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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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The UK Parliament is in recess until 22 February 2021.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Motion

Sandra White (SNP) [S5M-24085] Positive Action in Housing Supporting Migrant and Refugee Families and Individuals – That the Parliament acknowledges the vital support offered by the Glasgow Kelvin-based charity, Positive Action in Housing (PAiH), which supports refugees and migrant homelessness and human rights; understands that it has continued its excellent work providing essential advice, crisis support, distributing PPE, food and bus vouchers, winter wear and hygiene kits to 300 asylum seeking families and individuals throughout Glasgow; believes that these essential resources have supported their physical and mental wellbeing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and winter period;

notes that PAiH also pioneered the UK's first volunteer refugee hosting network, Room for Refugees, and, in 2019-20, provided shelter to almost 250 refugee or migrant households, and commends and thanks everyone involved for their commitment to supporting migrant and refugee individuals and families.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-24085>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Indefinite Leave to Remain

Douglas Ross (Conservative): What proportion of applications for indefinite leave to remain have been successful in the last 12 months. (911919)

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): The UK offers a wide range of routes for people to settle in the UK, including those in need of protection and those who settle through marriage or work routes. There were 80,710 decisions on applications for settlement in the UK from non-European economic area nationals in the year ending September 2020, of which 97% resulted in a grant.

Douglas Ross: Since I was elected in 2017, I have been supporting Matt Jun Fei Freeman in his efforts to secure indefinite leave to remain. Matt has been in the UK for 17 years, and for the last nine he has made Lossiemouth and the wider Moray community his home. Will the Home Secretary agree to meet me to look at the considerable case for Matt to remain in Moray, so that he can continue to benefit from the friendship and support he gets here and so that Moray can continue to gain from Matt choosing this part of the world to be his home?

Reply from Priti Patel: My hon. Friend raises a very important case. He spelt out the duration for which Matthew has lived in the UK and in his constituency. I would be delighted to meet him to discuss the detailed nature of the case, and I am happy to follow up on the concerns he has.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-08/debates/F40E5136-7C46-45E5-BF7C-7878640CC5A4/IndefiniteLeaveToRemain>

No Recourse to Public Funds: Covid-19

Ian Byrne (Labour): What support [has the Minister's Department] Department provided to people with no recourse to public funds since the start of the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021. (911921)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Chris Philp): The Government remain committed to supporting everyone through this pandemic. Many of the wide-ranging covid-19 measures the Government have put in place are available to migrants with NRPF, including the coronavirus job retention scheme, statutory sick pay and discretionary hardship payments for those who have to self-isolate. In addition, migrants with leave under family and human rights routes can also apply to have the NRPF condition lifted, something that is successful now in 85% of cases, in just 17 days.

Ian Byrne: After hearing evidence at the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on homelessness, I know that the unwillingness of the Home Office to suspend no recourse to public funds and a lack of clarity over support have had devastating consequences during this pandemic for many. Despite being over a month into this lockdown, policy is still opaque around section 4 eligibility for individuals with no recourse to public funds. Will the Minister provide an update on this as a matter of urgency?

Reply from Chris Philp: There is absolute clarity about the benefits. I have mentioned things like the coronavirus job retention scheme already, and I have

mentioned how people on family and human rights routes can get the NRPF condition lifted, but I did not mention the over £8 billion available via local authorities for NRPF-eligible migrants to apply for. In addition, the hon. Member asked about section 4: people on section 4 support do get accommodation provided by the Home Office. We currently now have, I think, about 61,000 people in accommodation. That is up from about 48,000 before the pandemic, precisely because we are looking after the people most in need.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-08/debates/F46C23A8-F96F-437F-B302-1DA622162483/NoRecourseToPublicFundsCovid-19>

Migrant Channel Crossings

Caroline Ansell (Conservative): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to stop migrants crossing the English channel illegally. (911932)

Natalie Elphicke (Conservative): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to stop migrants crossing the English channel illegally. (911934)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Chris Philp): The Government are taking a huge range of measures to prevent these dangerous and illegal crossings. Most notably, the Home Secretary reached an agreement with her French counterpart in late November to increase the number of gendarmes deployed on the French beaches and to take a variety of other steps aimed at preventing embarkations from the French shores. To anyone considering this trip, I say that it is dangerous, they are putting their lives at risk, it is illegal, but, most of all, it is unnecessary because France is a safe country where it is perfectly possible to claim asylum.

Caroline Ansell: Last month, the Eastbourne Royal National Lifeboat Institution rescued more than 30 migrants who had got into difficulty in the channel. I commend its sterling work. Its mission is simply to save lives at sea. I have every concern for those it rescued, but, as my hon. Friend has just outlined, there are serious concerns that this is pump-priming human traffickers, and the fact remains that people are putting themselves at risk. Can he outline to the House the work that is being undertaken with the French and with our European neighbours to intercept and close down human traffickers long before they reach the channel coast?

Reply from Chris Philp: My hon. Friend makes an excellent point. Let me start by paying tribute to the RNLI for the work that it does at sea keeping people safe in what are often very treacherous and difficult circumstances. She is right to outline the work that we need to do to disrupt and prevent these dangerous criminal gangs before they even launch the boats in the first place. The National Crime Agency and many other law enforcement agencies across Europe and beyond are working together to disrupt these criminal gangs. We regularly prosecute people for facilitating these small boat crossings. Last year, we successfully prosecuted 50 or 60 people. There have been several more prosecutions just in the last week, in addition to the law enforcement work we are now doing with the French, doubling the gendarme patrols, for example, which, just in the last few days, has resulted in literally hundreds of people being intercepted before they even set off. So these measures are now working, but we are certainly not going to give up: we will continue working with our French colleagues until these dangerous, illegal and unnecessary crossings are completely stopped.

Natalie Elphicke: Will my hon. Friend join me in thanking Kent police and the police and crime commissioner, Matthew Scott, for their important work on this issue of migration and border policing? Can he assure me that, across my whole constituency, in Dover and Deal and at nearby Napier barracks, Kent police are having extra funding for carrying out this vital work?

Reply from Chris Philp: ... Kent has had an extra 162 police officers recruited so

far and I believe that there are many more to come. Assuming the precept is used, it will have an extra £19.5 million in the next financial year as well. In addition to that, if there are particular issues caused by small boats or, indeed, by the barracks at Napier, it is able to apply to the Home Office for exceptional funding and, if it feels that that is merited, I would certainly encourage it to do that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-08/debates/8BDFBD95-9E98-4745-9E3A-119A10A3E057/MigrantChannelCrossings>

Refugee Resettlement

David Simmonds (Conservative): What plans [has the Minister's] Department to continue refugee resettlement after the conclusion of the vulnerable persons resettlement scheme. (911924)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Chris Philp): The United Kingdom is a world leader in resettlement. My hon. Friend will know that, in the last five years, we have resettled nearly 30,000 people—more than any other country in Europe. My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that we will be completing the 20,000 people under the VPRS in the coming weeks, and after that we will be continuing to offer further resettlement places beyond that, as far as we are able to, given the current coronavirus circumstances. Beyond that, we will be making announcements—my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will be making announcements—in the relatively near future about how we plan to continue resettlement beyond that.

David Simmonds: ... it is clearly vital that safe and legal routes to refuge in the UK are available to disrupt smuggling and people trafficking. Is my hon. Friend confident that using the very successful current scheme as a template, the new UK resettlement scheme will have the necessary level of support and funding to resettle refugees effectively and in line with our aspirations?

Reply from Chris Philp: I can absolutely give that assurance. Of course, our resettlement work will have the financial support it requires. We intend to build upon, but also learn the lessons from, the previous resettlement scheme. There are going to be significant ways in which we can improve it. Not only was our resettlement scheme over the last five years the largest resettlement scheme of any country in Europe, but there is more we are doing. Our refugee family reunion provisions see 6,000 people a year or more come into this country, and just a short while ago our BNO—British national overseas—route opened up, allowing people being persecuted by the Chinese Communist party to seek refuge here as well.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-08/debates/D4AE89D2-3E9B-4601-98C0-040FF0888019/RefugeeResettlement>

Asylum System: Reform

Mark Logan (Conservative): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to reform the asylum system. (911928)

Damian Collins (Conservative): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to reform the asylum system. (911929)

Reply from the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Chris Philp): The asylum system is in need of fundamental reform, and the Home Secretary and I will be introducing legislation in the relatively near future to do exactly that. Too many people come into the UK having first passed through a safe country—for example, France—without having claimed asylum there. We are determined that we are going to have an asylum system that will protect those people in genuine need of protection while preventing the abuse that we sadly too often see.

Mark Logan: I completely agree with the Minister: our asylum system needs to change

ASAP. My constituents are vocal about how long it is taking to process their applications, often leaving them in limbo for months on end. For example, Shahid suffers from severe depression and has been waiting 16 months while he cares for his disabled wife. He cannot get carer's allowance while his application is pending. Likewise, Aswad was told that their application would take a maximum of six months to process, but it has now been 13 months. ...

Reply from Chris Philp: ... I agree that we need to do more to speed up the system. Coronavirus has had a significant impact on asylum decision making, as it has on so many other areas of our public life. In the short term, we are hiring considerably more decision makers, we are introducing better IT and we are spending £20 million next year on system transformation, but beyond that, we need to legislate to make the system work more fairly and more efficiently, for the reasons that my hon. Friend has laid out.

Damian Collins: Can my hon. Friend confirm that Napier barracks in Folkestone is only a temporary facility to accommodate people in the asylum system, that it is unsuitable for individuals to be placed there for prolonged periods, and that, post-covid and with a reformed asylum system that is swifter in processing applications, we should avoid using facilities such as this in the future?

