportion of update requests on pending applications which are responded to within published service standards.

Reply from Kevin Foster: For all application progress enquiries to our advice line, where we need to review in more detail, we aim to respond to these within 5 working days. In the last month we achieved this in 100% of cases.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/133769>

Immigration: Coronavirus

Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op) [133709] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that urgent requests to expedite outstanding applications to remain in the UK are considered in a timely manner during the covid-19 pandemic.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

When urgent requests to expedite applications are received, UKVI will make an assessment of the circumstances of each. If there are compelling or compassionate reasons behind the request, they will work with Commercial Partners to expedite and bring ahead of the caseworking queue.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/133709>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Immigration: Biometrics

Afzal Khan (Labour) [133153] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to UKVI applicants with reusable biometric information, which applicants were (a) permitted to use the data and (b) prevented from utilising reusable biometric data.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [133154] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the merits of allowing biometric information submitted as part of a person's previous immigration application to be reused in further applications.

Immigration: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan (Labour) [133155] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer on 28 October to Question 106945 on Immigration: Coronavirus, what further steps her Department has taken to widen the use of previously enrolled biometrics.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office published Covid-19 guidance on 3 September 2020 setting out biometric reuse measures that were introduced to support UKVI customers adversely affected by the pandemic. The guidance sets out the circumstances under which reusable biometrics can be reused and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-biometric-enrolment-reuse-and-evidencing-status>

We are developing plans to enable us to widen the reuse of previously enrolled fingerprint biometrics, while maintaining public safety. The capability to reuse previously enrolled fingerprint biometrics will help us to reduce the need for foreign nationals to attend an office to provide their fingerprints every time they make an immigration application. However, foreign nationals will still be required to provide their latest facial image.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133153>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133154>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133155>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-21/106945>

Immigration

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [131408] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason past tax discrepancies result in good character requirement failures under paragraph 322(5) of the Immigration Rules' grounds for refusing indefinite leave to remain.

Immigration Rule 322(5) related to refusal of leave to remain on the grounds it was undesirable to allow a person to remain in the UK in the light of their character, conduct or associations. It was replaced with rule 9.3.1 in Part 9 of the Immigration Rules laid on 22 October 2020. This provides for the mandatory refusal of permission to stay where a person's presence in the UK is not conducive to the public good because of their character, conduct or associations.

Published guidance makes clear the behaviours which mean an application would be refused under rule 9.3.1. While innocent tax discrepancies would not normally warrant refusal on non-conducive grounds, an application can be refused on the grounds of corruption or involvement in the proceeds of crime.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131408>

The statement of changes to Immigration Rules referred to above can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929512/CCS001_CCS1020373376-](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929512/CCS001_CCS1020373376-001_Statement_of_changes_in_Immigration_Rules_HC_813_Web_Accessible_1.pdf)

[001_Statement_of_changes_in_Immigration_Rules_HC_813_Web_Accessible_1.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929512/CCS001_CCS1020373376-001_Statement_of_changes_in_Immigration_Rules_HC_813_Web_Accessible_1.pdf)

The following three questions all received the same answer

Immigrants: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas (Green) [131226] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to suspend (a) No Recourse to Public Funds conditions and (b) all other immigration-based exclusions from welfare and homelessness assistance for (i) 12 months, (ii) at least for the duration of the covid-19 outbreak; and if she will make a statement.

Immigrants: Social Security Benefits

Caroline Lucas (Green) [131226] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Housing, Community and Local Government and (b) the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the call from the Local Government Association to temporarily and universally remove the No Recourse to Public Funds condition to reduce public health risks and ease the pressure on homelessness services by enabling vulnerable people to access welfare benefits who are currently unable to do so because of their immigration status; and if she will make a statement.

Immigrants: Finance

Caroline Lucas (Green) [131228] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the effect of the No Recourse to Public Funds condition on (a) rough sleeping levels and (b) transmission of covid-19 in the next six months; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Government remains committed to protecting vulnerable people and has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this pandemic. During this time the Home Office has continued to work closely with Public Health Officials, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local

Government, and local authorities.

The Government has introduced a range of measures to ensure people can stay safe and many of these such as the Coronavirus Job retention scheme, and self-employment income support scheme are available for those with a no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition. Contribution-based benefits are also not classed as public funds for immigration purposes. Testing and treatment for Covid-19 is also free of charge to all regardless of immigration status.

We have also launched the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme in England, which provides a £500 payment to people on low incomes who cannot work from home and have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. Support is also available for those who are not in receipt of one of the seven means-tested benefits that are part of the eligibility criteria for the main scheme, but who will still face hardship if they have to self-isolate, in the form of a £500 discretionary payment, paid by local authorities. This payment is available to those with NRPF, provided they meet the criteria set by the local authority for discretionary payments in their area. Further information on this scheme can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>

The Government has provided an unprecedented £7.2 billion of package of support to councils to help their communities through this pandemic, *which includes their work to support rough sleepers*. This includes £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced funding, £1.1 billion from the Infection Control Fund, £300 million to support Test and Trace as well as funding allocated to councils from the new Local Alert Level system and a number of grants to support communities and vulnerable people.

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have their NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have continued to prioritise NRPF 'change of conditions' applications and deal with them compassionately.

In light of all the support that is currently available for people in the UK, including those with an NRPF condition, we have no plans to temporarily suspend NRPF.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131224>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131226>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131228>

Visas: Coronavirus

Virendra Sharma (Labour) [133766] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support visa holders unable to return to their home countries as a result of covid-19 restrictions whose visas have expired.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office is currently operating a concession which allows visa holders unable to return to their home country as a result of COVID-19 restrictions to request 'Exceptional Assurance'.

Exceptional Assurance provides short-term protection against immigration action or future consequences after leave has expired. If their visa conditions allowed them to work, study or rent accommodation they may continue to do under this concession.

Exceptional Assurance is not a grant of leave. It is a means to protect those who are unable to leave the UK due to COVID-19 restrictions and not to facilitate travel, other than to return home.

Information on our current concession can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/133766>

Visas: LGBT People

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [132946] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of spouse/partnership visa applications in each of the last three years have been for same sex partners (a) in total and (b) in relation to (i) Uganda, (ii) USA, (iii) China, (iv) Brazil, (v) Pakistan and (vi) Australia.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance visa applications in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

Data on the number of spouse/partnership visa applications are published in table Vis_D01 of the Entry clearance visa detailed datasets

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets>

which include nationality breakdowns. The data does not show whether the application was from a same sex partner as these do not have a separate visa endorsement.

Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relate up to September 2020. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

[https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?keywords=immigration&content_store_document_type=upcoming statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=relevance](https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?keywords=immigration&content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=relevance)

The data from the table mentioned above are outlined below.

Entry clearance visa applications as a partner or spouse

	2017	2018	2019	2020 Jan to Sep
Family: Partner ¹ total all nationalities	38,590	39,749	39,503	18,577
of which:				
Australia	726	848	761	358
Brazil	500	521	555	206
China	992	940	982	298
Pakistan	7,715	7,909	7,845	3,638
Uganda	124	166	167	51
United States	2,540	2,744	2,649	1,269
Family: Partner (for immediate settlement) total all nationalities	409	269	218	86
of which:				
Australia	40	3	0	0
Brazil	3	1	0	0
China	3	0	0	0
Pakistan	4	6	0	0
Uganda	0	0	1	0
United States	13	2	1	0

Source: Home Office, Immigration Statistics year ending September 2020 Visa Table Vis_D01

Table notes:

'Family: Partner' includes partners, spouses, Fiancé(e)s and proposed civil partners
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132946>

Visas: LGBT People

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [132947] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on the willingness of an applicant for a same sex spouse/partner visa to submit the application of the processing of that application being out-sourced to a local company; and whether applications may be allowed to bypass that local company in certain circumstances.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Commercial Partners have no involvement in visa decision-making, which is undertaken by UKVI Decision Makers only, and are unable to influence a visa decision outcome in any way.

Where Commercial Partners provide front end services to UKVI customers, customers also have the option of either uploading their supporting documents prior to their appointment or having these scanned by a commercial partner representative during the appointment.

UK Visas and Immigration also monitor the performance of the Commercial Partners who deliver services on behalf of the Home Office to ensure they comply with contractual service standards on applicant confidentiality, including providing equal treatment to all customers through The Equality Act 2010.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132947>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Migrant Workers: Visas

Robert Syms (Conservative) [131168] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals were relocated into the UK using the intra-company visa system in the most recent period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement.

Migrant Workers

Robert Syms (Conservative) [131172] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign nationals from (a) inside and (b) outside the EU were relocated for work purposes into the UK in 2019 by each of the visa categories prescribed by the Government; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The available published data shows the numbers of visas granted in each work route but does not provide any information on where the applicant resided (inside / outside the EU) or if the individual was "relocating".

There is also no guarantee these visas are used once issued.

Data on visas granted by category can be found in Vis_D02 at:

[entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-sep-2020.xlsx](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131168>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131172>

Migrant Workers: Teachers

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [131485] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of offering free visa extensions for overseas teachers that are working in British schools during the covid-19 pandemic.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Government recognises the significant contribution which key workers, including teachers, have made during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many overseas workers, including teachers, have been able to benefit from a range of concessions. For example, free extensions where a person's visa expired after

24 January 2020, but before the end of August 2020, and they were unable to leave due to travel restrictions, or concessions on requirements of the immigration rules where salaries do not meet the normal salary requirements due to company-wide furlough.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131485>

The following five questions all received the same answer

Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [132876] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers pilot scheme; and when he plans to make an announcement on its future.

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [132885] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish (a) what plans he has to assess the effectiveness of Seasonal Agricultural Workers Pilot scheme due to end in February 2021, (b) the criteria for the final assessment of that scheme and (c) any assessments carried out of that scheme to date.

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [132886] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to consult with stakeholder organisations representing migrant workers on the future of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Pilot scheme before any further rollout of that scheme.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [132943] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 98994, whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers pilot scheme; and when he plans to make an announcement on that scheme's future.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [132944] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions her Department has had with (a) migrant representative organisations and (b) trade unions to assist (i) the evaluation assessing the impact of the Seasonal Workers Pilot in the agricultural sector; and (ii) the design of any future scheme to bring seasonal workers into UK agriculture.

Reply from Victoria Prentis: On 22 December 2020, the Government extended the Seasonal Workers Pilot for one year and expanded the number of visas from 10,000 to 30,000.

The extension and expansion of the Pilot for 2021 will allow for further evaluation of the pilot, including how growers will reduce their reliance on migrant labour now we have left the EU, whilst also easing some of the pressure felt on farms when they are at their busiest. The first-year evaluation information will be published later this year.

Defra is working closely with industry and the Home Office – who engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations, when designing and implementing immigration policy – to better understand the effectiveness of interventions and to ensure there is a long-term strategy for the food and farming workforce beyond 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132876>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132885>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132886>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/132943>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132944>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/98994>

Visas: Musicians

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [135967] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on visa-free 90-day tours by musicians between the EU and UK; and whether she plans to take steps to secure an improved agreement on visa-free travel for musicians.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK Government already makes a range of generous provision for musicians and other cultural performers to help support the vibrant cultural life of our Union.

