



MEMO is produced by the [Scottish Council of Jewish Communities \(SCoJeC\)](#) in partnership with [BEMIS – empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities](#). It provides an overview of information of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, including parliamentary activity at Holyrood and Westminster, new publications, consultations, forthcoming conferences, and news reports.

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**The Scottish Parliament will be in recess until 4 May 2021,
and the UK Parliament until 13 April 2021.**

**The Scottish Parliament will be dissolved on 5 May,
and the Scottish Parliament elections will take place on 6 May 2021.**

The next issue of MEMO will be published on 19 April.

NB: The Scottish Parliament website has been redesigned, and they have not set up forwarding between the old and new sites. As a result many Scottish Parliament links in previous issues of MEMO will no longer lead to the relevant items. To find these items you will need to copy details such as the ID number of the written answer or motion, or key words, such as the subject matter, and name of MSP and/or Minister involved, from the link in MEMO into the search facility on their new site at www.parliament.scot/search

Immigration and Asylum

UK Parliament Debates

New Plan for Immigration

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-24/debates/464FFFBB-ECA5-4788-BC36-60F8B7D8D9D1/NewPlanForImmigration>

Immigration and Nationality Application Fees

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-25/debates/AEE4E60-FC9F-4300-9322-A8A69518B550/ImmigrationAndNationalityApplicationFees>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Home Secretary's statement on the New Plan for Immigration

The government has taken back control of legal immigration by ending free movement and introducing a points-based immigration system.

We are now addressing the challenge of illegal immigration - head on.

I am introducing the most significant overhaul of our asylum system in decades.

A new, comprehensive, fair but firm, long-term plan.

Because while people are dying, we have a responsibility to act.

People are dying - at sea, in lorries and in shipping containers - having put their lives in the hands of criminal gangs that facilitate illegal journeys to the UK.

To stop the deaths, we must stop the trade in people that cause them.

Our society is enriched by legal immigration.

We celebrate those who have come to the UK lawfully and helped build Britain. We always will.

Since 2015, we have resettled almost 25,000 men, women and children seeking refuge from persecution across the world - more than any EU country.

Welcomed more than 29,000 close relatives through refugee family reunion.

And created a pathway to citizenship to enable over five million people in Hong Kong to come to the UK.

Nobody can say that the British public are not fair or generous when it comes to helping those in need.

But the British public also recognise that for too long parts of the immigration system have been open to abuse.

At the heart of our New Plan for Immigration is a simple principle: fairness.

Access to the UK's asylum system should be based on need, not the ability to pay people smugglers.

If you enter illegally from a safe country like France where you should and could have claimed asylum, you are not seeking refuge from persecution – as is the intended purpose of the asylum system.

Instead, you are choosing the UK as your preferred destination.

And you are doing so at the expense of those with nowhere else to go.

Our system is collapsing under the pressure of parallel illegal routes to asylum, facilitated by criminal smugglers.

The existence of parallel routes is deeply unfair, advancing those with the means to pay smugglers over those in desperate need.

The capacity of our asylum system is not unlimited.

And so the presence of economic migrants which these illegal routes introduce, limits our ability to properly support others in genuine need of protection.

This is manifestly unfair to those desperately waiting to be resettled in the UK.

And it is not fair to the British people either; whose taxes pay for vital public services and an asylum system which has skyrocketed in cost – now costing over 1 billion pounds this year.

There were more than 32,000 attempts tried to enter the UK illegally in 2019.

With 8,500 people arriving by small boat in 2020.

Of those, 87% were men, 74% were aged between 18-39.

We should ask ourselves, where are the vulnerable women and children that this system should exist to protect?

The system is becoming overwhelmed – 109,000 claims are sitting in the asylum queue – 52,000 awaiting an initial asylum decision. Almost three quarters of those waiting a year or more.

42,000 failed asylum seekers have not left the country, despite having their claim refused. The persistent failure to enforce our immigration laws, with a system that is open to gaming by economic migrants and exploitation by criminals, is eroding public trust, and disadvantaging vulnerable people who need our help.

Which is why our New Plan for Immigration is driven by three fair but firm objectives:

First. To increase the fairness of our system so we can protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.

Second. To deter illegal entry into the UK – breaking the business model of people smugglers – and protecting the lives of those they endanger.

Third. To remove more easily from the UK, those with no right to be here.

Let me take each in turn, Mr Speaker.

First. We will continue to provide safe refuge to those in need – strengthening support for those arriving through safe and legal routes.

People coming to the UK through resettlement routes will be granted indefinite leave to remain.

They will receive more support to learn English, find work and integrate.

And I will also act to help those who have suffered injustices.

By amending British Nationality Law so that members of the Windrush Generation will be able to obtain British citizenship more easily.

Second. This plan marks a step change in our approach as we toughen our stance to deter illegal entry and the criminals that endanger life by enabling it.

Many illegal arrivals have travelled through a safe country like France to get to the UK – where they could and should have claimed asylum.

We must act to reduce the pull factors of our system and disincentivise illegal entry.

For the first time, whether people enter the UK legally or illegally will have an impact on how their asylum claim progresses, and on their status in the UK if that claim is successful.

We will deem their claim as inadmissible, and make every effort to remove those who enter the UK illegally having travelled through a safe country first in which they could and should have claimed asylum.

Only where removal is not possible, will those who have successful claims – having entered illegally – receive a new temporary protection status.

This is not an automatic right to settle, they will be regularly reassessed for removal, and will include limited access to benefits, and limited family reunion rights. Our tough new stance will also include:

New maximum life sentences for people smugglers and facilitators.

New rules to stop unscrupulous people posing as children.

And strengthen enforcement powers for Border Force.

Third. We will seek to rapidly remove those with no right to be here in the UK.

Establishing a fast-track appeals process.

Streamlining the appeals system and making quicker removal decisions for failed asylum seekers and dangerous foreign criminals.

We will tackle the practice of meritless claims which clog up the courts with last minute

claims and appeals.

A fundamental unfairness that lawyers tell me frustrates them too.

Because for too long our justice system has been gamed.

Almost three quarters of migrants in detention raised last-minute new claims, challenges or other issues with over eight in ten of these eventually being denied as valid reasons to stay in the UK.

Enough is enough.

Our new plan sets out a 'one-stop' process to require all claims to be made upfront.

No more endless meritless claims to frustrate removal. No more stalling justice.

Our new system will be faster and fairer and will help us better support the most vulnerable.

Mr Speaker, our new plan builds on the work already done to take back control of our borders.

Building a system that upholds our reputation as a country where criminality is not rewarded, but which is a haven for those in need.

There are no quick fixes, or shortcuts to success.

But this long-term plan, pursued doggedly, will fix our broken system.

We know that members of the Opposition would prefer a different plan, one that embraces the idea of Open Borders.

Many of them were reluctant to end Free Movement.

With members opposite on record as having said that all immigration controls are racist or sexist.

And to those who say we lack compassion, I simply say, while people are dying we must act to deter these journeys.

And if you don't like our plan, where is yours?

This government promised to take a common-sense approach to controlling immigration – legal and illegal – and we will deliver on that promise.

The UK is playing its part to tackle the inhumanity of illegal migration, and today I will press for global action at the G6.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretarys-statement-on-the-new-plan-for-immigration>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Immigration: Hong Kong

Bob Seely (Conservative): What progress [has the Minister's] Department made on implementing the immigration route for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) passport holders to settle in the UK. (913713)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): On 31 January, we launched a bespoke immigration route for British national overseas status-holders and their households, allowing them to come to the UK to live, work and study on a pathway to British citizenship. On 23 February, we also launched a fully digital application process, which will allow many applicants to apply from home using a smart device.