Reply from Chris Philp: I can confirm that Napier was set up in response to the enormous pressures placed on our asylum system by the coronavirus pandemic. We have set it up in such a way as to be safe, and it is of course accommodation that was previously used by the brave men and women of our armed services. We ensure that it is clean and secure and that there is health provision on site. It is not intended for use in perpetuity. I know that my hon. Friend spoke to the Home Secretary over the weekend, and we would be very willing to maintain a close and active dialogue with him and the local council to ensure that it is managed as well as it possibly can be.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): The repurposing of disused Army barracks to house asylum seekers is proving a disaster and a disgrace. What is worse, the leaked impact assessment shows that this dreadful policy was justified by wild notions that proper support and accommodation could undermine public confidence in the asylum system. In short, the Home Office was pandering to gutter politics. Will the Home Office apologise for suggesting that people in the UK oppose decent support and care for asylum seekers, and close these barracks urgently?

Reply from Chris Philp: No apology is due. As I just said, the barrack accommodation units in question were previously used by the brave men and women of our armed services. They were good enough for the armed services and they are certainly more than good enough for people who have arrived in this country seeking asylum. We fully comply with all the relevant guidelines. On the hon. Gentleman's question about this country's stance on asylum seekers, we now spend getting on for £1 billion a year on accommodating them. That record bears comparison with any country in Europe and, indeed, around the world. No apology is due and certainly none will be made.

Stuart C McDonald: The sad fact is that the policy undermines the UK's reputation as a welcoming place. Almost as bad as the impact assessment are the Home Office claims that people who criticise the use of barracks are insulting our armed forces: it is the Home Office that insults our soldiers by using them as cover for such disgraceful policies. The former senior military legal adviser Lieutenant Colonel Mercer has agreed that it is "wholly inappropriate" to house asylum seekers in disused Army barracks, saying that "this treatment is nothing more than naked hostility to very vulnerable people." If the Minister will not listen to me, will he listen to Lieutenant Colonel Mercer and a host of respected medical organisations and close the barracks quickly?

Reply from Chris Philp: The closure of the barracks would be made a lot easier if

more councils in Scotland—other than only Glasgow—would accept dispersed accommodation. That is the sort of thing that puts pressure on our accommodation estate. Thanks to the generosity of our approach, the number of people we are accommodating has gone up from 48,000 to 61,000 during the pandemic, because we have taken a thoughtful and protective approach. That is the right thing to do and we stand by it.

Holly Lynch (Labour): On Napier barracks, the equality impact assessment makes it clear that the use of disused barracks as asylum accommodation is absolutely a political choice. The Government have consistently refused to confirm the numbers of those who contracted the coronavirus while staying at Napier barracks, but I understand that, out of around 400 people, 105 who did not have the virus were moved out, leaving us to draw our own conclusions about just how massive an outbreak took place there. Does the Minister not agree with me and others that the use of barracks as asylum accommodation has been both a moral and public health disaster and that people must be moved into dispersed accommodation as a matter of urgency?

Reply from Chris Philp: I do not agree with that. As I have said already, we have closely consulted Public Health England throughout this episode. The use of accommodation of this kind is appropriate and suitable. We need to have regard to a range of factors, including value for money. We have had to use a large number of hotels to accommodate people during the coronavirus pandemic and they do not represent particularly good value for money. Barrack-type accommodation is not only suitable but a great deal cheaper than hotels. We all owe the general taxpayer a duty to ensure value for money and the Government make no apology for that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-08/debates/F2E3BFED-B7B5-47C0-8E0D-8BBEB21A179E/AsylumSystemReform>

Topical Questions: Home Office

Philip Davies (Conservative): The Government have made it clear that they want to change the law to make it easier and swifter to deport illegal immigrants, foreign national offenders and those making bogus claims for asylum. That is something that I fully support and the overwhelming majority of the country will support. Will the Home Secretary give us some idea as to when that legislation will be brought forward to Parliament, because, as far as I am concerned, the sooner, the better? (911981)

Reply from Priti Patel: My hon. Friend makes some very good, strong and important points that, absolutely, the British public support the removal of foreign national offenders, those who come to our country to cause harm, and also those who are, quite frankly, making asylum claims that are not legitimate. We intend to introduce legislation later this year. I have spoken frequently about the need for a firm but fair asylum system, with fairness to target those who genuinely need our help. I have already spoken about one new safe and legal route that this Government have supported. Absolutely, fairness is needed, and firmness is needed to stop abuse of our system and to make sure that we remove those who come to our country to create harm and participate in criminality. I should remind my hon. Friend—he will know this—that Labour has been campaigning against that over the past 12 months.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-08/debates/10298A83-34E0-42F4-86C4-122EAA90E87A/TopicalQuestions#contribution-5D54B1AB-E7C3-4688-BCE2-9442C0A8BE70>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

British Nationality: Assessments

Holly Lynch (Labour) [144733] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

what the most number of times is that someone has taken the Life in the UK citizenship test before passing from the most recent data available.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The highest number of times an individual has taken the Life in the UK test is 118 times in 2015 and 2016. This is a unique case and the vast majority of customers pass by their 3rd attempt.

Whilst the test provider does not disclose which answers they got wrong if they fail they are advised which parts of the handbook they need to study in more depth to help them pass future tests.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-27/144733>

Immigration: Married People

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [147091] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the 2019-20 financial year can be used instead of the 2020-21 financial year to assess the £18,600 income threshold with regard to self-employed British citizens applying for a spouse visa who have experienced financial disruption due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We have made several relevant adjustments to the Minimum Income Requirement to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, including self-employed British citizens who are sponsoring their spouse or partner under the family Immigration Rules.

A temporary loss of annual income due to COVID-19 between 1 March 2020 and 31 May 2021 will generally be disregarded when assessing self-employment income, along with the impact on income from the same period for any future applications. Income received via the Coronavirus Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will also be taken into account.

These adjustments are among a range of measures put in place by the Home Office to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. These are set out for customers on GOV.UK and are available 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/2021-02-01/147091>

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Catherine West (Labour) [133100] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether UK residents who are in the UK on Tier Visas will be eligible to be vaccinated under the UK covid-19 vaccination programme in line with Government guidelines for priority of vaccination.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation have advised that phase one of the COVID-19 vaccination programme should be targeted at reducing mortality, as well as protecting health and social care staff and systems. As a result, vaccines have first been prioritised to care home residents and staff, followed by people aged 80 years old and above and health and social care workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and clinical risk factors.

Entitlement to free National Health Service treatment is generally based on ordinary residence in the United Kingdom. A person who can show they have taken up ordinary residence in the UK can access all NHS services immediately, including COVID-19 vaccinations in line with the guidelines on prioritisation. This will be on a free of charge basis. It is recommended those who have not done so already should apply to register with a general practitioner practice near where they now live.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/133100>

Marriage of Convenience

Jessica Morden (Labour) [147781] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2021 to Question 142848, whether her Department holds data on the number of cases of marriage by deception as opposed to sham marriages that were reported in the UK in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020; what the average time taken was for her Department to respond to those reports in each of those years; and in how many of those cases the perpetrator of marriage by deception was removed from the UK in each of those years.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Whilst Home Office Immigration Enforcement publishes information relating to the number of allegations it receives each quarter, allegations relating specifically to marriage fraud are not reported upon separately and it is not possible to provide information relating to the number of these allegations received in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Where a relationship has broken down and the UK sponsor of the relationship has reported this to the Home Office, action may be taken to cancel the former partner's leave to remain.

In some of the cases where relationship breakdown is reported, an allegation may also be raised indicating the reason for the breakdown is because the UK sponsor became aware it was deceptive at the outset. Whilst figures are collated for the number of cases in which leave is cancelled on account of the breakdown of a relationship, the Home Office does not differentiate between the causes of the breakdown and, as such, there is no reporting which captures allegations of deception separately from the overall number of relationship breakdowns declared to the Home Office.

Any British citizen who believes they are a victim of immigration marriage fraud, and believes they were deceived into marriage in order for their partner to obtain some form of leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, can make a request for this to be investigated and action taken where appropriate.

In some cases it can be difficult to establish a person entered into a relationship in order to abuse the immigration system. However, all allegations will be assessed and investigated further where appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/147781>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-25/142848>

Immigration: Veterans

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [147852] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to record the (a) number and (b) success rate of visa applications from non-UK born veterans following their discharge from the armed forces.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Non-UK born veterans, following their discharge from the armed forces, can apply for immigration status on a variety of routes. To capture numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost. There are therefore no plans to identify these individuals separately within our published statistics.

The number and success rate of visa applications from Non-UK born veterans following their discharge from the armed forces are grouped together with other categories in our published statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2020/how-many-people-continue-their-stay-in-the-uk-or-apply-to-stay-permanently>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/147852>

Immigration: Afghanistan

Jessica Morden (Labour) [147783] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what step she is taking to expedite existing applications for the ex-gratia scheme for Afghan interpreters who served alongside the armed forces.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Those who apply for and are approved for relocation under the ex gratia scheme for Afghan locally engaged staff are brought to the UK as soon as suitable accommodation has been sourced and support arrangements are in place.

The application and relocation process for those being considered under the ex gratia scheme has inevitably been impacted by COVID-19, but the Home Office is working closely with all parties to ensure, wherever possible, applications are processed in a timely manner.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/147783>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Visas

Margaret Hodge (Labour) [148672] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Tier 1 (Investor) visa applicants in the last three years have been refused or curtailed under the general grounds of refusal due to concerns about the applicant or third party from whom the funds came being involved, complicit or otherwise engaged in corruption or illicit finance.