Musicians visiting the UK may perform at events, make personal appearances, take part in competitions, promotional activities and auditions, for up to 6 months without the need for formal sponsorship or, for non-visa nationals, without a visa if they are not being paid beyond expenses or prize money. They can also receive payment for appearances at permit free festivals for up to 6 months, or for up to one month for a specific engagements, under the Visitor route.

Musicians and support staff who are being paid in the UK may also qualify for entry under the Tier 5 Creative Worker route, if they are sponsored by a UK entity licensed with UK Visas and Immigration for this purpose. Entry is for up to 12 months and the relevant rules also provide for accompanying dependants.

Entry under the Tier 5 Creative Worker route is visa-free for non-visa nationals, which includes EU Nationals, where entry is for no more than three months.

We set our provisions based on the assessment of the needs of our United Kingdom's cultural sector, rather than tying them to decisions made by foreign jurisdictions and Governments. As I recently outlined to Members of the Scottish Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, we are specifically reviewing the provisions on Permit Free Festivals and Permitted Paid Engagement for other cultural events in response to the points raised by those in the sector, particularly the Edinburgh International Festival

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/135967>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

Emma Hardy (Labour) [133134] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether students who arrive in the UK to complete their studies by 6 April 2021 will be eligible for the Graduate Immigration Route.

Emma Hardy (Labour) [133135] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing students who have had to study by distance or via blended learning as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and who may not be able to complete their final semester of the 2020-21 academic year in the UK, to remain eligible for the Graduate Immigration Route.

Reply from Kevin Foster: It is a core principle of the Graduate route that someone must have spent some time studying in the UK.

As we have stated for some time, in light of the impact Covid-19 has had on international students those who began studying overseas in Autumn 2020 and who enter the UK before 6 April 2021 to complete their course will be eligible for the Graduate route if they meet the requirements.

On 24 December we published further guidance confirming those who begin study overseas in January 2021 will also be eligible for the route if they enter the UK to complete their course before 27 September 2021 and meet the requirements.

Any period of distance learning in the current academic year will not count against eligible students who graduate after 2021, providing they complete their course in

the UK under the Student route. Those who do not complete their studies in the UK will be ineligible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133134>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133135>

Overseas Students: Visas

Emma Hardy (Labour) [133133] To ask the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a longer term study visa to make the UK more attractive to international students.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Government has already announced the launch of the Graduate route in Summer 2021 which will enhance our offer to international students.

Students undertaking a degree at undergraduate level or above at a Higher Education Provider with a track record of compliance will be able to stay and work or look for work for two years (three years for PhD students) after successfully completing their course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133133>

Windrush Generation: Compensation

Catherine West (Labour) [134517] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many interim or preliminary payments have been made to Windrush Compensation Scheme applicants since changes to the scheme were announced on 14 December 2020.

Reply from Priti Patel: Information on payments made by the Windrush Compensation Scheme in December will be published shortly. Information on the scheme for November is available for view at GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-december-2020>

Our priority remains to process claims as quickly as possible and the recently updated Windrush Compensation factsheet

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/14/windrush-compensation-scheme-factsheet-december-2020>

sets out the timetable for when individuals will be contacted.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-08/134517>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [130826] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data her Department collects on the reasons why EU citizens with settled status request proof of that status.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Individuals granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme can use the online 'view and prove' service, to view their immigration status information and to share it with a third party.

The individual is asked to select whether they are proving their right to work, their right to rent or proving for something else, to ensure the appropriate information is provided, and is then able to preview the information that will be shared and generate a share code. The third party can use this share code to access the relevant information, using the following services – 'view a job applicant's right to work details', 'view a tenant's right to rent in England' and 'check someone's immigration status'. The service used will depend on the reason why the check is being conducted. Within the 'check someone's immigration status' service checkers are asked to choose why they are carrying out the check.

Information on usage of online status services is published as part of the Home

Office's quarterly migration transparency data;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-data-november-2020>

The transparency data contains information on the number of views by checkers on the 'check someone's immigration status' service, as well as the reason for check given by the checker when using that service. Purpose of check is collected so we can understand how the service is being used and to help us identify areas for improvement. It is also stored as part of the audit record of the check. Where a checker specifies a reason other than the pre-set options this data is not published.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130826>

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

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [134091] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department will accept applications from EU citizens under the EU Settlement Scheme who arrive in the UK after the 31 December 2020 deadline due to the prevention of travel by the covid-19 travel ban.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Travel is and was permitted from the EEA and Switzerland for the purpose of taking up residence in the UK, subject to complying with the relevant public health regulations in each nation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/134091>

Immigration: EEA Nationals

Apsana Begum (Labour) [131493] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for citizenship from EEA citizens have been rejected since 30 September 2020 due to the applicant not holding comprehensive sickness insurance.

Reply from Kevin Foster: No such applications have been refused or rejected on this basis.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131493>

National Insurance: EU Nationals

Jonathan Reynolds (Labour) [132901] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the suspension of processing applications for new national insurance numbers for EU nationals and EU/UK dual nationals since March 2020 on those groups.

Reply from Guy Opperman: The Department is aware of the effect that not having a National Insurance Number (NINo) may be having on some individuals.

It is worth noting that it is possible for an individual to start work before they receive a NINo as long as they are able to prove they have the Right to Work in the UK. The following link provides examples of how an individual is able to prove this:

<https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>

Her Majesty's Revenue and Custom's (HMRC) guidance to employers makes it very clear that they are able to employ individuals without a NINo. However, it is of course important that individuals make an application for a NINo once the process recommences, as this will enable their contributions to be recorded against their National Insurance account.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132901>

National Insurance: EU Nationals

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [130119] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps EU nationals with settled and pre-settled status need to take to access a

National Insurance number; and when procedures will be in place for EU nationals without settled or pre-settled status to access National Insurance numbers.

Reply from Guy Opperman: When applying for a National Insurance Number (NINo) all applicants are required to have their identity verified. For some applicants whose identity has been verified by another UK Government Department, primarily the Home Office, we are able to offer a postal service. For the remainder, UK and EU/EEA citizens, their ID is verified at a face-to-face appointment.

Due to COVID-19, the face-to-face identity verification appointment process is presently suspended.

The NINo allocation service has continued to offer a service, throughout the pandemic, to our most vulnerable customer groups and students who are entitled to Student Finance. In June 2020, we resumed our postal service for visa applicants.

DWP started testing a partial digital solution on a small scale in mid-October to support the issuing of NINos, which is still ongoing. This solution enables collection of the applicant's data, but not the online verification of their identity. Alternative identity verification solutions to reduce the need for a face-to-face identity check for some customer groups, including EU nationals with Settled or Pre-Settled status, is under development as part of this test.

The digital solution will be considered by the Government Data Service for its ability to move into Public Beta, and thereby deliver a service to a greater number of customers early next year.

EU nationals without Settled or Pre-Settled status will still be required to attend a face-to-face appointment with DWP for identity verification.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-15/130119>

Undocumented Migrants

Zarah Sultana (Labour) [130851] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the (a) reintroduction of the 14 Year Residency Rule for undocumented migrants and (b) amnesty for undocumented migrants previously proposed by the Prime Minister.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Government welcomes those who migrate to the UK through safe and legal routes, yet is committed to deterring illegal immigration which undermines both the system of immigration control and public confidence in it. There are already several ways in which migrants who have lived in the UK for a long period can regularise their stay under the Immigration Rules providing certain requirements are met.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130851>

Asylum: Coronavirus

Alex Davies-Jones (Labour) [131514] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December to Question 128332, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on her Department's capacity in asylum operations intake units.

Reply from Chris Philp: Pursuant to the answer of 15th December 2020, the temporary regional intake unit in Cardiff has been in operation since April 2020, as part of the Home Office response to the COVID pandemic.

There are no processing capacity limits on the additional temporary locations introduced to register asylum claims.

The Home Office aims to ensure all locations are sufficiently resourced to provide timely appointments to register asylum claims. Capacity is based upon demand and workforce availability at these temporary locations which enables them to cope with fluctuations in levels of asylum intake.

Asylum claims registered at these temporary regional locations are processed in accordance with policy, fulfilling the UK's statutory obligations in relation to registering asylum claims in a Covid safe environment.

These are temporary arrangements which will be kept under review to align with HMG guidance. These changes do not represent a new operating model - they are contingency measures put in place during the COVID-19 epidemic in order to ensure that asylum seekers are able to safely register their claims.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131514>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128332>

Asylum: Coronavirus

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [128186] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on clinically extremely vulnerable asylum seekers under his jurisdiction accessing covid-19 vaccines; and if he will make a statement.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) has advised that for Phase 1 of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, the vaccine first be given to care home residents and staff and those over 80 years old, followed by health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and clinical risk factors.

Asylum seekers have the same access to the COVID-19 vaccine as the rest of the population. If they have not done so already, they should register with a general practice, and if they have health conditions that would make them clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable then that should be recorded.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-10/128186>

Asylum

Chris Stephens (SNP) [130775] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's Immigration Rules, what the criteria is for assessing safe third countries for asylum seekers; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: The technical changes to the Immigration Rules laid on 10 December will send a strong message to those who could and should have claimed asylum in the first safe country they entered. They will not be able to make claims at sea and they may not have their claims decided in the UK.

Our Immigration Rules set out clear criteria which must be met in order for a third country to be considered safe for a particular applicant.

I made a statement on the Rules changes on 16 December.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130775>

The changes to Immigration Rules referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943127/CCS207_CCS1220673408-001_Statement_of_changes_in_Immigration_Rules_HC_1043_Web_accessible_.pdf

and an associated explanatory memorandum at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943128/CCS207_CCS1220673408-002_Explanatory_Memorandum_to_HC_1043_Web_Accessible_.pdf

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-16/debates/06EA3DD8-026C-4AAF-BCBA-60F1B5D2E3F6/ImmigrationRulesSupportedAccommodation#contribution-B9395357-011D-47B4-9C2F-59F03FCFD38F>

Asylum

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [130266] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking prior to the end of the transition period to ensure that international agreements are in place that would guarantee that an asylum applicant will be received in a timely manner by a safe third country.

Reply from Chris Philp: We have made a political commitment to pursue new bilateral negotiations on post-transition migration issues with key countries with which we share a mutual interest, including on new arrangements for the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-15/130266>

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [130121] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking (a) nationally and (b) locally to monitor, prevent and mitigate the risk of Far Right activities at contingency hotels and military barracks being used for asylum accommodation.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office works closely with law enforcement and others at a national level to monitor far right activity and ensure that local law enforcement and providers are joined up and have effective plans to tackle incidents.

Our accommodation providers liaise closely with local police colleagues and asylum seekers are briefed on risks and encouraged to report hate crimes accordingly.

The Home Office keeps security arrangements under review at its accommodation sites.

When incidents occur at these sites, providers report to the Home Office immediately, and then the Home Office works with the providers, putting additional measures in place if required.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-15/130121>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [130120] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish any reviews she has undertaken of covid-19 safety in contingency hotels and military barracks being used as asylum accommodation.