Bob Seely: I congratulate the Home Secretary and her Ministers on the excellent work with Hong Kong BNOs, and long may it continue. On the wider point of asylum, may I thank the Secretary of State and her excellent ministerial team for the much-needed reforms to the asylum system that they are introducing, which will make the asylum system significantly fairer to the British people? These changes cannot come soon enough.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We appreciate my hon. Friend's warm endorsement of the work done to create this route, which will give many millions the opportunity to make their home here in our United Kingdom, if they decide that that is the right choice for them and their family. We look forward to working with our colleagues in

the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and with local councils and the devolved Administrations, to ensure a warm welcome across our United Kingdom for those who arrive here under the new settlement route.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-22/debates/CF95F181-488F-49DB-89F8-7672B52FF32F/ImmigrationHongKong>

Contingency Asylum Accommodation

Catherine West (Labour): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to respond to the findings of the independent chief inspector of borders and immigration's inspection of contingency asylum accommodation. (913708)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): During the pandemic, the number of accommodated asylum seekers has increased, because we have not been able to move people on from accommodation and continuing claims. That means we have needed to secure contingency accommodation options, including two Ministry of Defence sites. We await the inspector's full report on contingency accommodation, which will lay in Parliament alongside the Department's response after his inspection is concluded.

Catherine West (Labour): Many constituents have been in touch about the unhygienic conditions at Napier barracks, which risk spreading covid. I understand that the Home Secretary told the Select Committee that she had been following guidance, yet that seems to be the opposite of what Kent and Medway clinical commissioning group said. It stated that there were "too many people housed in each block to allow adequate social distancing and to prevent the risk of spread of infection". Will the Minister once and for all decide that barracks are simply super-spreader venues that should not be used for anyone, let alone vulnerable asylum seekers?

Reply from Kevin Foster: We expect the highest standards from our providers and have instructed them to make improvements following the interim report from the independent chief inspector. In future, a core part of avoiding the pressures that result in the need for contingency accommodation will be fixing our broken asylum system, so that decisions are fair, prompt and firmer, and those whose claims are not genuine can be removed more easily.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): The Home Secretary said to the Select Committee that "advice around dormitories and the use of the accommodation was all based on Public Health England advice". However, the inspection report reveals that Public Health England had advised that opening "dormitory-style accommodation at Napier was not supported by current guidance".

Ministers have claimed that the barracks are "good enough for the armed services and they are certainly more than good enough for people...seeking asylum."—[[Official Report, 8 February 2021; Vol. 689, c. 10.](#)] However, the report says that they are "impoverished, run-down and unsuitable". When will those statements be corrected, and, more importantly, why did the Home Office not grasp that the use of dormitory accommodation in the middle of a pandemic was utterly reckless?

Reply from Kevin Foster: I note the hon. Member's points, but I have already outlined that we expect the highest standards from providers and have instructed them to make improvements. A core part of being able to end the use of contingency accommodation in hotels and barracks is having more options and locations for dispersed accommodation. Sadly, Glasgow is the only location currently providing it in Scotland. Part of the solution might be for his council in Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East to agree to be next on the list—something I hope he will reflect positively on.

Stuart C McDonald: It is well and good for the Minister to ask providers to make improvements, but it is a blindingly obvious fact that whatever is done with dormitory accommodation will not protect against coronavirus. I agree that to fix asylum

accommodation, local authorities must have the powers and the funding they need for the job. The Home Affairs Committee has said that several times. If the Home Office agrees to do that, instead of launching the horrendous large-scale warehousing of vulnerable people, more local authorities will get on board and I will, indeed, encourage it. Will the Home Office make sure local authorities get the powers and the funding they need?

Reply from Kevin Foster: We can see from the contribution Glasgow makes that a range of support is already available. As I say, we want to end the use of contingency accommodation. It is just that—contingency. As the pressures have reduced, we have moved away from using the Penally site, for example. However, as has been touched on, the solution is for more areas to come forward, because we need local councils to back up some of what they call for with action.

Holly Lynch (Labour): The independent inspector's report states very clearly that "once one person was infected a large-scale outbreak was virtually inevitable." In addition, the Kent and Medway clinical commissioning group inspection report on Napier confirmed that some communal areas were cleaned just once a week; that staff were expected to sleep three to a room; and that there were people with pre-existing vulnerabilities, including diabetes, leukaemia and tuberculosis, accommodated there. The public health advice never supported the use of dormitories, so why is Napier barracks still open?

Reply from Kevin Foster: As I have already outlined, we have instructed our providers to make improvements, and we want to reduce the use of contingency accommodation through fixing our broken asylum system. I am sure many will be interested to note the Labour party's sudden interest in, and enthusiasm for, securing improvements at Napier barracks now that they are no longer being used by our armed forces.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-22/debates/31A8C682-CEEA-41DF-A79E-80BD11B02AAC/ContingencyAsylumAccommodation>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/an-inspection-of-the-use-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-key-findings-from-site-visits-to-penally-camp-and-napier-barracks>

Asylum Accommodation: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna (SDLP): What recent discussions [has the Minister's] Department had with the Northern Ireland Executive on asylum accommodation in Northern Ireland. (913695)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): Home Office officials meet weekly with the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership to discuss intake, accommodation and other operational matters relating to asylum accommodation. That is supplemented by formal monthly meetings with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Belfast City Council, the voluntary and communities sector, public health colleagues and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Claire Hanna: Asylum seekers in Northern Ireland are disadvantaged by a lack of parity in specialist services such as trauma counselling and legal advice, but instead of plugging these gaps, this Secretary of State seems obsessed with introducing ever more punitive and dehumanising policies in her approach to dealing with people fleeing persecution. We have seen the outworkings of offshore processing in Australia, which cost lives and hundreds of millions of pounds; it was a human rights disaster. Will the Minister take the opportunity to confirm that the Department is not pursuing plans to use third countries as dumping grounds? Will the Government instead commit to establishing safe and legal routes, and housing with dignity those who need asylum in the UK?

Reply from Kevin Foster: It is disappointing to hear the tone of the hon. Lady's question, given that the Belfast City Council area is the only part of Northern Ireland to act as a dispersal area. Securing suitable accommodation relies on local communities taking part. Perhaps she may wish to reflect on what more action

could be taken by councils where the Social Democratic and Labour party has a presence to match her words.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-22/debates/9D6AEC29-355A-478D-9D5D-06749AA0C103/AsylumAccommodationNorthernIreland>

Deportation

Richard Holden (Conservative): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to speed up the deportation of (a) serious foreign national offenders, (b) failed asylum seekers, (c) people who commit serious breaches of their visa conditions and (d) illegal migrants. (913698)

Bob Blackman (Conservative): What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to deport foreign national offenders. (913707)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Chris Philp): Removing people who should not be here is vital in order to maintain the integrity of our immigration system. In particular, removing dangerous foreign national offenders is crucial to protecting our fellow citizens. In the year to June 2020, there were 5,208 enforced removals. However, that was significantly lower than in previous years, which is why we are going to be bringing forward proposals very shortly to reform the system to make sure we can better enforce our immigration rules.

Richard Holden: I thank the Minister for his answer. My North West Durham constituents want genuine refugees to be supported, but they also want to see foreign criminals and bogus asylum seekers deported. Members of the local Labour party are spreading scare stories about the plans for the Hassockfield site, so will the Minister confirm that it will be a secure facility—essentially a category C prison—with around 80 females detained for as short a time as possible, and that recruitment for 200 local jobs will start as soon as possible? Finally, will he ignore the calls of the hard-left Labour activists who want to have open borders and would allow foreign criminals to stay in the UK, and ensure that those people who have no right to be here are deported as quickly as possible?

Reply from Chris Philp: My hon. Friend is right: when people have valid asylum claims, we should of course look after them, but when they do not, we should ensure that they leave. The Hassockfield centre is indeed designed for 80 female detainees and will be a secure facility. As my hon. Friend says, it will create local jobs, and only people with no right to stay in the country will be there. I join my hon. Friend in condemning the local Labour party in his neighbourhood, which appears to be against proper border controls.

Bob Blackman: My hon. Friend the Minister will well know of the frustration when violent criminals who are foreign nationals leave prison and are due to be deported, only for their lawyers to frustrate the process with last-minute appeals. Will he bring forward proposals to prevent such action and make sure that those dangerous criminals who are a threat to this country are deported at the end of their criminal convictions?