Margaret Hodge (Labour) [148673] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Tier 1 (Investor) visa applicants in the last three years have been interviewed in the course of their Tier 1 (Investor) application or in consideration of curtailment of their Tier 1 (Investor) status owing to their alleged or actual involvement, engagement, or association with corruption.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We do not collate or publish figures on the number of Tier 1 (Investor) visa applications interviewed as part of the consideration of an application or in consideration of curtailment of their Tier 1 (Investor) status owing to their alleged or actual involvement, engagement, or association with corruption. Tackling serious and organised crime is a critical part of the Government's wider crime reduction agenda; we are committed to disrupting and dismantling the highest harm criminal enterprises.

The most recent published migration statistics can be viewed:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148672>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148673>

Au Pairs: Visas

Charles Walker (Conservative) [148738] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of temporarily extending the Tier 5 visa two year limit for au pairs currently in the UK who have had their work and travel opportunities curtailed by the response to the covid-19 restrictions; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office has put in place temporary arrangements to ensure visas due to expire are extended to enable people to remain legally in the UK until the point when restrictions are eased and a return to their home countries is possible. These safeguards ensure no person will lose their legal status in the UK and it is therefore not necessary to extend the two-year limit on any of the T5 routes.

As has been the case since 2008, the UK's points-based immigration system does not include a dedicated visa route for au pairs, so there is no set time limit for one.

The visa being referred to by the Hon Member may be the Youth Mobility Scheme which grants those aged 18-30 from participating countries up to 2 years in the UK during which they can study or work, with their employment not restricted to being an Au Pair or any other role.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148738>

Overseas Students: Visas

Matt Western (Labour) [149317] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on ensuring that employers are aware that (a) international postgraduate students and (b) other international students studying remotely will still be eligible for a post-study work visa if their degree does not finish during the 2020-21 academic year.

Reply from Amanda Solloway: BEIS is working closely with the Home Office and the Department for Education on visas, including the new Graduate route to attract and retain talent. Students will normally be expected to undertake their studies in the UK to be eligible for the Graduate route. However, if students are required to either continue their current studies or commence a new course by distance or blended learning due to Covid-19, they will still be eligible to switch into the Graduate route on a concessionary basis if they spent some time studying outside the UK, provided they meet the other eligibility criteria.

The Government have published guidance which covers these temporary concessions for students and student sponsors, and an introductory guide for employers that provides an overview of the new immigration system and the steps employers can take to prepare.

Successful applicants on the Graduate route, scheduled to be launched in summer 2021, will be able to stay and work, or look for work, in the UK at any skill level for a maximum period of two years. Graduates will be able to switch into skilled work once they have found a suitable job.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149317>

Children in Care: EU Nationals

Catherine West (Labour) [145828] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that local authorities are supporting eligible children in their care to apply to the EU Settlement scheme.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office has put in place a support model to ensure the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is accessible for all, including looked after children. The Home Office has engaged extensively with relevant stakeholders such as the Department for Education, Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Children's Services to assess the needs of this group and ensure they are supported. This engagement continues and all parties are committed to ensuring local authorities are supported throughout the process. To help local authorities prepare for the launch of the EU Settlement Scheme, the Home Office made several recommendations. Identifying the eligible cohort of children and care leavers was one of the recommendations, along with identifying resource to manage this work stream. The Home Office has also produced an information pack to assist local authorities with responsibilities for looked after children.

The Home Office is committed to continue engaging with local authorities as they undertake their responsibilities to ensure all eligible looked after children and care leavers are supported to make an application to the EUSS. The Home Office will ensure caseworkers liaise with and support applicants to get the status they require. The Home Office is directly engaging with local authorities, social workers, and those making applications on behalf of looked after children, children in care and

care leavers to provide support and information. We will work with supporting organisations to assist with the evidence which could be provided and apply evidential flexibility where possible.

Additionally, the Home Office has been holding monthly teleconferences for local authority staff who are undertaking this work. The teleconferences provide a forum to obtain information, ask questions and raise issues. A designated help line number has also been made available for local authority staff to contact trained caseworkers in the Home Office should they need to discuss any aspect of the EU Settlement Scheme, be it a specific case issue, or a matter of general information.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-29/145828>

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

General Practitioners: Undocumented Migrants

Apsana Begum (Labour) [148034] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase GP registration amongst undocumented migrants.

Reply from Jo Churchill: National Health Service regional teams are working with appropriate local systems to reach out to unregistered people so as to ensure that all their health needs are met and that they are offered the COVID-19 vaccine in line with Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation priorities. NHS England and NHS Improvement recently launched a general practitioner (GP) registration campaign alongside the voluntary sector. To support this, NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing materials, such as training for practice staff and access cards which support the message that everyone is entitled to register with a GP and give the NHS England and NHS Improvement Customer Contact Centre number for people to use if they have been refused registration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/148034>

Refugees: Resettlement

Carol Monaghan (SNP) [147914] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has for the continuation of refugee resettlement after the conclusion of the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme.

Reply from Chris Philp: The UK will continue to welcome refugees through resettlement following the completion of the VPRS. This commitment, alongside a future firm and fair asylum system, will ensure we continue to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for vulnerable refugees in need of protection. Our focus will remain on helping people directly from regions of conflict and instability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/147914>

Asylum: EU Countries

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [148934] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps have been taken to ensure the smooth transfer of accepted Dublin III family reunion cases to the UK in addition to the guidance issued now that the Dublin Regulation will no longer govern the way in which transfers happen between sending states and the UK.

Reply from Chris Philp: The 'savings' provisions, as set out in Schedule 2, Part 3 of the Immigration, Nationality and Asylum (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, allow a Dublin Regulation family reunion request made before the end of the Transition Period at 11pm 31 December 2020 to continue to be processed after that time.

We continue to cooperate collaboratively with sending States for the transfer of individuals under the Dublin Regulation we accepted under these provisions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148934>

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

David Linden (SNP) [911945] What assessment has [the Minister] made of the adequacy of the temporary accommodation provided by her Department for asylum seekers.

Reply from Chris Philp: Asylum seekers are provided with safe, warm, suitable accommodation that is fit for purpose and correctly equipped in line with existing asylum accommodation standards and contractual requirements. This includes accommodation recently used by our Armed Forces.

The Home Office expects the highest standards from its accommodation providers and works closely with partner organisations, including health and public health bodies, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of supported asylum seekers in all our accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/911945>

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [147875] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers who have claimed to be under 18 have been accommodated at Napier Barracks; and how long were they accommodated at that location.

Reply from Chris Philp: None

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/147875>

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Rosie Duffield (Labour) [911953] What steps the Government is taking to protect asylum seekers housed at Napier Barracks, Folkestone, from covid-19 infection.

Reply from Chris Philp: We take the welfare of asylum seekers extremely seriously and accommodation at Napier Barracks was configured in accordance with public health advice with a range of infection control measures in place. Despite our best efforts a number of those accommodated at the site have tested positive for coronavirus and an outbreak management plan was put in place.

Following the serious disturbance caused by some asylum seekers on site recently, immediate steps were taken to reconfigure accommodation to maintain outbreak management and allow for self-isolation of all those remaining on site.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/911953>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Holly Lynch (Labour) [148842] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been moved out of Napier Barracks after testing negative for covid-19.

Holly Lynch (Labour) [148843] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the outcome was of Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group's recent infection control assessment of Napier Barracks.

Reply from Chris Philp: We take the wellbeing of asylum seekers extremely seriously. We provide them with safe, suitable, Covid-secure accommodation where they receive three meals a day, all paid for by the taxpayer.

We have been following public health advice at all times and the accommodation at Napier remains safe, suitable and Covid-secure. This has included putting in place a range of infection control measures and configuring the site so that social distancing can be maintained.

Despite our best efforts and the robust measures in place at our sites, a number of asylum seekers accommodated at Napier recently tested positive for coronavirus.

It was also incredibly disappointing that a number of individuals refused coronavirus tests and had refused to self-isolate or follow social distancing rules, despite

repeated requests to do so.

In line with advice from Public Health England and as part of our outbreak management plan, the Home Office moved a number of asylum seekers out of the site who had not tested positive for coronavirus. The purpose of this move was to allow others at Napier to self-isolate more easily and facilitate a deep clean of the site.

An independent rapid review was also recently conducted to assure ourselves of the extensive COVID-19 protocols in place to safeguard the health and safety of asylum seekers during the pandemic. The Home Office is currently reviewing and acting upon the recommendations of the review and, as previously stated, will seek to publish a summary of the recommendations in due course. We will also hold round tables with stakeholders to discuss the recommendations, actions taken and proposed next steps.

We continue to work closely with our provider and partners to identify opportunities for enhancement, as we do across our entire accommodation estate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148842>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148843>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Zarah Sultana (Labour) [148929] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what reports the Government has commissioned to assess the suitability of Napier Barracks as a centre for asylum seeker accommodation.

Zarah Sultana (Labour) [148930] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish any reports commissioned to determine the suitability of Napier Barracks as a centre for asylum seeker accommodation.

Zarah Sultana (Labour) [148933] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what complaints her Department has received on the conditions of asylum seekers in Napier Barracks made by current or former residents at those barracks.

Zarah Sultana (Labour) [148933] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how complaints on the conditions of asylum seekers in Napier Barracks are (a) investigated and (b) responded to.

Reply from Chris Philp: As required by law, we provide asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute with accommodation which is safe, secure and fit-for-purpose, paid for by the taxpayer.

We welcome independent scrutiny of our sites, processes and procedures; and routinely facilitate inspections from relevant bodies to assure ourselves of the ongoing safety and suitability of the accommodation and services we provide.