Asylum: Military Bases

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [130841] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to relocate asylum seekers located at the Penally Camp to alternative accommodation.

Reply from Chris Philp: A rapid review of asylum accommodation came out of a series of Cabinet Office COVID-19 taskforce visits to asylum accommodation and a recommendation that the Home Office conduct a 'deep dive' on our approach to initial accommodation during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Home Office is reviewing the recommendations of the rapid review and, as previously stated, will seek to publish a summary of the recommendations. We will also hold round tables with stakeholders to discuss the recommendations, actions taken and proposed next steps.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-15/130120>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130841>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Military Bases

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [130787] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the implications for her policies of reports of poor and unsafe living conditions for migrants in (a) Napier Barracks in Folkestone and (b) Penally Training Camp in Pembrokeshire; and if she will make a statement.

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [130788] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve conditions for migrants at (a) Napier Barracks in Folkestone and (b) Penally Training Camp in Pembrokeshire.

Reply from Chris Philp: A rapid review of asylum accommodation came out of a series of Cabinet Office Covid-19 taskforce visits to asylum accommodation and a recommendation that the Home Office conduct a 'deep dive' on our approach to initial accommodation during Covid.

The Home Office is reviewing the recommendations of the rapid review and, as previously stated, will seek to publish a summary of the recommendations. We will also hold round tables with stakeholders to discuss the recommendations, actions taken and proposed next steps.

The Napier Barracks and Penally training camp sites have been in operation for almost three months. They are fit for purpose, safe and equipped in line with existing contractual requirements for asylum accommodation. We continue to work closely with our provider and partners to identify opportunities for improvement, as we do across our entire accommodation estate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130787>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130788>

Immigrants: Sleeping Rough

Caroline Lucas (Green) [131225] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will reverse the current plans for rough sleeping to become grounds for refusal or cancellation of permission to be in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Secretary of State has no plans to reverse the Immigration Rule which makes provision for the discretionary refusal or cancellation of permission to stay in the UK on the grounds of rough sleeping. It will be used sparingly and only as a last resort where a person sleeping rough refuses offers of support and engages in persistent anti-social behaviour.

A person is expected to leave the UK if their leave is cancelled or refused. If they do not choose to leave voluntarily the Home Office may enforce their removal. They will not be subject to deportation action which is reserved for foreign national offenders with serious and persistent criminality as well as for reasons of national security.

The new rule is not intended to criminalise rough sleeping or penalise those who inadvertently find themselves without a roof over their head for a short period of time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131225>

Sleeping Rough: Immigrants

Caroline Lucas (Green) [131227] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of plans for rough sleeping to become grounds for refusal or cancellation of permission to be in the UK on engagement of vulnerable individuals with local authority services to provide (a) accommodation and subsistence support and (b) support to prevent transmission of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Reply from Kelly Tolhurst: The Government has made clear that the new rough

sleeping rule will apply on a discretionary basis where a person refuses offers of support and is engaged in persistent anti-social behaviour. The provision will be used only where individuals refuse to engage with the range of support mechanisms available.

The ongoing 'Everyone In' campaign is helping to protect thousands of lives during the pandemic. By November, we had supported around 33,000 people, with nearly 10,000 in emergency accommodation and over 23,000 already moved into longer-term accommodation.

We continue to support rough sleepers during the pandemic. In November, we rolled out the 'Protect Programme' - the next step in the ongoing targeted support to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our communities from COVID-19. All councils were asked to update their rough sleeping plans and to carry out a rapid assessment of need for everyone they accommodate and to consider interventions for those new to rough sleeping.

In addition, on 8 January, we announced extra support to help protect rough sleepers from the effects of COVID-19. Backed by an additional £10 million in funding, all councils in England have been asked to redouble their efforts to help accommodate those currently sleeping rough, wherever possible, and ensure they are registered with a GP. In due course, this will assist with the roll out of vaccinations, in line with the priority groups outlined by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. Councils will also be asked to reach out again to those who have previously refused help, given rising infection rates and the colder winter months.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131227>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-covid-protections-for-rough-sleepers-and-renters>

Immigrants: Sleeping Rough

Neil Coyle (Labour) [131288] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on recent changes to Immigration Rules that make rough sleeping grounds for deportation on people with no recourse to public funds.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Immigration Rule making provision for the discretionary refusal or cancellation of permission to stay in the UK on the grounds of rough sleeping came into force on 1 December 2020. It will be used sparingly and only as a last resort where a person sleeping rough refuses offers of support and engages in persistent anti-social behaviour.

A person is expected to leave the UK if their leave is cancelled or refused. If they do not choose to leave voluntarily the Home Office may enforce their removal. They will not be subject to deportation action which is reserved for foreign national offenders with serious and persistent criminality as well as for reasons of national security.

The Home Office does not hold data on the number of people rough sleeping in the UK who are subject to no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

The Government remains committed to protecting vulnerable people and has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this pandemic. Many of the wide-ranging COVID-19 measures the Government has put in place, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme have been made available to migrants with NRPF. We have published guidance and support for migrants affected by COVID-19 at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131288>

Immigrants: Sleeping Rough

Apsana Begum (Labour) [131501] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the recent changes to Immigration Rules that make rough sleeping grounds for deportation on people seeking a change of conditions from No Recourse to Public Funds; and if she will make a statement on this.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Immigration Rule making provision for the discretionary refusal or cancellation of permission to stay in the UK on the grounds of rough sleeping came into force on 1 December 2020. It will be used sparingly and only as a last resort where a person sleeping rough refuses offers of support and engages in persistent anti-social behaviour.

A person is expected to leave the UK if their leave is cancelled or refused. If they do not choose to leave voluntarily the Home Office may enforce their removal. They will not be subject to deportation action which is reserved for foreign national offenders with serious and persistent criminality as well as for reasons of national security.

The Home Office does not hold data on the number of people rough sleeping in the UK who are subject to no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

The Government remains committed to protecting vulnerable people and has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this pandemic. Many of the wide-ranging COVID-19 measures the Government has put in place, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme have been made available to migrants with NRPF. We have published guidance and support for migrants affected by COVID-19 at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply, for free, to have their NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income, or where there are other exceptional financial circumstances.

Change of conditions decisions are being prioritised and are being dealt with compassionately. This approach is working. [Data](#) published in November 2020 shows that 85% of change of condition applications are granted and the average time taken to make a decision is now just 17 days, down from 45 days in the previous quarter.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131501>

Asylum: Housing

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [134217] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve living conditions at asylum seeker processing and detainment sites.

Reply from Chris Philp: We expect the highest standards from our providers and the accommodation provided must be safe, habitable, fit for purpose and is required to comply with the Decent Homes Standard, in addition to standards outlined in relevant national or local housing legislation.

The asylum seekers being accommodated are not being held under detention powers and they will not be prevented from leaving. Asylum seekers are free to find accommodation through friends or relatives and may be provided with the allowance alone if deemed to be financially destitute.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the asylum system has faced significant pressures and it has become necessary to use additional temporary accommodation to ensure the Home Office can continue to meet all of its statutory obligations.

Following a review of available government property, the MoD permitted the Home Office temporary use of Napier Barracks in Kent and the Penally Training Camp in Pembrokeshire, which have been in operation for almost four months. They are fit for purpose, safe and equipped in line with existing contractual requirements for asylum accommodation. We continue to work closely with our provider and partners to identify opportunities for improvement, as we do across our entire accommodation estate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/134217>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Housing

Marco Longhi (Conservative) [130854] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department spent on the provision of accommodation for asylum seekers in (a) hotels and (b) other forms of accommodation for the financial year 2020-21; and how many asylum seekers have been so housed as a result of that provision.

Marco Longhi (Conservative) [130855] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent on agencies sourcing the provision of hotel and other accommodation for asylum seekers in the financial year 2020-21; what the durations are of her Department's contracts with each of those agencies; what the renewal dates are of each of those contracts; and what the procurement processes were for each of those contracts.

Marco Longhi (Conservative) [130856] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hotel rooms her Department has procured for the placement of asylum seekers in each English region in (a) the financial year 2020-21 and (b) each of the previous five financial years.

Marco Longhi (Conservative) [130857] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which body undertakes the inspection of the (a) quality and (b) safe provision of accommodation of asylum seekers; and what the frequency is of those inspections.

Reply from Chris Philp: We expect the highest standards from our providers and the accommodation provided must be safe, habitable, fit for purpose and is required to comply with the Decent Homes Standard, in addition to standards outlined in relevant national or local housing legislation.

Providers are expected to conduct regular checks across the accommodation estate with the Home Office having access to their systems. Throughout the pandemic the ability to inspect accommodation has faced some challenges; ensuring that we protect the safety of our staff and the people we support adhering to PHE guidance; whilst maintaining safe, habitable, fit for purpose accommodation.

We receive regular intel from calls to our AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) providers Migrant Help. Service Users can raise issues relating to accommodation through the Issue Reporting service provided by Migrant Help.

The Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contracts (AASC) have a robust performance management system, against which providers are expected to deliver. Where performance falls short of the required standard, failures are recorded and can result in the award of points and, ultimately, service credits being applied.

Providers' performance is monitored closely by dedicated staff in each contract area, who are in daily contact with them. This is supplemented by a formal governance process which includes quarterly Strategic Review Management Boards and monthly Contract Management Groups. Service credits and subsequent improvement plans are discussed and monitored as part of this process.

The current global pandemic has presented us with significant challenges when it comes to the provision of asylum accommodation, including sourcing sufficient

suitable accommodation to meet demand.

The use of hotels and wider government facilities are a short-term measure and we are working to move people to longer-term dispersal accommodation as soon as it becomes available.

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area, which includes those in hotel and wider government facilities. These statistics can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which disaggregates the type of accommodation being used to accommodate asylum seekers.

As described above, accommodation for supported asylum seekers is arranged by private sector providers through contractual arrangements with the Home Office. Details of these contracts can be found here

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search/Results>

Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential, therefore the Home Office does not published this information, however total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ho-annual-reports-and-accounts>

The AASC providers receive payments for providing services consistent with those requirements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130854>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130855>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130856>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130857>

Asylum: Housing

Owen Thompson (SNP) [136007] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of (a) the spread of communicable diseases, (b) mental health problems, (c) physical health problems, (d) hate crime and (e) assault in (i) barracks housing asylum seekers and (ii) other Government housing for asylum seekers in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Reply from Chris Philp: Accommodation Providers are implementing advice and guidance to meet Public Health England & Wales guidance. Our accommodation has been configured where possible to meet local and national health guidance and allow for social distancing and self isolation when required. People accommodated in hostel-based accommodation receive translated guidance in relation to social distancing, potential symptoms, self-isolating and hygiene requirements, for example, hand washing. Onsite assistance and guidance are provided by support staff.

All asylum seekers in initial and temporary accommodation, including Ministry of Defence sites have access to health care through in house health care teams and/or provider welfare staff who will arrange health care and signpost asylum seekers to appropriate services.