Reply from Chris Philp: My hon. Friend is right: dangerous criminals, including murderers and rapists, should be deported once their sentence is over. I am afraid he is also right that we face legal challenges, often very late in the day and despite the fact that there have been many previous opportunities to make such claims, the vast majority of which—well over 80%—subsequently turn out to be totally without merit. It is for that reason that the Home Secretary and I will bring forward proposals in the very near future to address exactly that issue.

Conor McGinn (Labour): We learned this month that under this Government the number of foreign criminals living freely in the UK has exceeded 10,000 for the first time ever, while last year the number deported fell to its lowest level on record. However bad those numbers are, at least they exist, unlike—astonishingly, as I found out today—any figures on the rearrest of previously charged and potentially dangerous terrorist suspects. Does

that not show how, for all their tough talk, this Government's record is weak and their competence lacking? It is a totally unacceptable state of affairs when it comes to the safety and security of the British people.

Reply from Chris Philp: Given the shadow Minister's new-found concern about deporting foreign national offenders, we will find out whether his actions in the Division Lobbies match his rhetoric when we come to vote on legislation in the relatively near future. Why was it that when we brought forward a charter flight in December to deport dangerous foreign national offenders, Labour MP after Labour MP stood up to oppose that? That is completely wrong.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-22/debates/1BF29751-A7FA-4511-A9C7-D723F596B45C/Deportation>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

British Nationality: Fees and Charges

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru) [171678] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many eligible (a) adults, (b) children in Wales have applied unsuccessfully for UK citizenship as a result of being unable to pay the non-administrative costs of the citizenship fee since 2010.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on citizenship applications and grants at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-statistics-data-tables-year-ending-june-2020#citizenship

An incomplete payment is just one of a number of reasons which could lead to an application being rejected and included under the '*rejected applications*' heading in Table 4.

The Home Office does not have accessible management information on applications rejected in Wales specifically, as a result of being unable to pay the non-administrative costs of citizenship fees. Fees are set according to section 68 of the Immigration Act 2014 and are set within parameters agreed by Parliament.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171678>

British Nationality: Fees and Charges

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru) [121679] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of effect of the removal of all non-administrative costs from the child citizenship fee on her ability to discharge her duty under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office keeps all fees under review.

The Home Office has acknowledged the judgment given in the recent court case on child registration fees, where the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court's decision the Home Office had not demonstrated compliance with its duties under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 in setting the child registration fee

A Section 55 assessment of the child registration fee is currently being carried out.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171679>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2021/193.html>

Immigration

Taiwo Owatemi (Labour) [170746] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Leave to Remain family and private life applications were processed within six months in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Family and Private Life leave to remain applications are captured as part of the data referred to as “HR Complex” here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-protection-data-february-2021>

Family and Private Life applications are not currently subject to a service standard; this is due to their complexity, relying as they tend to on human rights claims. Each application is considered carefully on its own individual merits and with reference to the supporting documents provided.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170746>

Immigration: Married People

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [169107] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the fiscal merits of minimum income requirements for spouse visas with regard to demand for public services and welfare systems.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The minimum income requirement was set, following advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee, at £18,600 for sponsoring a partner, rising to £22,400 for also sponsoring a non-qualifying child and an additional £2,400 for each further such child. This reflects the level of income at which a British family or a family settled in the UK generally ceases to be able to access income-related benefits.

The income requirement and the qualifying period over which the requirement must be met ensure family migrants are supported at a reasonable level without reliance on public funds.

The number of partner applications granted permission to come to the UK has reduced since the introduction of the minimum income requirement in 2012, from 36,290 in 2011 to 30,669 in 2019/20, which means a reduction in demand for public services and welfare systems and savings for the taxpayer.

We continue to keep the family Immigration Rules under review and make adjustments should they prove to be necessary. Our overall assessment is the Rules, including the minimum income requirement, are having the right impact by helping to ensure public confidence migration to the UK is not based on access to public services paid for by UK taxpayers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-15/169107>

Migrant Workers: Immigration Controls

George Howarth (Labour) [171503] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that the UK's immigration policy enables people with (a) professional and (b) technical skills to access employment in the UK.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Skilled Worker route is designed to allow licensed UK employers to recruit workers to fill skilled vacancies on a global basis. Workers sponsored must be paid the appropriate salary and demonstrate they have the appropriate level of English language ability.

The new system includes broadening the minimum skill level for the skilled work route to RQF 3, equivalent to A levels, and lowering the general salary threshold to £25,600. The expanded skills threshold includes a variety of jobs requiring different professional and/or technical skills.

The new points-based system plays a key part in our long-term approach as the Government brings forward its strategy to rebuild our economy, support businesses to grow and get people back to work, with immigration policy being considered as part of our overall strategy for the UK Labour market, not in isolation to it.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171503>

Visas

Hilary Benn (Labour) [172889] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to extend the validity of leave to remain visas issued to persons overseas in red list countries who are unable to exercise their right to enter the UK on such a visa as a result of them, and any family members, not being able to afford the hotel isolation fee; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kevin Foster: If an individual overseas in a red list country has UK residence rights and is concerned about their ability to pay for their [managed quarantine facility](#) costs, they may be eligible to apply for a deferred repayment plan when booking.

We have set out how to apply for this, in particular for individuals who receive income related benefits. They will be required to pay back their debt to the government in 12 monthly instalments. Further guidance can be found on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/booking-and-staying-in-a-quarantine-hotel-when-you-arrive-in-england#what-you-need-to-do-before-you-arrive-in-england>

If an individual overseas with UK residence rights chooses not to travel to the UK within the validity of their visa, they will need to make an application for a replacement visa or a new visa in an appropriate route. Further guidance can be found on the GOV.UK website:

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

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/172889>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Migrants: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167981] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the hostile environment policy on the rollout of the covid-19 vaccine.

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167983] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the distribution of the covid-19 vaccine to UK residents with no recourse to public funds.

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167985] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of granting (a) undocumented migrants, (b) people with no recourse to public funds, and (c) people awaiting determination of their asylum, visa and immigration applications indefinite leave to remain to help ensure a complete roll-out of the covid-19 vaccine.

Reply from Chris Philp: The COVID-19 vaccine is available free of charge to anyone living in the UK, including those here without permission. If they are registered with a GP practice, they will be invited for the vaccine at the appropriate time based on the prioritisation set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

If they are not registered with a GP, they will still be able to receive the vaccine under the GP COVID-19 vaccination programme 2020/21 Enhanced Service Specification. More information can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/12/C09-17-Covid-19-Enhanced-Service-ES-Specification-1-December-2020.pdf>

The Home Office is supporting the Department for Health and Social Care's approach to ensure we are reaching as many people as possible.

A condition of No Recourse of Public Funds does not have a bearing on a person's access to healthcare or the COVID-19 vaccine.

In light of the availability of the COVID-19 vaccination for all UK residents, including

those who are undocumented, we have no plans to grant immigration leave for this purpose.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167981>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167983>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167985>

Undocumented Migrants: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167982] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the distribution of the covid-19 vaccine to undocumented migrants.

Reply from Chris Philp: For public health protection, it is very important people are not deterred from seeking treatment for COVID-19. The Department for Health and Social Care took early steps to ensure diagnosis and treatment for COVID-19 is free for all, including anyone living in the UK without permission. As such, progress on administering the COVID-19 vaccine to illegal immigrants is not a matter for the Home Office

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167982>

Migrants: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167984] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the distribution of the covid-19 vaccine to people awaiting determination of their asylum, visa and immigration applications.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Department for Health and Social Care took early steps to ensure diagnosis and treatment for COVID-19 is free for all, including anyone living in the UK without permission.

Distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine to people awaiting determination of their asylum, visa and immigration applications is therefore not a matter for the Home Office.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167984>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167986] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Home Office on the progress of the distribution of the covid-19 vaccine to people awaiting determination of their asylum, visa and immigration applications.

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167987] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Home Office on the progress of the distribution of the covid-19 vaccine to UK residents with No Recourse to Public Funds.