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) recently launched a call for evidence on the use of hotels and military barracks as contingency asylum accommodation. The Home Office have received a formal notice of inspection from the ICIBI. The Home Office will work with the ICIBI and his inspection team to facilitate full access to our asylum accommodation estate.

An independent rapid review was also recently conducted to assure ourselves of the extensive COVID-19 protocols in place to safeguard the health and safety of asylum seekers during the pandemic.

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

The Home Office will continue to carefully review the operation of the site and will make any improvements necessary. We continue to work closely with our provider

and partners to identify opportunities for improvement, as we do across our entire accommodation estate.

Asylum seekers who are accommodated at Napier receive an induction which outlines the process for raising complaints. A booklet available in ten languages detailing the process is also issued to new arrivals.

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 complaints or concerns can be raised, including reporting issues with their accommodation. Migrant Help will then refer the report to the relevant accommodation provider through a designated point of contact.

Community support workers at the site can also support asylum seekers in accessing the AIRE service to raise a complaint. Providers' staff will make clear to asylum seekers that registering a complaint will not affect their asylum claim.

The provider will then seek to resolve any complaint, within five working days of receipt, and will inform the service user and Migrant Help of the action taken and any subsequent action necessary.

As part of our robust contract compliance measures, providers are required to regularly report to us on complaints handling and support any audits or quality reviews that we may undertake.

The Home Office does not publish statistics relating to complaints raised by those accommodated at Napier Barracks.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148929>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148930>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148932>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148933>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [148014] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2021 to Question 143913 on Asylum: Temporary Accommodation, what steps she has taken to ensure that the suitable dispersed accommodation is (a) adequately heated, (b) hygienic and (c) covid-19 compliant.

Asylum: Penally Camp

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [148013] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2021 to Question 143914 on Asylum: Penally, what steps she is taking to ensure that the facilities at Penally Camp are (a) adequately heated, (b) hygienic and (c) covid-19 compliant.

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [148015] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2021 to Question 143912 on Asylum: Penally, what her planned date is for discontinuing the use of Penally Training Camp.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office and Clearsprings Ready Homes have worked intensively with the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, Hywel Dda University Health Board, Dyfed-Powys Police and other partners as we have stood up and are now operating on the site.

The site at Penally was immediately available to be used to house asylum seekers and is safe, warm, secure, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped in line with existing contractual requirements for asylum accommodation.

Clearsprings Ready Homes is also taking action where appropriate to augment

what is in place, taking account of feedback from service users and others, for example by providing additional heating and entertainment. Work with local faith leaders to provide further support and provision to meet religious needs is also underway.

An independent rapid review was also recently conducted to assure ourselves of the extensive COVID-19 protocols in place to safeguard the health and safety of asylum seekers during the pandemic. The Home Office is currently reviewing and acting upon the recommendations of the review and, as previously stated, will seek to publish a summary of the recommendations in due course.

The Penally training camp is temporary, contingency accommodation whilst we continue to address the issues putting pressure on our asylum system.

At present, the Home Office will continue to regularly move small numbers of people out of Penally into suitable dispersal accommodation in line with business as usual processes and will continue to route new people into Penally in line with public health guidance.

It remains our intention to move all individuals in contingency accommodation into suitable dispersed accommodation as soon as practicable.

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 support those that are no longer eligible for asylum support to 'Move-on' from asylum accommodation.

We expect the highest standards from our providers and dispersed accommodation provided must be fit for purpose and compliant with the Decent Homes Standard, in addition to standards outlined in relevant national or local housing legislation.

All Asylum seekers in dispersal accommodation have their essential needs and costs met by the Home Office and the contracted providers— such as heating, electric and water and a weekly cash allowance.

Our providers are contracted to respond to and rectify maintenance issues between 4 hours and a 21-day period depending on the category of the issue. Further information can be found here in the statement of requirements:

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-1112/AASC - Schedule 2 - Statement of Requirements.pdf>

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 raise any concerns or maintenance issues with their dispersal accommodation. The AIRE provider is then responsible for referring the report of the maintenance issue to the Provider, through a designated point of contact.

Our providers have put in place a range of measures and additional support to enable households to comply with public measures on social distancing and self-isolation. This has included food parcels and other items for people who are unable to leave the house, provision of telephony for those who are isolating and do not have a telephone, as well as increased welfare contact for those who are isolating. For those in dispersal accommodation, service user essential living needs - including for cleaning and sanitary items - are met through a weekly cash allowance which has been increased during the pandemic.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/148014>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/148013>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/148015>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-26/143913>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-26/143914>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-26/143912>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Penally Camp

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [148923] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer on 18 January 2021 to Question 136619, what criteria is being used to determine how asylum seekers are being selected to leave Penally Camp; and how many people will be leaving each week.

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [148924] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2021 to Question 138518 on Asylum: Military Bases, what work her Department has carried out with the Local Health Board in Pembrokeshire to ensure that every asylum seeker has access to health care as required; and whether the management at that site have introduced any restrictions to that access.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office will continue to regularly move small numbers of people out of Penally into suitable dispersal accommodation in line with business as usual processes and will continue to route new people into Penally in line with public health guidance.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148923>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148924>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-15/138519>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-15/138518>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Repatriation

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [149253] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the UK's immigration returns agreements with (a) Afghanistan, (b) Algeria, (c) Angola, (d) Azerbaijan, (e) China, (f) Djibouti, (g) Democratic Republic of Congo, (h) Guinea, (i) Iraq, (j) Kuwait, (k) Nigeria, (l) Sierra Leone, (m) Somalia, (n) South Korea, (o) South Sudan, (p) Switzerland and (q) Vietnam cover the return of (i) nationals and residents of the country listed and (ii) nationals of third countries.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [149254] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the UK's immigration returns agreements with (a) Afghanistan, (b) Algeria, (c) Angola, (d) Azerbaijan, (e) China, (f) Djibouti, (g) Democratic Republic of Congo, (h) Guinea, (i) Iraq, (j) Kuwait, (k) Nigeria, (l) Sierra Leone, (m) Somalia, (n) South Korea, (o) South Sudan, (p) Switzerland and (q) Vietnam.

Reply from Chris Philp: We have good longstanding migration relationships with many countries including through formal returns and readmission agreements with the countries listed in the question. The content of such agreements varies in scope. Some of the agreements are published on Gov.UK or are in the public domain. However, some agreements are not published so as to preserve good international relations or for operational reasons.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149253>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149254>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Deportation: Appeals

Simon Clarke (Conservative) [149326] To ask the Secretary of State for Home Office, how many appeals against deportation by foreign national offenders were allowed in each calendar year since 2010; and how many of those appeals were allowed on human rights grounds.

Offenders: Deportation

Simon Clarke (Conservative) [149324] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign national offenders were served with a Deportation Order in each year since 2010.

Simon Clarke (Conservative) [149325] To To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign national offenders lodged an appeal against a Deportation Order in each year since 2010.

Simon Clarke (Conservative) [149327] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many successful appeals against deportation by foreign national offenders on human rights grounds were allowed on the basis of (a) Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights and (b) Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights in each year since 2010.

Reply from Chris Philp: The information requested above is not available in a reportable format and would require a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Any foreign national who is convicted of a crime and given a prison sentence is considered for deportation at the earliest opportunity.

Section 32 of the UK Borders Act 2007 provides a statutory duty to deport a foreign national if they have been convicted of an offence in the UK and sentenced to a period of imprisonment of at least 12 months. This is subject to several exceptions, including where to do so would be a breach of a person's ECHR rights or the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention.

Where a decision is made to deport, and representations are raised against that decision, an FNO is likely to be granted a right of appeal. This may be exercised in or out of country depending on the circumstances of the case.

The Home Office publishes data on Returns in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of Returns from the UK by return type (including enforced returns) are published in table Ret_01 of the Returns '[summary tables](#)'.

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns which are enforced either following a criminal conviction or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. Information on those deported is not separately available and therefore the published statistics refer to all enforced returns.

The MoJ publishes data on Appeals in the following statistical quarterly release, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2020>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149326>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149324>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149325>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149327>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Refugees: Napier Barracks

Lord Dubs (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the living conditions for refugees in Napier Barracks.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford):

My Lords, throughout the pandemic, the asylum system has faced significant pressures, and it has become necessary to use additional temporary accommodation to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations at all times. The Government provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation that is fit for purpose and correctly equipped in line with existing asylum accommodation standards and contractual requirements.

Lord Dubs: My Lords, since I had a brief discussion with the Minister a few days ago about this issue, I have learned far more about what is going on. Surely it is unacceptable that asylum seekers—some of whom have suffered dreadfully, including from torture—should be held in conditions where Covid sufferers cannot self-isolate, where there is inadequate medical attention or support, and where there is a lack of hot food and hot water. Surely the Home Office should not be opening more barracks but should be finding decent accommodation for such vulnerable people.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, I would reject the description of “decent accommodation” —this accommodation has served our Armed Forces. We are managing any outbreaks in line with Covid guidance, and everyone staying at those barracks has a decent standard of living, including heat, food and accommodation.

Lord Randall of Uxbridge (Conservative): My Lords, the health of those accommodated in the barracks obviously must be paramount. Can my noble friend confirm that Public Health England has been closely consulted throughout this period? Can she also agree that the use of these barracks will be a temporary facility only, and that they are not really suitable for long periods? Perhaps she will share my hope that, with a reformed asylum system, the swift processing of applications will enable us to avoid using this type of facility in the future.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I repeat the point I just made to the noble Lord, Lord Dubs, about the accommodation being good enough for our Armed Forces. I underline that the accommodation is safe, warm, fit for purpose and of an appropriate standard, with three meals provided a day. To put the current demand for asylum accommodation into context, back in 2019 the accommodation asylum population was broadly static at about 47,000, but, as of December last year, we now accommodate in excess of 61,000 people.