Additionally, all asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can escalate any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support including legal advice where appropriate. AIRE asylum services provide free independent

advice, guidance and information on the asylum process, accommodation, financial support, finding legal representation and any other asylum related matters. AIRE run a national helpline that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers in the UK. All sites have security staff and our accommodation providers work with local police forces to ensure the safety and security of asylum seeker accommodation.

With regards to hate crime we are monitoring the situation and working closely with the police, as well as our providers, to ensure the safeguarding of the supported population, particularly those currently accommodated in hotels and MoD sites. The welfare of our service users is of the utmost importance.

We hold daily calls with our service providers to monitor and resolve issues during the current pandemic.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/136007>

Asylum: Housing

Owen Thompson (SNP) [136008] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to stop housing asylum seekers in (a) barracks and (b) other forms of institutional housing and use community-based housing for asylum seekers.

Reply from Chris Philp: Increased asylum intake, alongside measures taken to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, has meant that the Home Office has had to deal with growing demand for asylum support and accommodation services. In recent months we have faced additional challenges which have required us in some instances to use contingency accommodation, including hotels, to fulfil our statutory obligations to house destitute asylum seekers whilst their claims are examined.

In order to reduce the use of such contingency accommodation we have been working closely with local authorities and devolved administrations to identify opportunities to increase the amount of dispersal accommodation available and to assist those that are no longer eligible for asylum support to 'move-on' from asylum accommodation. This has been handled through a calm, considered and phased approach and in line with current health guidance.

Should any Local Authority agree to become an asylum dispersal area we are committed to work with them immediately to source community based accommodation in their areas, increasing the number of properties available to our providers and our ability to move people from contingency accommodation.

It remains our intention to move all individuals in contingency accommodation into suitable dispersed accommodation as soon as reasonably practical, however our immediate priority is to ensure that we continue to meet our legal duty to house destitute asylum seekers and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/136008>

Asylum: Housing

Owen Thompson (SNP) [136009] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria her Department uses to assess the suitability of (a) existing and (b) potential accommodation for asylum seekers in relation to (i) physical health, (ii) mental health and (iii) safety from harm.

Reply from Chris Philp: All asylum seekers in initial and temporary accommodation have access to an initial health screening and health care through in house health care teams and/or provider welfare staff who will arrange health care and signpost to the appropriate health services

Additionally, all asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can escalate any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support including legal advice where appropriate. AIRE asylum services provide free independent

advice, guidance and information on the asylum process, accommodation, financial support, finding legal representation and any other asylum related matters. AIRE run a national helpline that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers in the UK. All sites have security staff and our accommodation providers work with local police forces to ensure the safety and security of asylum seeker accommodation.

We expect the highest standards from our providers and monitor performance and the effectiveness of the contracts, including the safeguarding of our service users through the monthly Contract Management Groups and quarterly Strategic Review Management Boards. We also hold daily calls with our service providers to monitor and resolve issues during the current pandemic.

Those accommodated in longer term, dispersed accommodation have the same access to health care as the rest of the general population.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/136009>

Asylum: Health Services

Caroline Nokes (Conservative) [130706] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contracts have been negotiated with CCGs in Hampshire on the provision of health care services to asylum seekers in supported accommodation.

Reply from Chris Philp: Given pressure on the system during these unprecedented times, we have worked tirelessly with local authorities and other partners to provide asylum seekers, who would otherwise be destitute, with suitable accommodation, as we are required to do by law.

Following a review of available government property, the Ministry of Defence offered temporary use of some of its sites. This includes Barton Stacey and we are engaging with leaders and officials at Test Valley and Hampshire councils, local MPs, the police and health services – including the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group – as we continue to explore this as an option.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130706>

Asylum: Education

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [133859] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to improve access to education for asylum seekers while awaiting the outcome of their applications.

Reply from Gillian Keegan: Access to post-16 education for asylum seekers is governed by funding rules in further and higher education.

In further education, asylum seekers aged 19 and over who have lived in the UK for 6 months or longer while awaiting the outcome of their application, and no decision on their claim has been made, are eligible to receive funding through the Adult Education Budget. For asylum seekers aged 16-19, we will fund those who have applied for asylum as well as those who have been granted asylum status by the Home Office.

In higher education (HE), eligibility requirements for student support usually means that a student resident in England should have 'settled' status or a recognised connection with the UK and have been a resident of the UK and Islands for the 3 years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course. However, an exception to the 3 year ordinary residence requirement is made for students with refugee status and humanitarian protection. This means that immediate access to HE student support is available once a person has been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection by the Home Office.

A considerable subsidy has been built into the student loan scheme, which is targeted to those who are likely to remain in England (or at least the UK) indefinitely, so that the general public benefits of their HE will be to the country's advantage.

There are no plans to extend eligibility to HE student finance to asylum seekers

awaiting a Home Office decision on their claim as there is no guarantee that they will go on to be granted a relevant status.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/133859>

Immigration Removal Centres

Owen Thompson (SNP) [134499] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the compatibility with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights of steps taken by her Department's to remove parents from their children in immigration removal centres.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office has a duty to maintain effective immigration control. It may be necessary on occasion to detain a member of the household or another adult who is part of the care arrangements for children, thus separating a family.

Regular reviews of detention consider whether the ongoing detention is a proportionate interference in the Article 8 rights of each member of the family and take account of any new information that is obtained.

When assessing whether children should be removed from their family unit, the impact of the separation is considered carefully. Any information concerning the children that is available or can reasonably be obtained must be considered. The conclusion reached will depend on the specific facts of each case. Detention decision makers are also instructed to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in accordance with our duties under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

The separation of children from their parents for immigration purposes can be justified in exceptional circumstances for safeguarding reasons where the welfare of the child is compromised by their remaining with a parent, for example to prevent children from being at risk of, or witnessing, disruptive or violent behaviour, or when the Independent Family Returns Panel (IFRP) advises that a separation is in a child or the children's best interests.

Home Office guidance provides that nursing mothers must not be separated from the child they are nursing, and that a child must not be separated from both adults for immigration purposes, or from one, in the case of a single-parent family, if the consequence of that decision is that the child would be taken into care.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-08/134499>

Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre

Mohammad Yasin (Labour) [136030] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that there is no cross-over between the residents of Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre and the asylum seekers to be homed in temporary accommodation on the same site.

Reply from Chris Philp: To ensure we have sufficient accommodation available to meet our statutory obligations we are planning to use a vacant site adjacent to the existing Immigration Removal Centre to accommodate single, adult male asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers on this adjacent site are separate from the Immigration Removal Centre and are free to come and go as they please.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/136030>

Brook House Immigration Removal Centre: Coronavirus

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [135965] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the recent covid-19 outbreak at Brook House, how many and what proportion of detainees were subsequently transferred to Colnbrook; how many of the people transferred had been tested for covid-19; how many of the detainees

transferred had been tested for covid; and who was consulted in advance about the (a) safety and (b) public health implications of that transfer.

Reply from Chris Philp: Immigration Enforcement is responding to the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak and following the latest guidance from Public Health England (PHE). The safety of those detained, our staff and our suppliers' staff are our utmost priority.

In agreement with Public Health England, we have temporarily closed Brook House for a short period due to a number of positive COVID-19 cases among staff. A very small number of detained individuals remaining at Brook House were moved to another immigration removal centre as a result.

We have robust contingency measures in place across the immigration removal estate. Measures such as protective shielding are considered on a case-by-case basis and further measures, including enhanced hygiene, 'reverse cohorting' and single occupancy rooms have been introduced to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the immigration removal estate. This has been supported by the High Court, which last year ruled that our approach to detention and COVID-19 was sensible, with the appropriate precautionary measures in place.

To supplement the preventative measures already in place, on 26 October 2020 the Home Office introduced a voluntary programme of COVID-19 testing on induction for all individuals arriving at an IRC. This testing programme began with the Heathrow and Gatwick IRCs and now includes those arriving at Yarl's Wood. Accordingly, all individuals that were detained at Brook House had been offered a COVID-19 test.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/135965>

Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre

Owen Thompson (SNP) [134497] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure that people in Colnbrook immigration removal centre are able to access (a) legal representatives, (b) their families and (c) other forms of support.

Reply from Chris Philp: Detained individuals are advised of their right to legal representation, and how they can obtain such representation, within 24 hours of their arrival at an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), including Colnbrook IRC.

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) operates free legal advice surgeries in IRCs in England. Individuals who are detained are entitled to receive up to 30 minutes of advice regardless of financial eligibility or the merits of their case. There is no restriction on the number of surgeries an individual may attend. If an individual who is detained requires substantive advice on a matter which is in scope of legal aid, full legal advice can be provided if the statutory legal aid means and merits criteria are met. Following a change of operations in line with Government advice on social distancing, the LAA Detained Duty Advice scheme is currently operating by phone. The duty solicitor will directly contact individuals who wish to access this service.

All individuals in IRCs, including Colnbrook, are provided with a mobile phone and have access to landline telephones, fax machines, email and video calling facilities which can be used to contact legal advisers. In exceptional circumstances, and for individuals facing imminent removal from the UK, face to face legal visits can occur where other means of contact (video calling, telephone, email) are not feasible.

Social visits to IRCs and Short-Term Holding Facilities (STHF) are operated in line with Government COVID-19 control measures at a local, regional or national level and are carefully controlled and risk-assessed in line with Government advice on social distancing. Detained individuals are being encouraged to utilise virtual means of social contact including video calling, email and mobile telephone; additional weekly mobile phone credit is being provided to support continued social

contact in these unprecedented times.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-08/134497>

Asylum: Deportation

Chris Stephens (SNP) [130776] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development on Returns or Readmissions Agreements for those deemed to be (a) irregular migrants, (b) refused asylum and (c) inadmissible; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: As an EU Member State, the UK participated in a number of EU Readmission Agreements (EURAs) with third countries. Now that the Transition period has ended, we are no longer party to these and, where appropriate, we are looking to transition these arrangements into bilateral agreements. The Home Office continues to work closely with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development on this. As negotiations with individual countries are ongoing, it would not be appropriate to make a statement at this time.

Negotiations have now concluded with the EU. The UK and EU have agreed a joint declaration noting the importance of effectively managing migratory flows. The UK will continue to engage bilaterally and multilaterally with Member States to discuss suitable practical arrangements on illegal migration, asylum, returns and family reunion for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-16/130776>

Deportation: Offenders

Owen Thompson (SNP) [134498] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on the deportation of people who are in the process of appealing a criminal conviction.

Reply from Chris Philp: The department's policy is to put deportation on hold where we are aware that a person has appealed their criminal conviction.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-08/134498>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Immigrants: Coronavirus

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL11666] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide financial relief to those in the UK who have no recourse to public funds but cannot return to their countries of origin during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Many of the wide-ranging COVID-19 measures the Government has put in place have been made available to migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme, which have been extended into Spring 2021, are not classed as public funds so can be accessed by those with NRPF. Statutory sick pay and some other contribution-based benefits, such as contributory employment support allowance, are also not classed as public funds and are available to all who are eligible and unable to work during this difficult time, including those with NRPF status.