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [167988] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Home Office on the progress of the distribution of the covid-19 vaccine to undocumented migrants.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Department and Public Health England have engaged with the Home Office throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including in relation to the vaccination programme.

Anyone living in the United Kingdom, including refugees and asylum seekers, can receive a COVID-19 vaccine free of charge in line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's on prioritisation. Because there is no charge for the vaccine for people living in the UK, no proof of residence or

immigration status is needed.

National Health Service regional teams, working with various appropriate local systems, will reach out to unregistered people to ensure that they are offered the vaccine. A condition of No Recourse of Public Funds does not have a bearing on a person's access to healthcare or the COVID-19 vaccine.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167986>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167987>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167988>

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Apsana Begum (Labour) [148036] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people aged over 65 in (a) prisons and (b) immigration detention centres have been prioritised for covid-19 vaccination.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: If an individual in prison or an immigration detention centre is over 65 years old, they will be prioritised for vaccination in line with the rest of the population.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-02/148036>

Migrants: Finance

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [913725] What assessment she has made of the effect on people of the No Recourse to Public Funds condition applied to immigration status.

Reply from Chris Philp: Migrants coming to the UK are expected to maintain and support themselves and their families without posing a burden on the welfare system.

The Home Office has published its policy equality statement on the impact of the No Recourse to Public Funds policy on migrants on the human rights route.

Migrants with leave under certain routes can apply to lift their NRPF condition.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/913725>

Migrants: Finance

Helen Hayes (Labour) [169915] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the (a) Chancellor of the Exchequer and (b) Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the cost to local authorities of supporting households with no recourse to public funds.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Government has provided unprecedented support of over £8 billion of funding to local authorities in England to help councils manage the impacts of COVID-19 and respond to the spending pressures they are facing, including £4.6 billion which is not ringfenced. Funding provided to local authorities under the COVID-19 emergency response will be paid through a grant, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how this funding is spent. The Government has also provided additional funding of nearly £19 billion for the devolved administrations under the Barnett formula as part of the wider government response.

More information on the support available to migrants during the pandemic, including those with No Recourse to Public Funds, can be found at:

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

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169915>

Migrants: Finance

Claudia Webbe (Independent) [173208] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department, what plans the Government has to suspend the No Recourse to Public Funds conditions on public health grounds for the duration of the covid-19 outbreak, as recommended by the Work and Pensions Select Committee in its first report of Session 2019-21, DWP's response to the coronavirus outbreak, published 22 June 2020.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Government remains committed to protecting vulnerable people and has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this pandemic.

Healthcare is not classified as a public fund, and testing and treatment for COVID-19 is free of charge to all regardless of immigration status. Also, NHS Trusts have been advised that no immigration checks are required for these patients. The guidance can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide>

Many of the wide-ranging COVID-19 measures the Government has put in place are available to migrants with NRPf. These range from assistance being given under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme, statutory sick pay and discretionary hardship payments for those who have to self-isolate.

Migrants who have been granted leave on the basis of their family life / human rights can apply to have the NRPf condition on their stay lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we have continued to prioritise NRPf 'change of conditions' applications and deal with them compassionately. Data published in February 2021 for quarter 4 of 2020 shows the average time taken to make a decision on cases is 18 days. Of the decisions taken in the same period, 86% were granted.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

The Government has provided unprecedented support of over £8 billion of funding to local authorities in England to help councils manage the impacts of COVID-19 and respond to the spending pressures they are facing, including £4.6 billion which is not ringfenced. Additional funding of nearly £19 billion has also been provided for the devolved administrations under the Barnett formula as part of the wider government response. In light of the support that is available to those with NRPf, we do not believe it is necessary to suspend the NRPf condition for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/173208>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1558/documents/14743/default/>

Windrush Lessons Learned Review

Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [174238] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 157994 on Windrush Lessons Learned Review, whether her Department is conducting external consultation on its draft ethical decision-making model; and whether the final version of that model will be published.

Reply from Priti Patel: The draft ethical decision-making model was developed with reference to similar models used in policing, health and social care settings. This included discussion with practitioners and academics in those fields. The final model will be published following testing and introduction into operational settings.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/174238>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-24/157994>

The “Lessons Learned Review”, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874022/6.5577_HO_Windrush_Lessons_Learned_Review_WEB_v2.pdf

The following two questions both received the same answer

Windrush Generation: Compensation

Vicky Foxcroft (Labour) [174173] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) minimum and (b) maximum awards to date are for people that have made claims under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

Vicky Foxcroft (Labour) [174174] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average timescale is for processing claims to the Windrush Compensation Scheme for people in (a) Lewisham, Deptford constituency, (b) London and (c) the UK.

Reply from Priti Patel: The Home Office does not publish specific data regarding the minimum and maximum awards to date. The information is not readily available in a reportable format and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

However, on the 14th of December the Home Office increased the minimum award under the Impact on Life category to £10,000.

The value of awards for Impact on Life at every level were also increased, with the maximum award increasing from £10,000 to £100,000 (with options for even higher awards in exceptional circumstances).

Data on the number of members of the Windrush generation that reside in Lewisham, Deptford and London is not available. Information relating to individual Windrush migrants is not recorded by constituency.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/174173>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/174174>

The following five questions all received the same answer

Immigration: EU Nationals

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [170624] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been received under the EU Settlement Scheme in (a) each of the last 12 months and (b) total.

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [170625] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been granted Settled Status in (a) each of the last 12 months and (b) total under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [170626] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been granted pre-settled status in (a) each of the last 12 months and (b) total under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [170627] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applications to the EU Settlement Scheme in (a) each of the last 12 months and (b) total have been granted settled status.

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [170628] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applications to the EU Settlement Scheme in (a) each of the last 12 months and (b) total have been granted pre-settled status.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Total applications and conclusions by month up to December 2020 can be found in table EUSS_MON available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964547/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-tables-28-august-2018-to-31-december-2020.ods

The latest top-level monthly figures can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170624>
and
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170625>
and
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170626>
and
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170627>
and
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170628>

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

Immigration: EU Nationals

Bill Esterson (Labour) [169844] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the deadline for EU citizens applying for settled status in response to difficulties in renewing passports and national identity cards during the covid-19 pandemic.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We have continued to receive and process thousands of applications a day to the scheme throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 5.1 million applications received and more than 4.8 million applications concluded by 28 February 2021. There are no plans to extend the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

Support for applicants who need it has remained available, including from the network of 72 organisations across the UK grant-funded by the Home Office to help vulnerable people apply to the EUSS.

Published guidance for EUSS applicants on the impact of COVID-19, including the scope for them to provide alternative evidence of identity and nationality if they do not have a valid passport or national identity card, is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-eu-settlement-scheme-guidance-for-applicants>

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, the Government has been clear, where a person has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EUSS by EU citizens and their family members resident in the UK by the end of the transition period, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

Non-exhaustive guidance will be published in the near future on what constitutes such reasonable grounds, to underpin a flexible and pragmatic approach to considering late applications under the EUSS.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169844>

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

Immigration: EU Nationals

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [173084] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the deadline for the EU Settled Status Scheme beyond June 2021 in response to covid-19 restrictions.

Reply from Kevin Foster: There are no plans to extend the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

We have continued to receive and process thousands of applications a day to the scheme throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 5.1 million

applications received and more than 4.8 million applications concluded by 28 February 2021.

Support for applicants who need it has remained available, including from the network of 72 organisations across the UK grant-funded by the Home Office to help vulnerable people apply to the EUSS.

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, the Government has been clear, where a person has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EUSS by EU citizens and their family members resident in the UK by the end of the transition period, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

We will publish clear, non-exhaustive guidance in the near future on what constitutes reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. For now, the focus remains on communicating information about the scheme and helping people to apply.

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

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/173084>

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

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

The following two questions both received the same answer

Immigration: EU Nationals

Mike Amesbury (Labour) [170734] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to tackle the matter of self-sufficient individuals of EU nationality who were not informed of requirements to hold comprehensive sickness insurance but who now require such insurance to apply for British citizenship.