Baroness Meacher (Crossbench): My Lords, I fear that the Minister has been misinformed for her responses, as the information on the ground is very different, but that is not her fault. It seems that the Home Office is planning to use disused Army barracks such as Napier increasingly to house traumatised and, as the noble Lord, Lord Dubs, said, often tortured asylum seekers for whom prison conditions—as conditions in Napier are described—induce untold suffering, mental health crises and, indeed, suicide attempts. Can the Minister tell the House when Napier will be closed, as it needs to be, and assure the House that barracks will not be used as accommodation to house traumatised asylum seekers in the future?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I must say to the noble Baroness that the people at Napier are not being detained. I must underline that point very clearly: they are not being detained. I have been through the standards of the accommodation with noble Lords already. In terms of trauma, the access to healthcare in the barracks is of a very high standard. We have a nurse on call from Monday to Friday, nine to five, and out-of-hours healthcare, dental provision and

emergency healthcare are available as well. I would reject some of the statements being made by noble Lords.

Lord Boateng (Labour): My Lords, Churches Together in Folkestone is providing invaluable support to residents of the barracks. The local MPs of all parties and the Bishop of Dover—well known to Members of your Lordships' House—have all expressed concerns about the appalling conditions at the barracks and called for its closure. Two judgments have been made recently whereby residents have been extracted from the barracks because of their vulnerability. When were the barracks last inspected independently or visited by a Minister? If this has not occurred, can the Minister, who we know is concerned about these issues, assure us that such an independent inspection or visit will soon take place?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, I am not sure when a Minister last went in. I would suggest that at this current time, during a pandemic, it might not be the best thing for a Minister to go into the premises. But I can assure the noble Lord that HMIP is going in to do an inspection. ...

Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Labour Co-op): My Lords, I have never been to Napier barracks but, in the past, I have seen accommodation we have provided to our servicepeople in other parts of the United Kingdom. In many cases, it is not of a very high standard, which is very disappointing. Can the noble Baroness justify to the House how we can be sure that this is good-quality accommodation? Do we not have here a public health disaster made in the Home Office?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I can say to the noble Lord that, first, we are working very closely with public health authorities. Secondly, on the various aspects by which you might judge how people are living, there is drinking water, including bottled water, and three meals a day, two of them hot. I have gone through the healthcare provisions, and legal advice is also available. There is wi-fi on site, and everyone has a phone.

Lord Balfe (Conservative): The Minister has outlined the very large increase in the number of people in this sort of accommodation, and I accept that the Minister and the Government are doing their best. The one thing that they are failing on is the number of people who are getting into the country as illegal migrants. What I would like to hear from the department is that Napier barracks is closed because we have got a grip on illegal migration. Can the Minister promise us that that is also a priority?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I can echo the words of my right honourable friend the Home Secretary, who has said that the asylum system is broken. Over the next few months, we will see how we will change the immigration and asylum process to be firm and fair, while ensuring that it absolutely clamps down on those facilitators of illegal migration, who are criminals.

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (Crossbench): The 600-plus people in Napier and Penally are only the unacceptable tip of an unacceptable iceberg of over 60,000 asylum seekers now waiting for an initial decision on their case. They are not allowed to work, they are expected to survive on less than £40 a week, and three-quarters of them have been waiting for more than six months. It is not just the virus; the numbers more than doubled in the two years before the virus struck. As the Minister said, it is the system that is broken. NGOs such as the Refugee Council—I declare my interest as a trustee—try to mitigate the consequences, but only the Government can mend the system. Can the Minister assure us that the Government now intend to act to make the asylum system fair?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I refer the noble Lord back to the answer that I have just gave to my noble friend Lord Balfe, and the answer is yes.

Baroness Goudie (Labour): On 28 January I asked the Minister what conditions in the barracks were like, and she assured me that they were fit for purpose. In the last few days and weeks we have seen articles in the newspapers and on the news—these barracks are not fit for purpose and we should do our utmost to find other accommodation, remembering

that at some point these asylum seekers will become citizens of Great Britain, or they will go elsewhere. What will they think of us as a nation and the way we have treated them?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I think I have probably answered the noble Baroness's question but, absolutely, there has been additional demand on the system, and we have accommodated it. However, to go back to what the noble Lord, Lord Kerr, said, we need to process those claims as and when it is safe to do so and either grant people asylum or return them to their country of origin.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-02-11/debates/37B2C3E3-9F96-4B50-AA3C-73D0A3CABF51/RefugeesNapierBarracks>

The question and answer referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-01-28/debates/26429C33-16EF-4D9B-90A2-9932EFD41AED/EU-UKJointPoliticalDeclarationOnAsylumAndReturns#contribution-ED97B01C-723E-44A7-8036-D9E3A08FC6F6>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Immigration

Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench) [HL12493] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 21 January (HL11926), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, how many non-visa nationals whose permission to be in the UK expired, and for whom there was no record of departure, there were in each of the past five years.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do not currently hold any existing assured data relating to the cohort of non-visa national visitors whose permission to be in the UK has expired and there is no record of departure.

To attempt to answer the question from data we hold would require significant technical, analytical and assurance work to establish the accuracy of any data for this cohort held within the immigration system.

However, the Home Office publishes statistics relating to departures by visa holders as part of its annual Exit Checks report. Fifth report on statistics relating to exit checks - GOV.UK

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fifth-report-on-statistics-relating-to-exit-checks>)

The report includes the percentage of non-EEA visa holders whose leave expired with no initially identified departure in time, including both people for whom there was no record of departure and people with a confirmed late departure. It is important to note that individuals with no departure recorded were not necessarily non-compliant.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-25/hl12493>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-08/hl11926>

Asylum: Military Bases

Lord Judd (Labour) [HL12518] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to protect the health and wellbeing of asylum seekers housed in the disused army barracks in (1) Penally, and (2) Kent; what particular provisions are in place for torture survivors; and how they are managing any COVID-19 outbreaks on both sites.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Protecting the health and safety of asylum seekers during the coronavirus pandemic has been our priority and to test our effectiveness we have reviewed the sites we use for coronavirus regulation and guidance compliance.

This is augmented by a range of additional safety measures including increased cleaning of surfaces, availability of hand sanitisers, a track and trace system and communications with residents around COVID-19 control measures.

We work closely with our accommodation providers to ensure that all asylum seekers in supported accommodation are aware of, and have access to, Migrant Help's helpline. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if service users need help, advice or guidance; including signposting to relevant mental and medical health services. Asylum seekers also have the same access to coronavirus testing as the rest of the general population.

Asylum seekers at the barracks must self-isolate if they test positive or have been exposed to someone who has. We are working closely with the local health authority; Public Health England and Public Health Wales; and additional support staff, as well as on site medical staff, are on-site to ensure that all individuals who have to self-isolate can do so and are following all medical advice.

Additionally, regular welfare checks are conducted on service users, including behavioural monitoring of those who show signs of vulnerability, and where appropriate safeguarding referrals are made to relevant bodies.

Furthermore, as part of the Government's commitment to ensuring the support for potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery, individuals with a positive reasonable grounds decision who have consented to Victim Care Contract (VCC) support – who are also asylum seekers in asylum support accommodation – will receive essential support services from a VCC support worker, who can provide specialist support and advocacy services to assist victims to rebuild their lives.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-25/hl12518>

New Publication

When the clapping stops: EU Care Workers after Brexit

<https://www.jcwi.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=15c60f7e-17ff-4fa0-8f5d-df00cf2c5967>

News

Covid: 'No deportation risk' for illegal migrants getting vaccination

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-55978334>

Hostile environment 'will cut Covid vaccine uptake among migrants'

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/08/undocumented-uk-migrants-to-be-offered-covid-vaccine-without-any-checks>

Coronavirus 'amnesty' to get undocumented migrants vaccinated will not be enough, ministers warned

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/coronavirus-immigration-amnesty-vaccine-b1799280.html>

EU citizens who left UK because of pandemic set to lose right to live in Britain

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eu-citizens-coronavirus-pre-settled-status-b1799843.html>

Global Britain must lead the way in refugee resettlement

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/global-britain-must-lead-the-way-in-refugee-resettlement-3hc9ft7j2>

Watchdogs to inspect controversial barracks housing asylum seekers after health fears
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/barracks-asylum-seekers-inspectors-home-office-b1801055.html>

Immigration minister denies asylum barracks ‘public health disaster’ despite over 100 Covid cases at site
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-barracks-coronavirus-home-office-b1799263.html>

‘Entirely inappropriate’: Bishops call on Home Office to end use of military barracks as asylum accommodation
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bishops-home-office-asylum-seekers-barracks-b1800319.html?amp>

Home Office drops plan to house 200 asylum seekers in prefab-style accommodation at Yarl’s Wood
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-yarls-wood-asylum-accommodation-b1799758.html>

Home Office drops plan to house asylum seekers in ‘prison-style’ camp
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/feb/09/home-office-abandons-plans-for-camp-at-yarls-wood-immigration-removal-centre>

How migrant women have become the forgotten victims of Britain’s domestic abuse crisis
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/maid-forgotten-women-britains-domestic-abuse-crisis/>

‘I guess this means it is okay for me to be violated’ – migrant women have been forgotten in the domestic abuse bill
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/domestic-abuse-bill-migrant-women-bame-b1799680.html>

Echoes of Windrush in deportation threat to Commonwealth migrants
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/feb/09/echoes-of-windrush-in-deportation-threat-to-commonwealth-migrants>

Defendants no longer required to state nationality at the start of criminal cases
<https://ukhumanrightsblog.com/2021/02/09/defendants-no-longer-required-to-state-nationality-at-the-start-of-criminal-cases/>

TOP

Community Relations

News

Ruth Davidson video: Christian teacher must not be sacked
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19075717.ruth-davidson-video-christian-teacher-must-not-sacked-says-stuart-waiton/>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

BAME People in Criminal Justice System

Janet Daby (Labour): What recent discussions has [the Minister] had with the Justice Secretary on the disproportionate number of BAME people in the criminal justice system. (912143)

Reply from the Minister of State, Minister of Justice (Lucy Frazer): Tackling race disparity in the criminal justice system remains a priority for all Ministers in my Department. We have a broad programme of work to address the issue, including work on the collection of data and the implementation of policies that tackle disproportionality, together with scrutiny and oversight. The criminal justice system race and ethnicity board reviews the progress of this work.