The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme in England provides a £500 payment to people on low incomes who cannot work from home and have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. Support is also available for those who are not in receipt of one of the seven means-tested benefits that are part of the eligibility criteria for the main scheme, but who will still face hardship if they have to self-isolate, in the form of a £500 discretionary payment, paid by local authorities. This

payment is available to those with NRPF, provided they meet the criteria set by the local authority for discretionary payments in their area. Further information on this scheme can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question. The Government has provided an unprecedented package of support to councils to help their communities through this pandemic.

We have also temporarily extended the eligibility criteria for free school meals in England to support some families with NRPF, in recognition of the difficulties they may be facing during these unique times.

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have their NRPF condition lifted to enable them to access public funds. They do this by making a 'change of conditions' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income, or where there are other exceptional financial circumstances.

Further guidance and support for migrants affected by COVID-19 can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>

Migrants may also be able to seek help from their embassy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/hl11666>

Care Homes: Migrant Workers

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL116696] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the income requirement of £25,600 for immigrants on staffing levels in care homes; and what plans they have to ensure that care homes experience no staff shortages because of that requirement.

Reply from Lord Bethell: The new 'Skilled Worker' route will mean roles such as senior care worker and registered manager that meet the skills and/or salary requirements will be eligible for a sponsored Skilled Worker visa. However, we recognise that occupations such as direct care roles which do not meet the skills and salary threshold will not be eligible. The flow of European Union workers into the sector annually is small comparable to the size of the workforce – fewer than 5% of all workers joining the sector in a direct care role in 2019/20 had arrived from the EU in the previous 12 months. Therefore, we expect employers will be able to recruit domestically to outnumber any decreased flow of workers from the EU and we are taking action to support this.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/hl11696>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green) [HL11635] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to provide pre-settled status for EU citizens who can demonstrate their intention to settle in the UK before 31 December but were prevented from doing so by restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including (1) those who are currently resident in Australia and New Zealand, and (2) those who can demonstrate a previous tie with the UK including (a) a National Insurance number, and (b) an earlier period of residence.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The end of the transition period at 11 pm on 31 December 2020 remains the point by which EU citizens need to have

been resident in the UK to be eligible for pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). There are no plans to extend this deadline for those who wished to travel to the UK for the first time in order to apply to the EUSS, but did not do so. EU citizens and their family members who were resident in the UK before 31 December and are outside the UK on that date are eligible to apply to the EUSS, including from overseas, by the deadline of 30 June 2021.

Published guidance for EUSS applicants on the impact of COVID-19 is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-eu-settlement-scheme-guidance-for-applicants>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/hl11635>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat) [HL11664] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their agreement with the government of France to address migrant activity in the English Channel, agreed on 28 November, how many French officers will be patrolling the relevant beaches; how many prosecutions there were for people smuggling in 2020; of such prosecutions, how many were for people using small boats; and what is the financial contribution by (1) the UK, and (2) France, for the implementation of that agreement.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK recently agreed a figure of £28.1m with the French Government on 28 November 2020, to address migrant activity in the English Channel. We are unable to comment on French financial contributions for the implementation of this agreement.

This funding supports a range of activity, including the continued deployment of French reservists from the Gendarmerie, which has doubled from December 1 2020, and Police Nationale. As this resource directly impacts sensitive, live, operational activity, we cannot disclose the precise number of French officers from either agency, or the locations that they patrol.

In 2020, 57 individuals were prosecuted for people smuggling offenses; 8 of which were related to small boat crossings of the English Channel.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/hl11664>

The agreement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-france-joint-statement-collaborating-on-illegal-migration/uk-france-joint-statement-next-phase-of-collaboration-on-tackling-illegal-migration-28-november-2020>

Asylum: Penally

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL11695] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that security guards confiscated a Christmas meal donated by volunteers to the Penally asylum camp in Pembrokeshire.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: As required by law, we provide asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute with accommodation. In Penally, we also provide asylum seekers with free meals. This support is paid for by the taxpayer.

We are in regular contact with accommodation providers and the meals provided are high quality and in line with NHS Eatwell guidelines.

We are aware of an incident on Sunday, 20 December 2020, where a group attempted to share items on site. Whilst food is not permitted due to safety reasons, any other item must also comply with our safety and coronavirus measures before being distributed. All items that did not meet these guidelines were returned.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/hl11695>

Asylum: Barton Stacey

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL11693] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any dispensation of relevant planning regulations has been (1) required, or (2) sought, for the proposed establishment of temporary accommodation to house asylum seekers near Barton Stacey.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: During these unprecedented times we have worked with local authorities and other partners to provide asylum seekers, who would otherwise be destitute, with suitable accommodation – as we are required to do by law.

As part of this work we are looking at using a site on Ministry of Defence land in Barton Stacey to accommodate those awaiting a decision on their claim.

If the plans go ahead, we will be using emergency planning powers. This is lawful because the area is Crown land.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/hl11693>

New Publications

Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, Scotland, July 2019 to June 2020

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/population-estimates/pop-cob-nat-19-20/pop-cob-nat-19-20-report.pdf>

Updated guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>

An inspection of the Home Office's use of sanctions and penalties (November 2019 – October 2020)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951438/An_inspection_of_the_Home_Office_s_use_of_sanctions_and_penalties_November_2019_October_2020_.pdf

Government response to an inspection of the Home Office's use of sanctions and penalties

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-an-inspection-of-the-home-offices-use-of-sanctions-and-penalties/response-to-an-inspection-of-the-home-offices-use-of-sanctions-and-penalties-accessible-version>

An inspection of the Home Office Presenting Officer function (November 2019 – October 2020)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951120/An_inspection_of_the_Home_Office_Presenting_Officer_function_November_2019_to_October_2020.pdf

Government response to the report 'An Inspection of the Home Office Presenting Officer function'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-the-report-an-inspection-of-the-home-office-presenting-officer-function/response-to-the-report-an-inspection-of-the-home-office-presenting-officer-function-accessible-version>

News

Increase in non-British nationals living in Scotland

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/2021/increase-in-non-british-nationals-living-in-scotland>

Coronavirus: Up to 1.3 million immigrants have left UK in 'largest population fall since the Second World War'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/covid-uk-immigrants-job-loss-b1787785.html>

NHS worker stuck in Kenya as settled status documents are rejected

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/16/nhs-worker-stuck-in-kenya-as-settled-status-documents-are-rejected>

Migrants forced to travel 85 miles for Home Office appointments as coronavirus cases soar

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/travel-home-office-appointments-asylum-seekers-visas-b1787997.html>

Border patrols intercept 150 migrants crossing Channel in freezing conditions

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/border-patrols-intercept-150-migrants-crossing-channel-in-freezing-conditions-vmxpdntrq>

Covid: Asylum seeker camp conditions prompt inspection calls

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55650508>

Home Office facing legal action over plans for 'prison-style' camp for asylum seekers at Yarl's Wood

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/yarls-wood-camp-asylum-seekers-legal-action-home-office-b1785889.html>

Legal action launched against plan to house asylum seekers at Yarl's Wood

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/16/legal-action-launched-against-plan-to-house-asylum-seekers-at-yarls-wood>

'We are victims, not criminals': Asylum seekers protest conditions in military camp

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-napier-barracks-camp-home-office-b1786001.html>

Asylum seekers protest conditions in Napier Barracks

<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/asylum-seekers-protest-conditions-in-napier-barracks-cN4bW41P>

Asylum seekers on hunger strike over conditions at Kent barracks site

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/12/asylum-seekers-on-hunger-strike-over-conditions-at-kent-barracks-site>

Asylum seeker housing conditions under scrutiny at third ex-military site

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/14/asylum-seeker-housing-conditions-under-scrutiny-third-uk-military-site-raf-coltishall-norfolk>

New Covid outbreak at third UK immigration removal centre

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/15/new-covid-outbreak-harmondsworth-uk-immigration-removal-centre>

Migrant healthcare workers on Covid frontline angry about deportation risk

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/15/migrant-healthcare-workers-on-covid-frontline-angry-about-deportation-risk>

Home Office minister rejects plans for extra support for trafficking victims

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/11/home-office-minister-rejects-plans-for-extra-support-for-trafficking-victims>

Government's 'inhuman' approach to immigration will not work and will cost more, says former Home Office minister

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-immigration-caroline-nokes-priti-patel-uk-b1776208.html>

TOP

Community Relations

Scottish Parliament Motion

David Torrance (SNP) [S5M-23858] The Passing of Adnan Miyasar – That the Parliament notes with sadness the passing of Adnan Miyasar, a true local hero; commends the positive contribution that Adnan made to fighting inequality in Fife, and wider Scotland, over the last 30 years; notes his work in establishing the Fife Arabic Centre, which supports and brings Arab families together, and his work with Fairness, Race Awareness and Equality (FRAE) Fife, the Fife Arabic Society and the Kirkcaldy Islamic Centre, which has helped to improve the lives of many people; acknowledges the passion and dedication with which Adnan fought for equality for people from all walks of life; recognises that he was well known and much loved throughout Fife for his cheery disposition and trademark fedora hat; acknowledges the esteem and respect with which he was held by the community, and sends its condolences to Adnan's family and friends.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-23858>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Race Relations: Curriculum

Andrea Jenkyns (Conservative) [133058] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that discussions of race-related issues in the curriculum and schools are politically impartial.

Reply from Nick Gibb: All schools must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broad, and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. We expect all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance.

Schools play an important role in supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and to be prepared for life in modern Britain. Topics relating to race can be covered in a number of areas of the curriculum, such as in citizenship; religious education; Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, and the new subjects of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

In delivering the curriculum, schools should be aware of their duties relating to

political impartiality as set out under the Education Act 1996. They must:

- forbid the pursuit of partisan political activities by junior pupils
- forbid the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school
- take reasonably practicable steps to secure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views

The Department has reminded schools about the importance of political impartiality in our guidance to schools on planning their RSHE curricula, which can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum#ensuring-content-is-appropriate>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133058>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Peter Grant (SNP) [1356] Death of Adnan Miyasar, founder member of Fife Arabic Society – That this House records its sadness at the death of Adnan Miyasar of Kirkcaldy; expresses its appreciation of his decades of service towards race relations in his adopted home of Fife, in particular through the work of Fife Arabic Society which he helped to found in 2000, as a former chair of FRAE Fife (Fairness, Race Awareness & Equality), and as an active volunteer with several other organisations; commends the work of Fife Arabic Society in fostering community relations in Fife and further afield; notes in particular the Society's key role in supporting Syrian refugees who have been welcomed into Fife; recognises the pain felt by Adnan's family at being unable to spend more time with him during his lengthy illness; and offers its deepest condolences to those who mourn his loss.
<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/57959>

TOP

Equality

Scottish Parliament Debate

Employment Opportunities (BAME Women)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13052&i=118106#ScotParlOR>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answer

Traveller children: Education

Andrew Selous (Conservative): Despite the best efforts of local authority inclusion officers, there continues to be a crisis in the education of Traveller children, with around a third of Traveller children in my area not getting a proper education. The planning system has to bear some responsibility for that. As the Department reviews this policy, will it look at a more integrated approach where children generally go to school on a regular basis and get a better education? Will that be factored in to future planning policy as the Department reviews this area? (910718)

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... Fewer than one in five children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background meets the expected standard for English and maths at

GCSE. I am firmly committed to delivering a cross-Government strategy to improve life chances in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and, as my hon. Friend says, to encourage greater integration, particularly in education. In the depths of the pandemic, my Department has invested £400,000 in education and training programmes for GRT children, so that they can receive extra tuition and catch up on lost learning.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-01-11/debates/254992CE-7A3B-4317-91FC-AD2674C0B73D/TopicalQuestions#contribution-148E023B-8CFF-42ED-B2B4-0D308753F918>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Sikhs: Curriculum

Hilary Benn (Labour) [132769] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to issue new guidance on teaching (a) about Sikhism in secondary schools and (b) diversity and inclusion in KS2 and KS3.