Mike Amesbury (Labour) [170735] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the efficacy of Government communications on publicising the requirement for EU citizens living in the UK to hold Comprehensive Sickness Insurance.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Guidance on which groups of EEA nationals required comprehensive sickness insurance, as well as the types of documents accepted to meet this condition, has always been publicly available. This can currently be found from page 38 of the guidance on 'qualified persons' available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-economic-area-nationals-qualified-persons>

The requirements to naturalise as a British citizen remain unchanged by our exit from the European Union or the implementation of the EU Settlement Scheme. This includes requirements to normally have been free of immigration time restrictions for 12 months before applying, and to have been lawfully in the UK throughout the residential qualifying period.

There may be cases where nationality caseworkers need to satisfy themselves the person was here lawfully. This is not a new requirement and was an assessment we have always been making. It is also a statutory requirement and cannot be ignored. The same applies to all applicants, EEA or not. We have recently amended the application forms to ensure we can gather as much of this information upfront at the application stage where possible.

Guidance on GOV.UK sets out when we might exercise discretion where a person did not meet the lawful residence requirements. This includes where it is because the applicant did not meet an additional/implicit condition of stay under EEA Free Movement Regulations, rather than illegal entry or overstaying, such as an EEA or Swiss national living or studying in the UK, rather than working, not having CSI.

As has previously been confirmed I am not aware of any application for UK Citizenship being declined purely on the basis of the CSI requirement under EEA Free Movement Regulations and it should not deter anyone from making their application. The guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/naturalisation-as-a-british-citizen-by-discretion-nationality-policy-guidance>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170734>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170735>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Neil Coyle (Labour) [170663] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps an EU citizen, who is eligible for but has not yet been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme, needs to take to apply for or renew a British driving licence during the EU Settlement Scheme grace period up to 30 June 2021.

Reply from Kevin Foster: EU/EEA citizens who arrived in the UK prior to the 31 December 2020, and who declare this as part of their application to apply for a UK driving licence, will not be required by DVLA to provide evidence of residency during the grace period.

Until the grace period ends, they will simply need to provide proof of identity, such as a passport, if they are applying for a first, provisional licence or to change a paper licence to a photocard licence.

If they are applying to renew a photocard licence, they will only need to pay the renewal fee and update their photograph.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170663>

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

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

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Michael Fabricant (Conservative) [913717] What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to prevent migrants from unlawfully crossing the English Channel; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: The danger to life from channel crossings and the criminal activity they fund is simply unacceptable.

Journeys are often illegally-facilitated and totally unnecessary, France is a safe country with a fully functioning asylum system.

We are working tirelessly to make this route unviable.

We are also introducing legislation to fix our broken asylum system and create a fairer and firmer system.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/913717>

Refugees: Resettlement

Carol Monaghan (SNP) [173075] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timescale is for the commencement of her Department's future UK refugee resettlement scheme.

Reply from Chris Philp: The global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) launched following the completion of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Through UKRS we are committed to welcoming refugees through resettlement in the months and years to come. This commitment, alongside a fair and firm asylum system, will see us continue to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for vulnerable refugees in need of protection.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/173075>

Asylum

Scot Benton (Conservative) [913721] What steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to simplify asylum (a) claims and (b) appeals.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office is working to transform the broken asylum system and processes: the work will simplify, streamline and digitise processes, ensuring that genuine asylum claimants are treated quickly, fairly and are supported; and those who do not qualify are rapidly identified and prepared for return. As part of this programme of work, the Home Office is working collaboratively with HMCTS on their ambitious programme of court reform.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/913721>

Asylum

Holly Lynch (Labour) [171652] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claims have been deemed inadmissible since the most recent Immigration Rule changes came into effect.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of asylum applications are published in Table Asy_D01 and data on the number and type of asylum initial decisions are published in table Asy_D02 of the Asylum and Resettlement datasets.

Figures on the number of asylum application decisions made in the first quarter of 2021 are due to be published on 27 May 2021. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'. We are working to bring inadmissibility decisions in line with current reporting and hope to publish that information in the same timeframe.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171652>

The statistics referred to above can be read at

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

Belarus: Asylum

Daniel Kawczynski (Conservative) [172029] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total number of political asylums granted by UK to citizens of Belarus was in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of the initial decision on asylum applications are published in tables Asy_D02 of the [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

Please note, the data relates to all initial decisions on asylum applications, regardless of reason. The definition of asylum, as used by Immigration Statistics Quarterly release, can be found in the asylum section of the [user guide](#).

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relate to December 2020.

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the '[summary tables](#)'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and resettlement.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/172029>

Asylum: Children

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [169925] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many local authorities have been unable to fulfil their duties to unaccompanied asylum seeking children under the Children Act 1989 in each year since 2010.

Reply from Vicky Ford: Legislation is clear about the statutory duties placed on local authorities in caring for unaccompanied children. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and to accommodate them if they meet the relevant criteria for requiring accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

As far as the department is aware, two local authorities have been unable to fulfil these duties to unaccompanied asylum seeking children under the Children Act 1989 since 2010, both in 2020, with one ongoing in 2021. We have been working with both councils to support them to meet their duties to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The government has also worked with local authorities across the country to secure alternative placements for children and young people arriving in these local authorities.

An unaccompanied asylum seeking child will become looked after by the local authority after having been accommodated by that local authority under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 for 24 hours. This will mean that the local authority has the same statutory duties towards them as to any other looked after child.

Local authorities supporting high numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in proportion to their child population have, since 2016, been able to refer children to the National Transfer Scheme if they are concerned about their capacity to meet their statutory duties towards them as looked after children. A place will then be sought for those children with another local authority that will take on statutory duties for them. Statistics on transfers made through the National Transfer Scheme are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-february-2020>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169925>

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Stephen Flynn (SNP) [913719] What assessment has [the Minister] made of the adequacy of the temporary accommodation provided by her Department for asylum seekers.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Contingency accommodation - whether this be hotels across the United Kingdom or at the Napier barracks and Penally training camp - was set up in response to the enormous pressures placed on our asylum system by the coronavirus pandemic.

We expect the highest standards from providers and have instructed them to make improvements as part of our contract governance and following inspections, an independent audit and the interim report from the Independent Chief Inspector.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/913719>

The interim report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/an-inspection-of-the-use-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-key-findings-from-site-visits-to-penally-camp-and-napier-barracks>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Military Bases

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [169963] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to close Penally and Napier Barracks as asylum accommodation.

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [169964] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take in response to the findings of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's inspection on contingency asylum accommodation.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Penally has provided emergency capacity in response to pressures put on the asylum estate during the pandemic. As those pressures have eased, we have decided not to extend emergency planning permission beyond six months and moved all remaining asylum seekers from the site on 21 March. Napier Barracks will remain in operation in accordance with current needs. The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration announced an inspection of contingency asylum accommodation on 25 January 2021. The Home Office acknowledges the ICIBI's decision to publish the initial findings from site visits to Napier Barracks and Penally.

The ICIBI's inspection continues and a full inspection report will follow.

The duration of the inspection is a matter for the ICIBI and upon its conclusion, following standard procedure set out in the UK Borders Act 2007, the Department will issue a formal response alongside the inspection report as it is laid before Parliament and published on Gov.UK

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169963>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169964>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/an-inspection-of-the-use-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-key-findings-from-site-visits-to-penally-camp-and-napier-barracks>

Asylum: Penally Camp

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [170680] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people being moved elsewhere from Penally barracks have (a) an adequate supply of prescription medication and (b) their medical records transferred; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that those involved in the care of asylum seekers are informed in sufficient time of where they are being transferred to so that such arrangements for continuity of medical treatment can be made.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office and its accommodation provider Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) is working closely with the partners at Hywel Dda Health Board, to ensure steps can be taken to ensure they have enough medication and continuity of care is maintained.