Janet Daby: A lack of diversity in the judiciary is something that should concern the Government. It is deeply troubling, as it is one of the major reasons that all communities, including black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, lack confidence in the criminal justice system. There are currently zero Supreme Court judges who are from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds. Steps need to be taken to fix the justice system so that it is fair and equal for everyone. Will the Government introduce a clear target for a representative judiciary, as called for in the Lammy review?

Reply from Lucy Frazer: The hon. Member raises an important issue in relation to diversity in the judiciary, and it is important to ensure that women and black and ethnic minorities come through the system as lawyers. Indeed, there are a lot of women coming through the system, but we need to improve that as well. From 2014 to 2019, there have been some small improvements in judicial diversity. The proportion of women judges increased from 24% to 32% in the courts and from 43% to 46% in tribunals, and the proportion of BAME judges increased from 6% to 7% in the courts and from 9% to 11% in tribunals, but we need to do more work. The judiciary is independent, and I know that it is very concerned about this issue.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-10/debates/63416C09-3285-4103-8AB6-A406EFB1CC6C/BAMEPeopleInCriminalJusticeSystem>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Adoption: Ethnic Groups

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [148921] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the policy under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 that consideration to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background is made when placing the child for adoption on the average time it takes to place black children for adoption.

Reply from Vicky Ford: In 2014 the government removed the requirement for adoption agencies to give "due consideration to a child's religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background" when matching a child and prospective adopters. This was to avoid any suggestion that the legislation placed a child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background above other factors which the agency should consider. As my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, said in his speech of October 2020, "we want to make sure that far more people from all sorts of different backgrounds are willing to become adoptive parents, and to do that we must end this obsession with finding the perfect ethnic match for children".

Adoption agencies must still have regard to any of the child's characteristics that

the agency considers relevant. This could include a range of issues including health, disability, education, religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background. This is about creating a children's social care system that works for all children, giving them the best possible chance to succeed in life.

Latest published analysis shows that in 2014-15, Black and minority ethnic children were being placed for adoption 5 months earlier than in 2012-13. More recent Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB) figures also show that waiting times fell by 35% for Black and minority ethnic children between 2014-15 and 2017-18. Since then, ASGLB data shows that waiting times for all children have increased which is due to a national shortage of adopters.

During the 2020-21 financial year, we gave the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) Leaders Group £1 million to develop a sector led recruitment campaign. This campaign launched on 16 September 2020 and challenged preconceived conceptions about who can adopt and encouraged more people to come forward. Part of the campaign had a specific focus on Black and minority ethnic communities through outreach work in 2 pilot areas, London and Birmingham. The RAA Leaders Group are also funding Home for Good to run a triage service to support prospective adopters from these pilot areas. This included a safe space to explore adoption and ask further questions, but also seek extra support during the process. Ensuring that the right adopters come forward for the children we have waiting for forever homes remains a priority for the government.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148921>

Students: Loans

Catherine West (Labour) [149309] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2021 to Question 137261, whether the Government plans to publish further guidance on this matter; and whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential effect of interest-payable loans as a barrier to Muslim students.

Reply from Michelle Donelan: The government remains committed to ensuring that all individuals with the potential to benefit can access higher education and will provide an update on Alternative Student Finance in due course.

The government undertook equalities assessments on access to student finance for individuals of Muslim faith in November 2015 when introducing regulations to move from a system of maintenance grants to loans. Further analysis was published in May 2016 during the passage of the Higher Education and Research Bill. The assessments can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482110/bis-15-639-student-finance-equality-analysis.pdf

and

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524226/bis-16-281-he-research-bill-equality-analysis.pdf

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149309>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-13/137261>

News

Are Scottish firms doing enough to help BAME career progression?

<https://www.scotsman.com/business/analysis-are-scottish-firms-doing-enough-help-bame-career-progression-3132335>

Apprenticeships: 'People from BAME backgrounds are not getting through'

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/feb/08/apprenticeships-people-from-bame-backgrounds-are-not-getting-through>

No black people in stop and search training videos, Met Police admits

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/stop-and-search-london-met-police-b1801106.html>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Social Media: Hate Crime

Mark Menzies (Conservative) [150765] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to online hate speech posted on social media using country-specific language or tropes which might not be identifiable as such elsewhere or via an algorithm, whether the online harms Bill will include a requirement for social media companies to operate specific UK moderating teams which will be able to recognise country-specific language.

Reply from Caroline Dinenage: As part of the new online harms regulatory framework, Ofcom will set out how companies can fulfil their duty of care via codes of practice. The codes will outline the systems and processes companies must have in place to keep their users safe, including procedures on the training and support of human moderators.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/150765>

Social Media: Racial Discrimination

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [150775] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to tackle racism on social media platforms.

Reply from Caroline Dinenage: We are clear that the online racist abuse is unacceptable. We must do all we can to tackle it. We are taking steps through the online harms regulatory framework to ensure that online abuse is addressed. Under a new legal duty of care, companies will need to remove and limit the spread of illegal content, including illegal online abuse. All companies will need to take swift and effective action against such content. Companies providing high-risk, high-reach services will also need to undertake regular risk assessments to identify legal but harmful material on their services. These companies will need to set clear terms and conditions which explicitly state what categories of legal but harmful material they accept (and do not accept) on their service. Companies will need to enforce these terms and conditions consistently and transparently and could face enforcement action if they do not. The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework, will be ready this year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/150775>

Social Media: Antisemitism

Bob Blackman (Conservative) [147825] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will issue guidance to Ofcom, on (a) adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and (b) on analysing the behaviour of social media companies on antisemitism.

Reply from Caroline Dinéage: As the UK's communications regulator, Ofcom is independent from government. Regulatory decisions are a matter for Ofcom. Ofcom can have regard to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism when determining complaints about antisemitic material broadcast on television and radio services.

The Government is committed to tackling racism, including the spread of antisemitic content online. In December 2020, we published the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation, which sets out new expectations on companies to keep their users safe online. Under a new legal duty of care, in-scope companies, including social media, will need to tackle illegal antisemitic content and activity on their services.

In addition, companies providing high-risk, high-reach services will need to set clear terms and conditions stating what legal but harmful material they accept (and do not accept) on their service. This may include antisemitic hate speech, which does not meet the threshold of a criminal offence. Companies will need to enforce these terms and conditions consistently and transparently, and could face enforcement action if they do not. All companies in scope will be required to have effective and accessible user reporting and redress mechanisms.

The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework outlined in the Full Government Response, including the appointment of Ofcom as the regulator, will be ready this year. There are no plans to issue guidance to Ofcom on analysing the behaviour of social media companies on antisemitism.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/147825>

The Government response referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper/outcome/online-harms-white-paper-full-government-response>

Mass Media: Antisemitism

Catherine West (Labour) [150892] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking with (a) the press and (b) media industries to tackle discriminatory speech towards the Haredi Jewish Community.

Reply from John Whittingdale: The government is committed to a free and independent press, and does not intervene in what the press can and cannot publish. We are clear, however, that with this freedom, comes responsibility, which media organisations must take seriously. It is important that there exists an independent self regulatory regime to ensure that the press adheres to a wide set of clear and appropriate standards, and to offer individuals a means of redress where these are not met.

The majority of traditional publishers—including 95% of national newspapers by circulation—are members of The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). A small number of publishers have joined The Independent Monitor for the Press (IMPRESS). These regulators issue codes of conduct which provide guidelines on a range of areas including discrimination, and set out the rules that members have agreed to follow.

Ofcom, the UK's independent broadcast regulator, sets clear rules in its Broadcasting Code for licensed broadcasters to meet to ensure UK audiences are adequately protected from harmful material.

In addition, the government has been clear that more needs to be done to ensure safety online. Therefore this government is introducing new Online Harms legislation. This will require companies to tackle abuse on their services and take reasonable steps to protect users' safety online. Users will be better able to report abuse, and should expect to receive appropriate support from the relevant platform if they do so.

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Social Media: Racial Harassment

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL12863] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they plan to have with social media companies about racist abuse of Premier League football players on social media platforms.

Reply from Baroness Barran: Ministers and officials meet regularly with social media companies to discuss online harms. The Culture Secretary and Sports Minister recently led a roundtable discussion with current and former players from the Premier League, English Football League (EFL), Women's Super League (WSL) and Women's Championship, which discussed online racist abuse and players' perspectives on tackling discrimination in the game.