Reply from Nick Gibb: The Department for Education does not provide guidance to schools on teaching about any specific religion.

All state funded schools are required to teach religious education (RE) which must reflect that “the religious traditions in Great Britain are Christian, in the main, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”. For most maintained schools, in each local authority area the key document in determining the teaching of RE is the statutory locally agreed syllabus, which sets out details of what must be taught. Alternatively, academies and most schools designated as having a religious character may develop and teach their own RE syllabuses.

Schools should publish online the content of their curriculum in each academic year for every subject, including religious education.

The Department provides non-statutory guidance to schools on how the Equality Act 2010 affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act, including inclusion and diversity in how the curriculum is delivered. The guidance can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools

Diversity is also being considered by the Independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities established by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, to examine inequality in the UK. In their Call for Evidence, the Commission asked for evidence to describe how the school curriculum could be adapted in response to the ethnic diversity of the country. The Commission is due to report to my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, by the end of February 2021 and the Department will carefully consider the Commission’s report when published.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132769>

Press Release

Work on representation of BAME women in the workplace to be recognised in Parliament

<https://www.parliament.scot/newsandmediacentre/116936.aspx>

News

Parents threatened with legal action after Muslim schoolgirl refuses to wear shorter skirt

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/school-uniform-row-uxbridge-hillingdon-skirt-muslim-b1785943.html>

School threatens legal action after Muslim girl told skirt is 'too long'

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jan/12/school-threatens-legal-action-muslim-girl-siham-hamud-skirt-too-long>

Muslim schoolgirl feels 'bullied' after school sent her home for wearing a skirt that was 'too long'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/11/muslim-schoolgirl-feels-bullied-school-sent-home-wearing-skirt/>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime

Helen Hayes (Labour) [133999] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Justice and (b) Home Secretary on strengthening hate crime legislation.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: Any hate crime is completely unacceptable and the Government is committed to stamping it out. As part of the Hate Crime Action Plan Refresh in October 2018, the Government asked the Law Commission to conduct a review into the coverage and approach of hate crime legislation, including consideration of whether other protected characteristics should be included. The Law Commission's consultation to support the review closed on 24 December 2020. The Government will respond to the review when it is complete.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-06/133999>

The action plan refresh referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

Information about the Law Commission Review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

Religious Hatred: Islam

Apsana Begum (Labour) [124891] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps her Department took to mark Islamophobia Awareness month in November 2020.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: The Government notes Islamophobia Awareness Month but takes the view that combatting Islamophobia is not a time-limited task and such thinking and behaviour should be tackled whenever it occurs. For that reason we continue to work closely with Muslim communities to tackle hate against them, including understanding issues and trends. This includes supporting Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with just over £2.8m distributed over the last five years to monitor, combat and raise awareness of anti-Muslim hatred.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/124891>

Discrimination: Business Premises

Jonathan Gullis (Conservative) [133268] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking to tackle discrimination in (a) offices, (b) factories and (c) shop floors.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) provides protection for those aged 16 or over, against direct and indirect discrimination in employment settings (including offices, factories and shop floors), the provision of goods, services, public functions and in private clubs. The Act makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against an employee or a job applicant due to a protected characteristic. Similar rules apply to service providers.

The Act is civil law, meaning that a person who believes that they have experienced discrimination may take their case to an employment tribunal or, in non-employment cases, a County Court (Sherriff's Court in Scotland).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Equality Act 2010, and is increasingly focusing its work on effective enforcement. In December a new Chair and four new Commissioners were appointed to the EHRC to help drive this agenda forward.

The Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS), the helpline for anyone who believes that they have been discriminated against in the provision of goods, services and public functions, can provide free bespoke advice and in-depth support. The EASS can be contacted via its website

www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

by telephone on 0808 800 0082, or by text phone on 0808 800 0084. Acas can assist in relation to employment discrimination issues, their number is 0800 464 0979.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133268>

Treasury: Racial Discrimination

Bridget Phillipson (Labour) [131243] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints have been made of racist behaviour in the workplace by staff in his Department in each of the last five years, by directorate.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch:

Calendar Year	Number of complaints
2015	0
2016	0
2017	0
2018	Fewer than five
2019	Fewer than five
2020 to date	0

HM Treasury takes complaints of racist behaviour very seriously, any form of bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated, and all complaints are investigated and addressed in accordance with the procedure laid out by the Civil Service and in HM Treasury's Dispute Resolution policy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131243>

National Savings and Investments: Racial Discrimination

Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op) [131456] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the National Savings & Investments, how many complaints have been received of racist behaviour in the workplace in each of the last five years.

Reply from John Glen: NS&I treats all discrimination, bullying and harassment, as misconduct and follows disciplinary procedure.

NS&I has not received any formal complaints of racist behaviour in the workplace

in each of the last five years.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131456>

UK Parliament Early Day Motions

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru) [1342] The death of Mohamud Mohammed Hassan – That this House mourns the death of Mohamud Mohammed Hassan following his release without charge from police custody in Cardiff on 9 January 2020; offers its deepest condolences to Mr Hassan's family and friends; notes that South Wales Police has, as is standard practice following a death after police contact, self-referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct; calls for a full and transparent investigation into the circumstances of Mr Hassan's death; recognises legitimate concerns arising from evidence that people of Black and Ethnic Minority ethnicity die at a disproportionately higher rate as a result of the use of force or restraint by police; and calls for systematic and institutional change to end racial discrimination within the criminal justice system.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/57939>

Welsh Assembly Oral Answers

Racism in Sport

Jayne Bryant Labour) [OQ56119] What steps is the Welsh Government taking to tackle racism in sport? OQ56119

Reply from the First Minister (Mark Drakeford): Llywydd, racism, in any form, has no place in Wales—direct or indirect. A great deal of ground still has to be made up at all levels before sport in Wales fully reflects and celebrates the diversity of our nation.

Jayne Bryant: Thank you, First Minister. Over the Christmas period, Dragons rugby winger Ashton Hewitt was subjected to racial abuse on social media. Sadly, this is not an isolated event, and it was only one in a long line of posts that Ashton has received because he's a black player. It's not just confined to one person or sport. Last year, Ashton used his platform to call out racial abuse and raise awareness of racism. Ashton's praised the support he's had from his club—the Dragons—and the Welsh Rugby Players Association, but he has said: 'It was just important for me to highlight that it does happen in my sport. It's not perfect and it's important that people acknowledge and take action.'

Much of the abuse on social media comes from anonymous accounts. While Ashton has said he would like to have a constructive conversation with the person who racially abused him, social media anonymity is a problem with obvious solutions. Many apps and advertising requires proof of identification to create an account; similar checks could easily be made on social media platforms. Will the First Minister join me in commending Ashton Hewitt for speaking out about racism in sport, and look at how we can support him and others to put an end to all racism? And will the First Minister use his voice in urging the social media giants to strengthen their regulations around anonymous accounts, so that there's nowhere for people to hide?

Reply from the First Minister: Llywydd, I thank Jayne Bryant for that, and of course I'm very keen to join her in commending the way in which Mr. Hewitt responded to the dreadful abuse that he received. I thought his response was remarkable, really. It was dignified and it was designed to try to put right the wrongs that had been carried out. So, I absolutely commend him for that.

The general point that Jayne Bryant makes is a really important one. As I understand it, the account of the person who abused Mr. Hewitt has now been cancelled. But, we've seen, not just in this instance, but surely we saw across the

Atlantic in the United States recently, the harm that is done when people who abuse social media platforms go unchallenged. And I think, maybe, in some ways, we are all a bit inclined to dismiss that stuff as somehow just belonging to a fringe element, and we shouldn't get too worked up about it all, but I think the events that we saw in the United States demonstrate just how insidious that far-right occupation of social media has become, and it's here in Wales as well. It spreads the myths about coronavirus, it encourages people to believe that people who are providing public services to assist them are somehow never to be trusted and always to be suspected. And I think there is more—definitely more—that the platforms themselves need to do to challenge this information, to challenge people who seek to pursue their pernicious views in ways that the internet, which in other ways is such a blessing and a boom—the way it has opened up a space who wish to use it for entirely illegitimate and destructive purposes. And I agree with what the Member said about the need to urge them to do more to make sure that that does not happen.

Laura Anne Jones (Conservative): The Black Lives Matter protest and incidents like that, just raised by Jayne Bryant, have encouraged governments at all levels now to look at the inequalities facing BAME people in all aspects of life, and sport has had a particularly high profile due to sportsmen like Sir Lewis Hamilton

Sir Lewis Hamilton and all the premiership football teams still taking the knee. Campaigners have made the point, though, that nothing will change unless there is greater representation of BAME people in higher echelons of sporting organisations. In football, for example, a quarter of Premier League football players are black, however, there are only six managers of BAME background in the professional game, and just one director of football. In 2003, in the National Football League in America, they brought in the Rooney rule to address the underrepresentation of African American coaches in American football, by which at least one black candidate is on the shortlist for interview when a manager's job becomes vacant. What discussions has the Welsh Government had with sports councils, sports organisations, clubs and national governing bodies to review representation and pathways for black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Wales?

Reply from the First Minister: ... We are absolutely not immune from this difficulty here in Wales. There are no black people on any of the 17 sporting boards that were recently investigated, and that includes the Welsh Rugby Union, the Football Association of Wales; nine out of 17 Welsh sports organisations have no BAME staff members; 10 out of 17 Welsh sports organisations have no BAME board members. These are not acceptable figures, Llywydd, they're absolutely not, and the Rooney rule is one of the ways in which some of that can be addressed.

Now, I do want to say that Sports Wales is very actively trying to address this itself, our Tell Your Story and Our Stories Matter campaigns are both designed to make sure that the experience of black people in sport in Wales is properly understood and recognised, but that needs to be true of the very top of the sporting world as well. At board level, we need to see the experience of black sportsmen and women properly represented. The Welsh Government is committed to that, our race equality action plan will help us with that, and there are other ways, Llywydd, as well. The audit of commemoration in Wales, which we instituted earlier in the autumn, identified that a number of black rugby league players who were forced to leave Wales because of discrimination in the union code—it is remarkable to me that Billy Boston, who I believe is still alive, has a statue to him in Wigan and a statue to him in Wembley, but no statue to him at all here in Wales, and I commend the actions that Cardiff council is taking to try to put that right. So, I thank the Member for raising the points that you did, because they are very important and there is a really serious agenda that sport in Wales is grappling with and needs to make proper progress in resolving.