Transfers from Penally have taken place for several weeks to longer-term dispersal accommodation and well-developed relationships are in place to ensure receiving health boards are aware of new arrivals to their area.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170680>

Asylum: Penally Camp

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [170685] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has for providing residents at Penally Barracks with alternative accommodation when it is returned to the Ministry of Defence on 21 March 2021.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Following the announcement on 16 March 2021 of the closure of Penally, the Home Office has been working closely with its accommodation provider Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) to ensure all people leaving Penally had safe, suitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped accommodation to move to on transfer from Penally prior to closure.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170685>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Detention Centres: Females

Holly Lynch (Labour) [169892] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 162658, what the current operational

capacity is of the units for women at (a) Colnbrook, (b) Dungavel and (c) Yarl's Wood immigration removal centres.

Holly Lynch (Labour) [169892] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 162658, on Detention Centres: Females, whether her Department has plans to undertake an equality impact assessment on the practice of detaining women at immigration removal centres that predominantly hold men.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office has acquired the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham and will open it as an immigration removal centre (IRC) for around 80 women by the autumn. We plan to supplement the new Hassockfield IRC by continuing to provide some detention capacity for women at Colnbrook, Dungavel and Yarl's Wood IRCs.

The operational capacity for women under normal operating conditions is 18 at Colnbrook IRC, 12 at Dungavel IRC and 304 at Yarl's Wood IRC. Yarl's Wood has additional capacity of 68 for adult families more than half of whom could be women. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for the change to predominantly male accommodation at Yarl's Wood IRC.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169892>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169893>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-03/162658>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Detention Centres: Durham

Holly Lynch (Labour) [167902] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what planning permissions are required in relation to the new Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre; and whether those permissions have been obtained.

Holly Lynch (Labour) [167903] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of detainees' ability to access appropriate legal advice in the area surrounding the new Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre.

Holly Lynch (Labour) [167904] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training will be provided to staff at the new Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre in response to its planned use to detain only women.

Reply from Chris Philp The Home Office has acquired the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham and will open it as an immigration removal centre (IRC) for around 80 women by the autumn. Initial discussions with the planning authority at Durham Country Council have taken place and given the site's previous history as a custody facility, planning designation for the site does not need to change in order to operate as an IRC.

People who are detained must be advised of their right to legal representation and of how they can obtain such representation, within 24 hours of their arrival at an IRC. The Home Office recognise the importance of ensuring that such legal advice can be easily obtained by those in detention and we will be working closely with the Legal Aid Agency to ensure appropriate legal provision at the site.

The rights of all detained individuals, including women, are safeguarded by the Detention Centre Rules, published Operating Standards for IRCs and individuals under escort and Detention Services Orders (DSO).

The training requirements for Home Office, custodial service provider and healthcare staff at Hassockfield IRC will be equivalent to those for Yarl's Wood IRC. As set out in published DSO 06/2016 'women in the detention estate', all staff working with women must receive appropriate gender specific training (such as the protocol for entry to bedrooms), in addition to any generic training they receive

when they undergo initial training. Appropriate refresher training should be undertaken, to include equality and diversity, human trafficking and modern slavery.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167902>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167903>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/167904>

Detention Centres: Durham

Holly Lynch (Labour) [168976] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what ratio of male to female staff members will be put in place at the new Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre in response to its planned use to detain only women.

Reply from Chris Philp: Our Detention Centre Rules are designed to ensure the rights and safety of those in detention are our foremost priority and we expect the highest standards from our contractors in this regard. This includes mandatory gender-specific training for those working with women in detention.

The workforce requirements for the new Hassockfield immigration removal centre (IRC) will reflect the lessons learned from detaining women at Yarl's Wood IRC and will include a ratio of female to male custodial staff that is appropriate for the specific needs of women in detention.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-15/168976>

Hassockfield Secure Training Centre

Mary Kelly Foy (Labour) [173172] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) number, (b) security and (c) pay of new jobs which will be created by plans to re-open the former Hassockfield Detention Centre in Medomsley as an Immigration Detention or Removal Centre in Autumn 2021.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office has acquired the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham and will open it as an immigration removal centre by the autumn. The proposed site will provide modern, decent and secure accommodation for around 80 women. We expect approximately 200 permanent jobs to be created when the centre is fully operational.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/173172>

Detention Centres: Durham

Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat) [171528] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what visiting rights are planned for the proposed new immigration removal centre for women at Hassockfield for (a) the legal profession, (b) chaplaincy, and (c) friends and family.

Reply from Chris Philp: The rights of all detained individuals are protected by the Detention Centre Rules 2001 (DCR), published Operating Standards for immigration removal centres (IRCs) and individuals under escort and Detention Services Orders (DSO). This framework includes specific guidance on visits, as set out in DSO 04/2012 'Visitors and visiting procedures'.

In addition to the DCR and Operating Standards for IRCs, the provision of religious services is mandated in relevant sections of the service provider contracts and service level agreements relating to religious affairs. All IRCs have a number of appointed religious chaplains in place.

Hassockfield will be operated in line with these provisions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171528>

The Detention Centre Rules 2001, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2001/238/contents/made>

The Operating Standards referred to above can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257352/operatingstandards_manual.pdf

and

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257350/escortprocess.pdf

The guidance of Visitors and visiting procedures, referred to above, can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788006/DSO_04_2012_Visits_and_visitors.pdf

Links to Detention Services Orders, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/detention-service-orders>

Asylum: Repatriation

Helen Hayes (Labour) [171668] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government is in negotiations with (a) France and (b) other European countries on a bilateral readmission agreement for the return of failed asylum seekers.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Joint Political Declaration on Asylum and Returns between the UK and the EU agreed on 24 December 2020 noted the UK's intention to engage in bilateral discussions with the most concerned Member States to discuss suitable practical arrangements on asylum and illegal migration, in accordance with the UK's and EU's respective laws and regulations.

The Government has not yet concluded any new bilateral agreements to facilitate the return of asylum-seekers from the UK to third countries. We are currently in discussions with several Member States but we will not provide a running commentary on the progress of specific negotiations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171668>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Migrant Workers: British National (Overseas)

Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench) [HL13966] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of British National (Overseas) passport holders and their dependants who may apply to work in the UK; and how many of these would meet the English language requirements that apply to migrants from elsewhere.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: On 31 January, the Home Office launched the new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route. The route will enable BN(O) status holders and their eligible family members to come to the UK to live, work and study.

As set out in the published impact assessment, our central estimates of those who will take up this offer range between 123,000 and 153,700 BN(O) status holders and their dependants coming in the first year and between 258,000 and 322,400 over five years. Details of the impact assessment can be found at:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukia/2020/70/pdfs/ukia_20200070_en.pdf

We have communicated the expectation throughout the development of the route; applicants should be self-sufficient and economically active. Part of the integration planning for the new BN(O) route includes access to support materials to help BN(O) status holders find work. There are no minimum skill levels or salary thresholds on this route as it comes with a general right to work in the UK.

There is no English language requirement when applying for the BN(O) route so this aspect is not assessed, although English is commonly used in Hong Kong.

The government looks forward to welcoming applications from those British

National (Overseas) who wish to make our United Kingdom their home.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/hl13966>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Napier Barracks

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL14035] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice on 8 February (148930), when the recommendations of the independent rapid review by Human Applications will be published.

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL14035] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice on 8 February (148930), when they plan to hold roundtables with stakeholders to discuss (1) the recommendations, (2) actions taken, and (3) proposed next...

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office contracted with an independent organisation, Human Applications, to conduct a rapid review of initial accommodation for single adult asylum seekers, including hotels and the former military barracks. This was to provide assurance of compliance with public health guidelines to prevent the transmission of Covid 19

Human Applications completed their visits, which included both the Napier and Penally sites, and they have now submitted a report with their findings and recommendations. Once we have responded to the report, we intend to share a summary of the findings and actions taken with key stakeholders.

We have already shared the report with accommodation providers to allow them to action specific findings.

The roundtables were held between 16-26 February, with stakeholders from Local Authorities, Statutory Bodies, Strategic Migration Partnerships and Non-Governmental Organisations; recommendations were shared to inform discussions on the day.

An action plan to move these recommendations forward is being developed, and stakeholders will be consulted, and progress reported through our usual engagement routes; Asylum Strategic Engagement Group, Asylum Support Subgroups, SMP weekly meetings and HO, Local Government Chief Executives meeting.