We are clear that the online racist abuse of Premier League football players is unacceptable. We must do all we can to tackle it. We are taking steps through the online harms regulatory framework to ensure that online abuse, whether anonymous or not, is addressed. Under a new legal duty of care, companies will need to remove and limit the spread of illegal content, including illegal online abuse. All companies will need to take swift and effective action against such content. Companies providing high-risk, high-reach services will also need to undertake regular risk assessments to identify legal but harmful material on their services. These companies will need to set clear terms and conditions which explicitly state what categories of legal but harmful material they accept (and do not accept) on their service. Companies will need to enforce these terms and conditions consistently and transparently and could face enforcement action if they do not. The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework, will be ready this year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-01/hl12863>

Press Release

Youngest British terrorist sentenced for neo-Nazi manuals stash

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/youngest-british-terrorist-sentenced-neo-nazi-manuals-stash>

New Publication

Antisemitic Incidents Report 2020

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/7/2/Incidents%20Report%202020.pdf>

News

Reasonableness test for abusive and insulting language added to Scottish Hate Crime Bill

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/reasonableness-test-abusive-and-insulting-language-added-scottish-hate-crime-bill-3129332>

MSPs back criminalising hate speech at the dinner table

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19077579.msps-back-criminalising-hate-speech-dinner-table/>

Church leaders claim hate crime laws could ban criticism of trans issues

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19086774.church-leaders-claim-hate-crime-laws-ban-criticism-trans-issues/>

Churches urge rethink on gender issues in hate crime bill

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/churches-urge-rethink-on-gender-issues-in-hate-crime-bill-qvvj77lmd>

UK government accused of 'dragging heels' on racism

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/11/uk-government-accused-of-dragging-heels-in-response-to-racism-report>

Forde inquiry delay suggests Labour not serious on racism, black MPs say

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/feb/12/forde-inquiry-delay-suggests-labour-not-serious-on-racism-black-mps-say>

Conservatives could become 'no-go' party for black Britons, says Tory activist

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/feb/09/conservatives-no-go-party-black-britons-wilfred-emmanuel-jones>

Tories drop candidate who sent 'Aryan race' tweet to Jewish Labour MP

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tory-aryan-race-jewish-mp-charlotte-nichols-b1799396.html>

Tories urged to investigate Warrington branch over antisemitic tweet

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/feb/08/tory-council-candidate-deselected-antisemitic-tweet-to-jewish-labour-mp-charlotte-nichols>

CST Antisemitic Incidents Report 2020 published today

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2021/02/11/cst-antisemitic-incidents-report-2020-published-today>

Coronavirus has fuelled new forms of antisemitism, charity says

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/antisemitism-covid-coronavirus-cst-b1800352.html>

Charity sees third highest annual tally of anti-Semitic abuse despite lockdown

<https://www.faith-matters.org/charity-sees-third-highest-annual-tally-of-anti-semitic-abuse-despite-lockdown/>

Britain's youngest convicted terrorist avoids jail

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/feb/08/britains-youngest-convicted-terrorist-avoids-jail>

Britain's youngest terrorist avoids custody as he is handed youth rehabilitation order

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/02/08/britains-youngest-terrorist-avoids-custody-handed-youth-rehabilitation/>

Boy, 13, directed neo-Nazi FKD from granny's cottage

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/boy-13-directed-neo-nazis-granny-cottage-xszqnmkv0>

UK's youngest terror offender walks free from court after recruiting for neo-Nazi group
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/neo-nazi-uk-fkd-youngest-terror-offender-b1799103.html>

Ramla Ali: ending hair discrimination must start with schools
<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/lifestyle/other/ramla-ali-ending-hair-discrimination-must-start-with-schools/ar-BB1dhHKu>

Greene King renames its 'Black Boy' pubs 'to become truly anti-racist organisation'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/02/13/greene-king-renames-black-boy-pubs-become-truly-anti-racist/>

Greene King renames four pubs in England over racism concerns
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/feb/13/greene-king-renames-pubs-england-racism-concerns>

UCL board rejects IHRA definition of antisemitism
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/feb/12/ucl-board-rejects-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism>

Oxford College master apologises to Jewish students for inviting Ken Loach to virtual event
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/02/10/oxford-college-master-apologises-jewish-students-inviting-ken/>

Scottish rugby racism row: Taking the knee mustn't be compulsory
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19074582.scottish-rugby-racism-row-taking-knee-mustnt-compulsory/>

Six Nations issues statement on 'fighting racism' following row over players not taking a knee
<https://www.scotsman.com/sport/rugby-union/six-nations-issues-statement-fighting-racism-following-row-over-players-not-taking-knee-3127998>

Anger as Facebook fail to ban 'racist abuser'
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/anger-as-facebook-fail-to-ban-racist-abuser-76858brkz>

Instagram vows to shut accounts after racist abuse of footballers
<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/feb/10/instagram-vows-to-shut-accounts-after-racist-abuse-of-footballers>

PFA plans to issue guide for players subjected to online racist abuse
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pfa-plans-to-issue-guide-for-players-subjected-to-online-racist-abuse-s8qbdcbgl>

FA demands government legislation in fight against racism on social media
<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/axel-tuanzebe-fa-racism-social-media-b1799066.html>

Receiving racist abuse online was a shock - social media companies need to wake up
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2021/02/11/receiving-racist-abuse-online-shock-social-media-companies/>

Swansea ‘appalled and saddened’ by racist abuse received by Yan Dhanda after FA Cup loss to Man City

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/fa-league-cups/yan-dhanda-racist-abuse-swansea-man-city-b1800748.html>

Man arrested over a ‘number of racist and hateful’ tweets relating to Chelsea

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/premier-league/chelsea/racist-tweets-chelsea-arrest-b1799431.html>

English football is consumed by racism and hatred. Can the cycle be broken?

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/feb/08/english-football-is-consumed-by-racism-and-hatred-can-the-cycle-be-broken>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Hospitals: Ministers of Religion

Lord Patten (Conservative) [HL12663] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the work done by hospital chaplains in helping (1) the welfare, and (2) the recovery, of patients.

Reply from Lord Bethell: No formal assessment has taken place.

Chaplaincy and faith services are funded locally. The commissioning of local services is conducted by clinical commission groups responding to the needs of their individual patient populations and workforce, including as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise the significant role chaplains and leaders of all faiths play in spiritual, emotional and psychological care and in the delivery of high-quality palliative and end of life care.

This is recognised in clinical guides and for compassionate visiting arrangements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-27/hl12663>

New Publication

Updated Guidance: Female genital mutilation: resource pack

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>

TOP

Health Information: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS

Scottish COVID-19 vaccination helpline and booking service

The Scottish COVID-19 vaccination helpline and booking service is available from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week on 0800 030 8013.

<https://nhs.uk/services/our-covid-19-response/covid-19-vaccination-helpline-and-booking-service>

Coronavirus helpline

People living in Scotland who don't have any symptoms but are looking for general information can call the coronavirus helpline. If you're a non-English speaker you can still use this service. Phone 0800 028 2816, tell the call handler that you need an interpreter, give the name of your preferred language and you will be connected to a Language Line interpreter. You will not have to pay for this.

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 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 Written Answers

Weddings and Funerals: Covid-19

Jeremy Balfour (Conservative) [S5W-34945] To ask the Scottish Government for what reason 20 guests are permitted at a funeral during the current lockdown, but not at a wedding.

Reply from Ash Denham: From 8 January 2021 the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 were amended to limit the number of people permitted to attend a marriage ceremony in a protection level 4 area to 5 people. This is the minimum number required under the law for a marriage to be solemnised and is made up of the couple getting married, the two witnesses and the local authority registrar or the religious or belief celebrant. If an interpreter is needed, they can attend in addition.

This change was one of a number of additional actions the Scottish Ministers considered necessary to minimise further spread of the virus. These decisions reflect the public health advice.

While up to 20 people are still able to attend funeral services, with effect from 8 January, wakes must not take place in a protection level 4 area.

Funeral services are an essential part of the bereavement process and vital to people's wellbeing. They cannot be delayed. Our decision on marriage ceremonies reflects that the right to marry is an important one, but also that a wedding can be postponed if a couple want a wedding with more people attending. The current

restrictions give couples who want to get married now the chance to do that, whilst minimising the risks of transmission at the marriage ceremonies that do proceed.
<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-34945>

The following five questions all received the same answer

COVID-19: Places of Worship

Elaine Smith (Labour) [S5W-34370] To ask the Scottish Government whether places of worship will be a priority for reopening at the end of the current COVID-19 lockdown period.

Elaine Smith (Labour) [S5W-34371] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish the evidence it has received regarding COVID-19 transmission rates in places of worship, and for what reason it considers this transmission rate to be high enough for these venues to be closed under the current restrictions.

Elaine Smith (Labour) [S5W-34372] To ask the Scottish Government for what reason its position on places of worship under the current COVID-19 situation differs from that of the UK Government, and what its response is to reported concerns that, as a result of this, people in Carlisle can attend communal worship but people in Gretna cannot.

Elaine Smith (Labour) [S5W-34375] To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has carried out of what benefit communal worship during the COVID-19 pandemic can offer to older and isolated people, and what impact the closure of places of worship under the most recent restrictions will have on people from these groups who had adopted safe and socially-distanced worship to help mitigate the negative impacts of the previous lockdown.

Elaine Smith (Labour) [S5W-34387] To ask the Scottish Government what discussions have taken place with the Bishops' Conference of Scotland regarding the closure of places of worship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aileen Campbell: We appreciate how difficult the latest restrictions are for faith and belief communities, coming as they do after what has already been a challenging eleven months for everyone.

Our response to the Covid-19 pandemic has always been guided by the principles set out in our [Framework for Decision Making](#), and throughout we have sought to reduce broader health, economic and societal harm. We must also focus on the necessity to suppress the virus, and this has led to some difficult decisions. The latest and perhaps hardest of these decisions in relation to places of worship was the First Minister's announcement, on the 04 January, that at this critical moment in the pandemic, rates of transmission in Scotland are such that places of worship could not remain open for congregational worship and prayer.