New Publications

Briefing: Antisemitic incidents in universities: Community Security Trust report

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/antisemitic-incidents-in-universities-community-security-trust-report/>

Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d3006107-519b-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

News

Police service is too white, says Hampshire's chief constable after racism scandal

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/10/police-service-white-says-hampshires-chief-constable-racism/>

New Scots book for bairns: Neeps and Tatties

<https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/node/id/1071>

Police drop 'hate crime' probe after comedian Sophie Duker joked about 'killing whitey' on Frankie Boyle BBC show

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19015771.police-drop-hate-crime-probe-comedian-sophie-duker-joked-killing-whitey-frankie-boyle-bbc-show/>

The only way to beat hatred is to talk openly about it

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19016922.opinion-way-beat-hatred-talk-openly/>

Dundee condemn 'disgusting' racist abuse sent to striker Jonathan Afolabi

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/jan/10/dundee-condemn-disgusting-racist-abuse-sent-to-striker-jonathan-afolabi>

TOP

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Scottish Parliament Motions

S5M-23857 Bill Kidd ((SNP): Honouring the Life of Bishop Tartaglia, Archdiocese of Glasgow – That the Parliament is saddened by the sudden passing of the Bishop of Glasgow, Philip Tartaglia; notes that Bishop Tartaglia served the Archdiocese of Glasgow as Bishop since 2012 and was appreciated across the city for his positive leadership and impact on communities and Catholic people; acknowledges that he passed away on the feast day of St Mungo, the Patron Saint of Glasgow, and sends its deepest sympathies to his family, friends and the church.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-23857>

News

Richard Leonard quits as Scottish Labour leader

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-55666234>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Patrick Grady (SNP) [1349] Most Rev Philip Tartaglia, Archbishop of Glasgow, 1951–2021 – That this House notes with sadness the sudden death of the Most Reverend Philip Tartaglia, Archbishop of Glasgow, on 13th January 2021; notes that this date is marked in the Catholic Church as the Feast of St Mungo, the founder and first Bishop of Glasgow, and that Archbishop Tartaglia was considered to be the 40th Successor of St Mungo; further notes that the Archbishop served in that position since July 2012, having previously been Bishop of Paisley and, since his ordination as a priest in the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Dennistoun in 1975, had served in a number of parishes in Glasgow and as Rector of the Scots College in Rome; recalls his occasional visits to the Palace of Westminster as Archbishop, including his celebration of Mass in the Crypt Chapel on 21st November 2018, marking the centenary of the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 receiving Royal Assent; notes the many tributes paid to him as a wise theologian, and warm-hearted, gentle and generous shepherd of his flock and pastor of souls; and sends its sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to his family, to the Catholic faithful of the Archdiocese of Glasgow and the wider community of Glasgow and Scotland.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/57952>

TOP

Health Information: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS

NHS Inform (Scotland)

Latest guidance about COVID-19 from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government, including social distancing and stay at home advice.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

Protect-Scot contact tracing app

<https://protect.scot/how-it-works>

Healthcare for overseas visitors

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/access/healthcare-for-overseas-visitors>

Healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/access/healthcare-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

NHS Near Me (Scotland)

Near Me is a video consulting service that enables people to have health and social care appointments from home or wherever is convenient. All you need is a device for making video calls like a smartphone and an internet connection. Near Me is a secure form of video consulting approved for use by the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland.

<https://www.nearme.scot/>

NHS (England and Wales)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

Church Services (Restrictions)

Mike Rumbles (Liberal Democrat): Has the First Minister seen the letter to her from more than 200 church leaders from across Scotland, who question whether, in completely closing down churches for public worship, she is consistent with her obligations under article 9 of the European convention on human rights? They simply ask the Scottish Government to provide them with the evidence that Covid-compliant church services that were operating safely were proven to be a significant source of the spread of Covid-19.

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): It has just been drawn to my attention that Philip Tartaglia, the Archbishop of Glasgow, passed away this morning. I put on record my deep sadness at the news, and I am sure that everybody across the chamber shares that sadness. I send my deepest condolences to his loved ones and to everyone in his community.

The member's question is serious and I take it seriously. I do not want to impose restrictions on anyone or on their ability to worship collectively. I know how important that is to people of faith—for their wellbeing and mental health and for the purposes of their faith.

We do not take any of these decisions lightly. This is a pandemic. At the stage we are at right now, we simply must, as far as we can, stop people coming together, which unfortunately includes in places of worship. The restrictions will not be in place for any longer than is absolutely necessary.

Church leaders and members of different churches have made representations to me that they want to see that re-thought, but I have also had representations from others in churches who say that they understand and think that, in the circumstances, the restrictions are appropriate and necessary.

These decisions are difficult, and that is perhaps one of the most difficult. The more we act collectively to suppress the virus, the quicker we will get out of the restrictions and get back to a degree of normality, including allowing people to take part in collective worship.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13046&i=118040#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

COVID-19: Naming Ceremonies

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Liberal Democrat) [S5W-34136] To ask the Scottish Government what COVID-19 guidance is in place regarding naming ceremonies.

Reply from Ash Denham: The Scottish Government has not published specific guidance for ceremonies such as baby naming ceremonies, Christenings or baptisms. We have issued specific guidance for [marriage ceremonies and civil partnership registrations](#).

Our [guidance for the safe use of places of worship](#) outlines that where ceremonies such as Christenings, baptisms and coming-of-age ceremonies form part of a wider religious service in a place of worship, the gathering should consist of no more than 50 people in total in areas at Levels 0-3 as set out in the [strategic framework](#). Outdoor acts of worship conducted in accordance with [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): events sector guidance](#) in areas at levels 0 and 1 areas may have up to 200 people in attendance.

Under the current Level 4 restrictions affecting most of Scotland set out in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions and Requirements\) \(Local Levels\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) as amended, places of worship must be closed to the public except for limited specified purposes. These specified purposes do not include a baby naming ceremony, Christening or baptism.

If a naming ceremony, Christening or baptism is not happening in a place of worship or as part of a permitted act of worship outdoors, the gathering should comply with the restrictions on social gatherings in the relevant protection level set out in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions and Requirements\) \(Local Levels\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) as amended.

Any celebrants conducting naming ceremonies permitted under the present restrictions should work with families on whether aspects of the ceremony need to be adapted in line with physical distancing and hygiene requirements in order to help ensure the safety of all present.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-34136>

Covid-19: Pakistani Community

Neil Bibby (Labour) [S5W-33876] To ask the Scottish Government (a) how many and (b) what proportion of people from the Pakistani community have been tested for COVID-19 in each month since March 2020, also broken down by how many have (i) tested positive, (ii) been admitted to hospital and (iii) died because of the condition, and how this compares with (A) other BAME groups and (B) the overall population.

Reply from Mairi Gougeon: Public Health Scotland first published an analysis of the variation in outcomes by ethnic group among those tested positive for COVID-19 on 20 May. Updates using more complete data on ethnicity were published on 15 July, 12 August and 2 December. The analysis focussed on the risk of a more serious outcome due to COVID-19, requiring hospitalisation, admission to a critical care unit care or dying.

The ethnicity analysis in the PHS reports does not include specific information on testing or deaths as this information is not held centrally. The latest report reinforced earlier findings, that there was evidence of increased risks of serious illness due to COVID-19 in those of South Asian origin, particularly in relation to those needing critical care or dying following a positive test.

The PHS report from 2nd Dec shows that South Asian ethnic groups (Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi) accounted for nearly 2% of patients (among those that tested positive for COVID-19), similar to the proportion of the population recorded at the last census. It also notes that among South Asians, the increased risk of hospitalisation or death was particularly evident among the Pakistani group, based on 94 cases.

The report also shows that when the analysis is restricted to COVID-19 patients with the most severe outcomes, i.e. admission to a critical care unit (ICU or HDU) or death, the increased rate of severe disease among the South Asian ethnic group was seen most markedly within the Pakistani ethnic group.

The latest report is available here:

<https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/2-december-2020/>

Detailed tables showing a breakdown of all ethnic minority groups accompany the report, and are available from the PHS website here:

<https://beta.isdscotland.org/media/6736/ethnicity-tables.xlsx>

National Records of Scotland (NRS) also published a report on 8th July which showed that there were 23 deaths amongst the “Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British” ethnicity category where Covid-19 was written on the death certificate, either as a suspected or probable contributing factor in the death. The report is available here:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/covid19/ethnicity-deceased-covid-19-june20.pdf>

Subsequent analysis published by NRS in November reiterated the elevated risk to people in the South Asian group from COVID-19, and this is available on the NRS ‘ethnicity of the deceased person’ webpage here:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/deaths/deaths-background-information/ethnicity-of-the-deceased-person>

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-33876>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Covid-19: BAME Communities

Chi Onwurah (Labour): What steps [the Minister’s] Department has taken to help tackle the disproportionate effect of the covid-19 outbreak on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. (910491)

Reply from the Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch): My first report on the disproportionate impact of covid-19 on ethnic minority groups in October concluded that there is no evidence suggesting that ethnicity itself is a risk factor. Rather, the evidence suggests that a range of socioeconomic and geographical factors, as well as pre-existing health conditions, largely explained the disparities. The report set out the range of measures that the Government had put in place as well as recommendations to target those risk factors, which we are carrying out across Government. We are also working with stakeholders, including the British Medical Association and the Community Advisory Group, specifically in relation to adult social care.

Chi Onwurah: The disparities impact report did not say that race was not a factor. What it actually said was that data were not being collected. Has the Minister ensured that ethnicity data, including test-taking, positive tests, vaccinations and deaths at a national and regional level, are being collected to enable the robust monitoring of the impacts of covid-19 on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities? If she has, we will see whether her deep-rooted reluctance to acknowledge the role that structural racism plays is actually justified.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: I am afraid that the hon. Lady seems to have completely misunderstood the report. I encourage her to re-read it. There is no evidence to suggest that structural or institutional racism is the cause of the higher infection rate for ethnic minority groups. In fact, data published by the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre shows that from September to December, the direct impacts of covid-19 have improved for ethnic minorities overall when it comes to the percentages of critically ill patients and deaths in England by ethnicity when compared with the first wave. We need to understand that this is a health crisis, and it is really sad that Opposition Members continue to politicise the issue and to look

for racism, when medical experts have supported our report and shown what is driving these disparities.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-01-13/debates/C2ECE4A2-B54B-4B14-912E-A74D70B768B6/Covid-19BAMECommunities>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op) [128634] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to communicate the importance of the covid-19 inoculation to different (a) age, (b) ethnic, (c) race, (d) gender, (e) religious and (f) socio-economic groups.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Department, together with the National Health Service (NHS) and Public Health England, is providing advice and information at every opportunity to support those getting the vaccine and to anyone who might have questions about the vaccination process.

The Department, alongside the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and NHS England are holding regular meetings with local authorities, faith leaders and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) organisations to provide advice and information about COVID-19 vaccines and how they will be made available.