The recommendations from this review were shared on the 9 March with the Home Affairs Select Committee together with actions taken to address these recommendations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-09/hl14035>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-09/hl14036>

The answer referred to above can be read at

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

Napier Barracks

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL14100] To ask Her Majesty's Government, when Napier Barracks was last used continuously to house military personnel.

Reply from Baroness Goldie: From 1967 Napier Barracks was used continuously to house military personnel up until 1991. Following this it was reallocated as a training camp and used by personnel training at nearby locations as temporary accommodation. It was then taken over by the Home Office in September 2020.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-10/hl14100>

Napier Barracks

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL14101] To ask Her Majesty's Government, on how many occasions Napier Barracks was used for short-term training purposes in each year since 2016.

Reply from Baroness Goldie: The number of occasions that Napier Barracks was utilised for short-term training purposes in each year since 2016, up until it was taken over by the Home Office in September 2020, is detailed in the table below:

Year	Number of days
2016	352
2017	352
2018	290
2019	155
2020	40
Total	1,189

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-10/hl14101>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Military Bases

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL14102] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many asylum seekers have contracted COVID-19 while staying at (1) Napier Barracks, and (2) Penally military training camp.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL14103] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the Independent Chief Inspector, published on 8 March, of the asylum accommodation at (1) Napier Barracks, and (2) Penally military training camp.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration announced an inspection of contingency asylum accommodation on 25 January 2021.

The department acknowledges the ICIBI's decision to publish on 8 March the initial findings from site visits to Napier Barracks and Penally.

The ICIBI's inspection continues and a full inspection report will follow.

The duration of the inspection is a matter for the ICIBI and upon its conclusion, following standard procedure set out in the UK Borders Act 2007, the Department will issue a formal response alongside the inspection report as it is laid before Parliament and published on Gov.UK.

197 people accommodated at Napier tested positive for coronavirus earlier this year. There have been no recorded cases at Penally.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-10/hl14102>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-10/hl14103>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/an-inspection-of-the-use-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-key-findings-from-site-visits-to-penally-camp-and-napier-barracks>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL13998] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration on the use of Napier Barracks as contingency asylum accommodation; and what steps they will take further to those findings.

Refugees: Military Bases

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL14000] To ask Her Majesty's

Government how many refugees were accommodated at (1) Napier Barracks, and (2) Pennally Camp, on (a) 1 December 2020, and (b) 1 March 2021.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Napier and Penally have been used to accommodate destitute asylum seekers. On 1 December 2020, 403 asylum seekers were accommodated at Napier and 148 at Penally. On 1 March 2021, these figures were 55 and 65 respectively.

The department acknowledges the ICIBI's decision to publish on 8 March 2021 the initial findings from site visits to Napier Barracks and Penally. The ICIBI's inspection report will be laid before Parliament in the usual way after the inspection has concluded. The Department will issue a formal response alongside the report as it is published on Gov.UK.

It is not known when the final inspection report will be received as this is a matter for the ICIBI.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/hl13998>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/hl14000>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/an-inspection-of-the-use-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-key-findings-from-site-visits-to-penally-camp-and-napier-barracks>

New Publications

Updated guidance: New immigration system: what you need to know

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-immigration-system-what-you-need-to-know>

Updated: An introduction to the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972362/6.7166_HO_FBIS_BN_O_Leafletweb.pdf

Updated Guidance: Settled status for EU citizens and their families: translations

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/settled-status-for-eu-citizens-and-their-families-translations>

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

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

Letter from Chris Philp MP to Yvette Cooper MP regarding EU Exit and sham marriages: amendments to provisions which come into force on 1 July 2021

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0281/Chris_Philp_to_HASC_Chair-EU_Exit_and_Sham_Marriage.pdf

Immigration Act 2014 Marriage and civil partnership referral and investigation scheme: statutory guidance for Home Office staff

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0281/Sham_Marriage_Scheme_Statutory_Guidance_For_HO_Staff_Mar2021.pdf

Updated guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Worker and temporary worker sponsors

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-worker-and-temporary-worker-sponsors>

Updated guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Student sponsors

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-student-sponsors>

News

Scotland's political leaders sign Scottish Refugee Council's Welcome Pledge

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/scotlands-political-leaders-sign-scottish-refugee-councils-welcome-pledge/>

Welcome pack for new Scots

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/welcome-pack-for-new-scots/>

Priti Patel pledges overhaul of asylum seeker rules

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-56500680>

Priti Patel: 'All options are on the table' over sending asylum seekers abroad

<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/priti-patel-all-options-are-on-the-table-over-sending-asylum-seekers-abroad-vee32254f>

How is Priti Patel planning to change the UK's asylum system?

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/24/how-is-priti-patel-planning-to-change-the-uks-asylum-system>

Can Priti Patel's asylum plan work?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-56518305>

Patel makes 'no apologies' over clampdown on asylum claims

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19182138.patel-announces-clampdown-asylum-claims-new-plan/>

Leading immigration body urges Priti Patel to rethink "cruel" asylum plans

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19184891.leading-immigration-body-urges-priti-patel-rethink-cruel-immigration-plans/>

UN refugee agency hits out at Priti Patel's plans for UK asylum overhaul

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/24/priti-patel-defends-inhumane-overhaul-of-uk-asylum-system>

Refugees face risk of deportation under Priti Patel's 'cruel' asylum overhaul, charities warn

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-plan-refugees-priti-patel-b1821290.html>

Migrants entering UK illegally to be liable for removal at any time

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/23/migrants-entering-uk-illegally-to-be-liable-for-removal-at-any-time>

Priti Patel accused of breaking Geneva Convention with plans to deny asylum rights to refugees crossing Channel

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-asylum-rights-geneva-b1821562.html>

UK plan for tougher asylum-seeker rules draws criticism

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk-plan-for-tougher-asylum-seeker-rules-draws-criticism-priti-patel-london-mike-adamson-france-british-red-cross-b1821660.html>

Border Force will get powers to stop and redirect boats carrying migrants across Channel
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/24/border-force-will-get-powers-stop-redirect-boats-carrying-migrants/>

Illegal migrants will be denied right to settle in UK even if granted asylum
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/03/24/illegal-migrants-will-denied-right-settle-uk-even-granted-asylum/>

Priti Patel plans to introduce two-tier system to tackle illegal immigration
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrants-who-enter-uk-illegally-to-lose-benefits-sjs9n6fv2>

Priti Patel to speed up criminal deportations
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/priti-patel-to-speed-up-criminal-deportations-cbx8l3p>

Asylum seekers are not ‘those people’ – they are humans in a terrible place who need our help
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/priti-patel-asylum-seekers-refugees-humans-b1821878.html>

Priti Patel cannot pick and choose between asylum seekers
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/priti-patel-asylum-seekers-migrants-b1821806.html>

Priti Patel's asylum reforms will only deepen the despair of refugees
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/26/priti-patel-asylum-reforms-despair-refugees-war-persecution>

Patel's asylum proposals: incoherent, unworkable and inhumane
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/24/the-guardian-view-on-patels-asylum-proposals-incoherent-unworkable-and-inhumane>

By cracking down on illegal arrivals Britain can create a more humane asylum system
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/22/cracking-illegal-arrivals-britain-can-create-humane-asylum-system/>

We are finally regaining control of our borders
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/24/finally-regaining-control-borders/>

Asylum system reform: Fair and Firm
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-asylum-system-reform-fair-and-firm-9tlv6sm7t>

I came to Britain as an asylum seeker – Priti Patel’s cruel plans will punish refugees seeking safety
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/priti-patel-refugees-asylum-seekers-uk-home-office-b1821898.html>

Channel crossings: Six boats with 183 migrants on board intercepted
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-56509935>

The welcome party: how a secret group of Kent residents is helping small-boat refugees
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/24/the-welcome-party-how-a-secret-group-of-kent-residents-is-helping-small-boat-refugees>

Child asylum seekers 'falling apart' due to Home Office delays

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/25/child-asylum-seekers-falling-apart-due-to-home-office-delays>