Prior to and since the First Minister's announcement on 4 January, the National Clinical Director and I have separately engaged with Scotland's faith and belief communities, and on Monday 18 January I issued a letter providing reassurance that places of worship will be amongst the first sectors to be seriously considered for any easing of restrictions.

The transmissibility of the current strain of the Covid-19 virus is now understood to be significantly higher than the earlier strain. The risks of catching the virus therefore are very real.

On Wednesday 20 January, the Deputy First Minister provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament Covid Committee explaining why enhanced restrictions for places of worship had been put in place.

In most cases it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty where an individual has contracted the virus, however we can look at areas where people interact with one another which create opportunities for transmission to occur. We know that 110 people reported attending a place of worship whilst judged to be infectious in the week prior to the introduction of the enhanced level 4 restrictions. For week ending

10 January the seven day number of new positive cases for places of worship stood at 38. Information relating Test and Protect is published online as part of the weekly [Covid-19 Statistical Report](#) on the Public Health Scotland website.

Wherever possible the Scottish Government has contributed to the wider four nations approach in responding to the pandemic; however Public Health policy is devolved and we understand that other parts of the UK have imposed different enhanced restrictions, on places of worship. Here in Scotland, we have decided to take decisive early measures, in the face of the more transmissible strain of the virus. We have reinforced the key message of “stay at home” to reduce physical interaction and therefore minimise the risk of spreading the virus. We believe this combined with the on-going rollout of the vaccines provides us with the best chance in preventing our health services from being overwhelmed, hence saving lives.

Throughout the pandemic we have met weekly with leaders from many different faith and belief groups, including representatives from the Bishop’s Conference of Scotland and their associated Parliamentary Office, to discuss their concerns about the impact of restrictions and to work with them on our guidance around how places of worship can be fully reopened safely, when it is judged safe to do so. We know from these meetings that both congregational worship and prayer are continuing, albeit by virtual means. We have of course provided funding to further increase capability for virtual worship and engagement. Important and practical pastoral care continues with faith and belief groups able to support vulnerable members of their communities. We are grateful for this hard work of those faith and belief groups. We are also grateful for their ongoing support in the pandemic.

We understand the important role of congregational worship in supporting spiritual wellbeing. We know from our stakeholder engagements, how significant it is in preventing social isolation and loneliness. That is why until the most recent lockdown, in January, that communal worship remained one of few organised gatherings permitted in level 4 in Scotland, albeit with a reduced capacity of 20.

We will continue to be guided by the latest Public Health Scotland and clinical advice and to work closely with faith group representatives on the scope for removing or alleviating restrictions on worship as soon it is considered safe to do so.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-34370>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-34371>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-34372>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-34375>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-34387>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-monday-4-january-2021/>

The letter referred to above can be read at

https://scojec.org/pad/2021/files/21i18_aleen_campbell_letter.pdf

The evidence referred to above can be read at

https://www.parliament.scot/General%20Documents/20210120_DFM_Letter_to_Covid_Ctee_re_Enhanced_Restrictions_for_Places_of_Worship.pdf

UK Parliament, House of Commons Debate

Covid-19: Faith Groups

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-11/debates/A0C1914E-7B70-4309-9E9E-AE1FBD11C76F/Covid-19FaithGroups>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Ministers of Religion: Hospitals

Jim Shannon (DUP) [146884] To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what role hospital chaplains are playing in supporting (a) patients and (b) the NHS during the covid-19 pandemic.

Reply from Andrew Selous: NHS chaplains have given their all in response to the unprecedented need for pastoral and spiritual support during the pandemic, with patients, in liaison with families unable to visit their loved ones, and with NHS staff under stress. Chaplains are an essential component in the care for the whole person that is central to the NHS's vocation.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has also been supporting patients at St Thomas's Hospital, London as part of the chaplaincy team there and is regularly making time to speak to patients and support families and staff.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-01/146884>

UK Parliament, Early Day Motion

Apsana Begum (Labour) [1500] **Covid-19 and BAME deaths** – That this House notes the analysis of 3 February 2021 highlighted by Professor Kevin Fenton, Public Health England that London's Asian communities have been hardest hit by the covid-19 second wave; further notes that for some time evidence has shown that covid-19 has had a disproportionate effect on people from a Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) background; believes that BAME communities should be prioritised for a vaccine rollout in addition to the other vulnerable groups and healthcare workers; calls on the Government to amend its advice on priority groups for covid-19 vaccination in order to reflect this and to ensure that the data on covid-19 deaths and the vaccination rollout broken down by ethnicity is published; and further calls on the Government to communicate this widely through a range of effective and targeted media as a part of a comprehensive strategy to address the disproportionate effect of the pandemic on BAME communities.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58113>

The analysis referred to above can be read at

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.03.21251004v1.full.pdf>

Scottish Government Press Release

One million people vaccinated

<https://www.gov.scot/news/one-million-people-vaccinated/>

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/>

Fol release: Places of worship COVID-19 guidance

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202000094719/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: Health Secretary's statement - 12 February 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-health-secretarys-statement-12-february-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement - 10 February 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-10-february-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement - 9 February 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-9-february-2021/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement - 8 February 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-8-february-2021/>

UK Government Press Releases

A record 3 million people tested by NHS Test and Trace this reporting week

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-record-3-million-people-tested-by-nhs-test-and-trace-this-reporting-week>

New vaccine uptake plan published

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-vaccine-uptake-plan-published>

UK Government Publications

UK COVID-19 vaccine uptake plan

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-uptake-plan/uk-covid-19-vaccine-uptake-plan>

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 10 February 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-10-february-2021>

Other Organisations

BEMIS

BEMIS Scotland Health and Vaccine Survey

<https://bit.ly/2XU6JzU>

Voluntary Health Scotland

Survey exploring enablers and barriers to uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine
(closing date 19 February 2021)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/equitableaccesstoCV-19vaccine>

Office for National Statistics

Ethnic differences in COVID-19 mortality during the first two waves of the Coronavirus Pandemic: a nationwide cohort study of 29 million adults in England

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.03.21251004v1.full.pdf>

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/12february2021/pdf>

News

Charity offers transport for those in Edinburgh and the Lothians struggling to get to vaccine appointments

<https://tfn.scot/news/charity-offers-transport-for-those-struggling-to-get-to-vaccine-appointments>

Covid: BAME communities urged to have coronavirus vaccine

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-55956997>

Reports of 'vaccine hesitancy' in minority ethnic groups in Scotland

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/reports-vaccine-hesitancy-minority-ethnic-groups-scotland-3132255>

Covid vaccine: Van-Tam 'really concerned' fewer BAME people will get jab

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-56008081>

Covid Scotland: Sir Geoff Palmer criticises lack of diversity in pandemic messaging

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19076934.covid-scotland-sir-geoff-palmer-criticises-lack-diversity-pandemic-messaging/>

NHS England agrees to collect ethnicity data seven weeks after covid vaccinations began

<https://www.hsj.co.uk/primary-care/nhs-england-agrees-to-collect-ethnicity-data-seven-weeks-after-covid-vaccinations-began/7029378.article>

Up to 100 UK children a week hospitalised with rare post-Covid disease

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/05/up-to-100-uk-children-a-week-hospitalised-with-rare-post-covid-disease>

Welsh council under fire over Covid restrictions at Traveller site

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/08/welsh-council-under-fire-over-covid-restrictions-at-traveller-site>

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New Publications

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

Updated Covid-19 Guidance: Charity meetings and governance

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/covid-19-guidance-for-charities/3-charity-meetings-and-governance/>

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator:

Updates to the Disclosure Scotland Act 2020 webinar

video

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

Q&A

https://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/1709145/oscr_event_q_a.pdf

'Do No Harm': Lived Experiences and Impacts of the UK's FGM Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, Bristol study

<https://www.forwarduk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FORWARD-UKs-FGM-Safeguarding-Research-Report-Bristol-Study-2021.pdf>

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Other News

UK's FGM safeguarding policies undermining welfare, study warns

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/04/female-genital-mutilation-uk-safeguarding-policies-undermining-welfare-study-finds>

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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>

**** Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

Stage 2 consideration of amendments, Justice Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13112&i=118677#ScotParlOR>

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>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

Use of hotels and barracks as contingency asylum accommodation

(closing date 19 February 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/call-for-evidence-an-inspection-of-the-use-of-hotels-and-barracks-as-contingency-asylum-accommodation>

**** The Windrush Compensation Scheme** (closing date 1 March 2021)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/317/the-windrush-compensation-scheme/>

Human Rights Act Review (closing date 3 March 2021)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/138635/call-for-evidence-the-governments-independent-human-rights-act-review/>

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/>

Racial inequality in health and social care workplaces (closing date not stated)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/inquiry-racial-inequality-health-and-social-care-workplaces>

Black Lives in Scotland (closing date not stated)

<https://blacklivesinScotland.typeform.com/to/YFrnnHSC>

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>

Adapt and Thrive

Running until March 2021

This programme, which is part of the Scottish Government Community and Third Sector Recovery Programme, offers grants of up to £75,000, loans, and specialist advice to organisations across the third sector to adapt to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and build back better to thrive in the future. For information see

<https://scvo.scot/support/coronavirus/funding/scottish-government/community-recovery/atf>

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

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 see <https://tinyurl.com/y4qdpm9y>

**** this week!**

Refugee Week Slow Conference

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>

Organising security for your place of worship

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>

Ethnicity and Covid-19: Addressing the impact of the pandemic on Black and Minority Ethnic people

25 February 2020 (online, 11.00)

JRF/Runnymede webinar to explore evidence and policy recommendations relating to the impact of the pandemic on BME people. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y53oskg4>

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/>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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/>

No Recourse to Public Funds

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/>

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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/>*



*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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