The communications plan includes targeted information and advice via TV, radio, and social media, translated into 13 languages. Print and online material, including interviews and practical advice, will also appear in 600 national, regional, local, and specialist titles, including BAME media, to maximise reach.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-11/128634>

Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes (Labour) [131349] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to make targeted public health guidance and information about covid-19 vaccines available for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Department has been working closely with Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England and NHS Improvement to provide authoritative information to the public on COVID-19 vaccination.

PHE is preparing translated versions of the core vaccine programme leaflets. We will be producing alternative formats that will include the following languages - Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Bengali, French, Farsi, Kurdish, Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Panjabi, Nepalese, Romanian, Turkish, Tagalog, Spanish, Somali, Ukrainian and Urdu. Simple text, video and audio versions are also being developed to support messaging to black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. These will be published in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131349>

Leaflets in some of the languages referred to above can be read at

<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/37397.aspx>

The following five questions all received the same answer

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Afzal Khan (Labour) [131470] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care,

what steps his Department has taken to make covid-19 vaccine information available in other languages.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [131471] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to make covid-19 vaccine information available in Romanian; and where that information can be accessed.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [131472] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to make covid-19 vaccine information available in Polish; and where that information can be accessed.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [131473] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to make covid-19 vaccine information available in Bengali; and where that information can be accessed.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [131474] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to make covid-19 vaccine information available in Urdu; and where that information can be accessed.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Department, together with the National Health Service and Public Health England, are providing advice and information to support the national vaccination programme. The Department, alongside the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, is holding regular meetings with local authorities, faith leaders, and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) organisations to provide advice and information about COVID-19 vaccines and how they will be made available.

The communications plan includes targeted information and advice via TV, radio, and social media. This is being translated into 13 languages, including Bengali, Chinese, Filipino, Gujarati, Hindi, Mirpur, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. Print and online material, including interviews and practical advice will also appear in 600 national, regional, local and specialist titles. Public Health England is also currently developing translated versions of patient advice leaflets in to 19 languages, which will include the following languages: Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Bengali, French, Farsi, Kurdish, Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Panjabi, Nepalese, Romanian, Turkish, Tagalog, Spanish, Somali, Ukrainian and Urdu.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131470>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131471>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131472>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131473>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131474>

The leaflets referred to above can be read at

<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/37397.aspx>

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Apsana Begum (Labour) [131496] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Royal Society of Public Health survey funding that 55 per cent of people in Asian communities would take the covid-19 vaccine, whether he plans to implement public health initiatives for Asian communities to encourage covid-19 vaccine take up.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Department, together with the National Health Service (NHS) and Public Health England, is providing advice and information at every opportunity to support uptake in individuals who are prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccine. This includes providing advice to groups who may have questions about

the vaccination process, including members from the Asian communities. The Department, alongside the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and NHS England are holding regular meetings with local authorities, faith leaders, and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) organisations to answer questions and provide advice and information about COVID-19 vaccines and how they will be made available.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131496>

Scottish Government Press Releases

Strengthening lockdown restrictions

<https://www.gov.scot/news/strengthening-lockdown-restrictions/>

The R number and growth rate in the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk>

Scottish Government Publications

Coronavirus (COVID-19): daily data for Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): trends in daily data

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-trends-in-daily-data/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement - Thursday 14 January 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-thursday-14-january-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement – 13 January 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-13-january-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement – 12 January 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-12-january-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement – 11 January 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-monday-11-january-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - vaccination plan: statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport - 13 January 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-vaccination-plan-1/>

COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan 2021

<https://tinyurl.com/yxz7fjx9>

UK Government Press Release

More than 2.2 million people in UK receive first dose of COVID-19 vaccine
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-than-22-million-people-in-uk-receive-first-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine>

UK Government Publication

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 15 January 2021
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-15-january-2021>

News

Faith leaders urge people to get COVID-19 vaccine
<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/faith-leaders-urge-people-to-get-covid-19-vaccine>

Imams across UK to reassure worshippers about Covid vaccines
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/14/imams-mosques-uk-reassure-muslim-worshippers-covid-vaccines>

Covid: Fake news 'causing UK South Asians to reject jab'
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55666407>

Muslims and Hindus rejecting vaccine due to fake news that jab contains meat or alcohol, doctors warn
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/15/muslims-hindus-rejecting-vaccine-due-fake-news-jab-contains/>

Covid-19: Breaking down Asian vaccine myths in Lancashire
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lancashire-55630726>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Children (Scotland) Bill
<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/children-scotland-bill>

**** Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill**
<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill>

Stage 1 consideration, Justice Committee
<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13045&i=118015#ScotParlOR>

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill
<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

UK Parliament

Asylum Seekers (Accommodation Eviction Procedures) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2699>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2638>

Asylum Support (Prescribed Period) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2535>

European Citizens' Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2704>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2660>

Immigration Control (Gross Human Rights Abuses) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2574>

Immigration (Health and Social Care Staff)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2770>

Marriage (Approved Organisations) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2537>

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2538>

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (Legal Advice and Appeals) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2611>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated this week

Your Police 2020-2021 (closing date 31 March 2021)

Police Scotland recognise the importance of understanding the views and priorities of Scotland's diverse communities. This is especially important during the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This survey is an opportunity for you to give your views and opinions during these challenging times, and beyond.

<https://consult.scotland.police.uk/surveys/your-police-2020-2021/>

Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19

(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

Experiences of people with refugee status who are renting private property in Scotland

(closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YDR67MN>

Equality and human rights impact of Covid-19 (closing date not stated)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/114975.aspx>

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>

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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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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Grants online: Coronavirus

A number of Community Foundations and other organisations have launched funding programmes to assist local organisations in responding to the challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic. To read a list of organisations and the types of funding they have made available, see <https://www.grantsonline.org.uk/coronavirus.html>

**** closes this week!**

Scotland's Winter Festivals: Burns Night

Closing date 22 January 2021

Grants of up to £1,000 from BEMIS Scotland to begin 2021 with a positive celebration of Burns Night on January 25th. Our diverse ethnic and cultural minority communities are key elements of Scotland's past, present and future so BEMIS want to ensure that your story, history, and narrative plays a full part. For information see <https://bemis.org.uk/swf/burns/>

Winter Social Wellbeing Fund (Glasgow)

Closing date 29 January 2021

Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership funding for organisations in Glasgow City to support people who may be isolated over the winter months. Priority will be given to organisations working with individuals most at risk of social isolation and loneliness as well as those most impacted by coronavirus. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y22jeads>

Places of Worship Fund

Running until mid January 2021

Interfaith Scotland grants of up to £500 for places of worship that are struggling to meet the safety requirements of re-opening their buildings and safely holding services within Government Guidelines. With discretion the funds can also be used to assist in keeping open places that have managed their initial outlay with regard to safely reopening their place of worship but are now struggling to keep up the measures required to stay open.

This fund will help places of worship to:

- **Re-open** safely, including deep clean premises, provide appropriate signage and ensure that all volunteers and staff have appropriate training and PPE.
- **Keep open** places of worship that are struggling with the on-going health and safety costs during the pandemic
- **Remain connected** with those still too vulnerable to come to a place of worship – this may be through regular mail outs, telephone calls or the provision of mobile devices to allow those without digital access to keep in touch
- **Advancing Equality and Tackling Loneliness** Supporting faith communities to open the doors of their places of worship in a safe and inclusive manner will enable thousands of lonely and isolated people across Scotland to re-connect with their wider community.

The funding will be available for faith communities and community groups that utilise places of worship only, and will be offered to faith communities that are members and associate members of Interfaith Scotland in the first instance. For full details and an application form contact Frances Hume frances@interfaithscotland.org

Resilient & Inclusive Communities Fund

Running until March 2021

BEMIS grants of up to £3,000, in partnership with Foundation Scotland, for eligible local community groups and organisations supporting disadvantaged and excluded communities (suffering with domestic abuse; mental health; access to food, shelter and amenities; poverty, access to services/care). For information see <https://bemis.org.uk/ricfund/>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Online Security

19 January 2021 (online, 7.00)

17 February 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust webinar on how to protect yourself and your community from online threats. The webinar will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to violent extremism and hate crime. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible. For information about the 19 January webinar see <https://tinyurl.com/yy7t7q8m> and for 17 February see <https://tinyurl.com/y4qdp9y>

**** this week!**

Interpreting Culture

19 and 20 January 2021 (two day course) (online, 10.30–12.30)

Positive Action in Housing course to examine where culture comes from and look at examples of its extraordinary diversity, and focus on interactions with people from other cultures to improve understanding, confidence and trust. For information contact training@positiveactionh.org or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/training/>

**** this week!**

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

20 January 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

10 March 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Positive Action in Housing course to explore how the asylum system works from the perspective of a claimant and the process involved in making a claim for asylum. The course will also explore the barriers faced by both refugees and asylum seekers building a new life in Scotland and their respective entitlement to services. For information contact training@positiveactionh.org or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/training/>

**** this week!**

Basic security for your place of worship

21 January 2021 (online, 2.00)

11 February 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust introduction to security for places of worship and faith communities. The webinar will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to violent extremism and hate crime. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible. For information about the 21 January webinar see <https://tinyurl.com/y5d7dl36> and for 11 February see <https://tinyurl.com/y3u2jzws>

Organising security for your place of worship

25 January 2021 (online, 7.00)

23 February 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust webinar about security and risk management, and how to develop a security plan. The webinar will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to violent extremism and hate crime. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible. For information about the 25 January webinar see <https://tinyurl.com/yx8gw3y8> and for 23 February see <https://tinyurl.com/yxdc7kwg>

Security – why? A brief history of terrorism

28 January 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust webinar about the evolution of terrorism, recent and current threats and how SAFE can put you on the path to improved security. The webinar will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to violent extremism and hate crime. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yy55pasq>

Past terror attacks – lessons learned

2 February 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust webinar about the phases of an attack and how we can learn from past incidents to foil future attacks. The webinar will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to violent extremism and hate crime. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yyo6wdtr>

No Recourse to Public Funds

3 February 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

17 March 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Positive Action in Housing course 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 contact training@positiveactionh.org or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/training/>

**** Refugee Week Slow Conference**

4 February to 11 March 2021 (online)

A series of free online workshops exploring arts and culture for change, and to gain new skills, grow your networks, and reflect on work and practice, in preparation for Refugee Week 2021. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y6ao5ufa>

Hate crime and your community

8 February 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust webinar about How to deal with racial and religious hatred – especially in the digital age. The webinar will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to violent extremism and hate crime. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y6p95oal>

**** Black and Minority Ethnic Women's Experiences of Domestic Abuse**

26 February 2021 (online, 10.00–12.30)

Scottish Women's Aid webinar to raise awareness and broaden understanding of the varied issues for black and minority ethnic women and their children experiencing domestic abuse, forced marriage and other types of gender based violence. For information see <https://womensaid.scot/learning-development/>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

3 March 2021 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Positive Action in Housing course to provide information about fundamental issues of housing, homelessness and welfare entitlements of EEA nationals and look at how service users might prepare themselves to avoid the threats of Brexit. For information contact training@positiveactionh.org or see <https://www.paih.org/our-services/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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SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

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/>



gov.scot

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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