Home Office still has no agreements with other countries for deportations central to new immigration plan

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-immigration-plans-deportations-b1821744.html>

Home Office under investigation after 1,000 suddenly deported over English test cheating claims

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-student-visa-english-language-test-cheat-a8888926.html>

Home Office revives plan to deport non-UK rough sleepers

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/27/home-office-revives-plan-to-deport-non-uk-rough-sleepers>

Did a million migrants really leave the UK during the pandemic?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/news-analysis/migrants-population-uk-million-leave-coronavirus-b1821136.html>

TOP

Community Relations

News

Faith and ritual: Religion in 21st century Britain

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-56545760>

TOP

Equality

Scottish Parliament Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Human Rights: evidence session

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13215&i=119692#ScotParIOR>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

Helen Hayes (Labour) [914026] What progress the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities has made on its report on ethnic disparities and inequality.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch; The independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities has reviewed inequality in the UK, focusing on areas including poverty, education, employment, health and the criminal justice system. They have held meetings with key delivery partners and agencies for these areas, gathered evidence from a range of external stakeholders and influencers, and ran an open

Call for Evidence that invited evidence from across the United Kingdom. Yesterday, I spoke with Chair of the Commission, Dr Tony Sewell. The Commission is of course independent of government, but he has assured me that their report will be submitted to the Prime Minister shortly.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-24/914026>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Electoral Register: Ethnic Groups

Cat Smith (Labour) [171644] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding has been allocated to improve voter registration levels among Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people since 2018.

Electoral Register: Travellers

Cat Smith (Labour) [171645] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding has been allocated to improving voter registration levels among Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people over the last 10 years.

Reply from Chloe Smith: Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have the statutory responsibility for compiling and maintaining complete and accurate registers for their local areas. The Electoral Commission (EC) is responsible for providing guidance and resources to help EROs and their staff in running electoral registration, for setting standards, and for monitoring the performance of EROs. The Commission runs campaigns to raise awareness of how people can register to vote, and how to cast their vote.

The Government ensures that EROs have the tools that they need to do their job efficiently. For example, changes to the annual canvass in Great Britain has provided EROs with greater flexibility to target their resources where they are needed, rather than on the majority of properties, where nothing has changed.

The Government is committed to encouraging democratic engagement amongst all electors, including underrepresented groups. Since 2013, the Government has provided more than £27m to fund activities to promote electoral registration and democratic engagement more widely.

Third-party organisations delivered events and activities during National Democracy Week (NDW), and the Government facilitated workshops with Democratic Engagement Champions in preparation for the week. The Government has no plans to run NDW in 2021. Instead, the Government will focus on its unique responsibilities as legislator, funder and promoter of good practice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171644>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171645>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Prisoners: Travellers

Lyn Brown (Labour) [170591] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the report, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Women in Prison, published by the Traveller Movement on 17 March 2021, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing the recommendations made in that report.

Lyn Brown (Labour) [170592] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the report, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Women in Prison, published by the Traveller Movement on 17 March 2021, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of that report.

Reply from Alex Chalk: The Ministry of Justice is in active contact with the Traveller Movement, among other advocacy groups, and is examining the use of community sentences for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. The findings of the Traveller Movement's report on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women are

valuable to inform policy and practice changes. The Ministry of Justice published new guidance in 2020 for frontline staff working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller individuals. This provides information and advice, alongside an explanation of intersectionality and inter-related disadvantage, including a specific section on women.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170591>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170592>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/TTM%20GRT%20Women%20in%20Pri-son%20Report_final.pdf

The guidance referred to above can be read at

https://yresourcehub.uk/over-representation-and-disproportionality/item/download/929_6a5a2811d4e6a146d93f3e2a3ec46be1.html

Climate Change: Ethnic Groups

Catherine West (Labour) [173116] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of the Government's climate policies on BAME communities.

Reply from Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The impacts of climate change are not equally distributed across people or communities, and it is well-established that existing social inequalities result in a disproportionate negative impact of climate change among disadvantaged groups. BEIS has committed to improving how it takes account of equality, diversity and inclusion in its policy-making, to develop our interventions in a more inclusive way. We comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty by considering the equality impacts of our climate policies on different protected characteristics – including BAME communities. BEIS will be setting out more detail on the work it is undertaking across its responsibilities, including climate change, to build understanding and take actions to reduce inequalities in areas relating to its responsibilities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/173116>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Education and Vocational Guidance: Travellers

Baroness Whitaker (Labour) [HL14306] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their white paper Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth, published on 21 January, what steps they are taking (1) to ensure equality of opportunities for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children and young people of compulsory education age who are out of school or not in education, employment or training to gain the Maths and English Level 2 qualifications required to access further education and training, including apprenticeships, and (2) to ensure that careers advice and guidance is accessible to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma students who have missed out on schooling; and what plans they have to ensure that all Government-backed careers advisors receive training on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma culture.

Reply from Baroness Berridge: The participation age has been raised so that young people are now required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday. Young people can do this through full-time education, a job or volunteering combined with part-time study, or by undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. The government has invested nearly £7 billion during the academic year 2020/21, to ensure there is a place in education or training for every 16 to 19

year old.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and track the participation of 16 and 17 year olds, supporting those who are not participating to do so and making sure that there is sufficient and suitable education and training provision to meet their needs.

The September Guarantee places a further duty on local authorities to ensure that all year 11 pupils (and year 12 pupils on one year courses) receive an offer of a place in education or training for the following September. It aims to ensure that all young people, regardless of what they achieved in school, understand that there are opportunities that will help them to progress, and to ensure that they get the advice and support they need to find a suitable place.

A range of provision is available for young people aged 16 to 24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress. This includes traineeships, which provide unemployed young people with employability training, work experience and English and maths, and Supported Internships which offer tailored support for young people aged 16 to 25 who have special educational needs and disabilities.

We know students who leave school with a good grasp of English and maths increase their chances of securing a job or going on to further education, which is why students who do not achieve a GCSE grade 4 at age 16 must continue to study these subjects in Post-16 (it is also known as the 'condition of funding'). Students who just missed out on a GCSE grade 4 are given the opportunity to achieve a GCSE. We recognise that for students with prior attainment of a GCSE grade 2 or below, a level 2 Functional Skills qualification may be more appropriate.

Alongside this, English and maths are crucial elements of a T Level and apprenticeship. Each T Level student and apprentice must ensure they have achieved a prescribed level of English and maths in order to successfully complete their programme.

The government is committed to ensuring that young people and adults are provided with high-quality careers information, advice, and guidance, regardless of their background. We have provided specific support for pupils from disadvantaged groups such as Gypsy, Traveller and Roma, special educational needs, and looked after children. This includes investing over £1.7 million to test new approaches to broaden aspirations and raise awareness of pathways into training and work.

Our statutory guidance, first introduced in September 2012, requires that schools secure independent and impartial careers guidance on the full range of education and training options.

Members of the careers profession, including careers advisers are trained to give impartial careers, information, advice and guidance. They work closely with school leaders to develop careers plans that reflect a pupil's personal circumstance. They also take into account a pupil's background and aspirations when giving them impartial careers advice. We will continue working with members of the careers profession, including the Careers Development Institute, to ensure careers advisers and other professionals receive adequate training to enable them to deal with pupils from all backgrounds, including those from the traveller community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/hl14306>

Swimming: Ethnic Groups

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat) [HL14475] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the work of the Black Swimming Association; and what steps they intend to take in response to the finding by Sport England's Active Lives Survey, published in October 2020, that (1) 95 per cent of Black adults, (2) 80 percent of Black children, (3) 95 percent of Asian adults, and (4) 78 per cent of Asian Children, in England do not swim.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The Government supports the efforts of groups helping to promote diversity and inclusion in sport, including the Black Swimming Association who are working to address inequalities in swimming participation levels. We are committed to these efforts, and our sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future' has diversity and inclusion at its heart.

In addition, Sport England have recently launched a new ten year strategy, "Uniting the Movement", reinforcing their commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion in grassroots sport and physical activity, including swimming. They have invested £12.62 million in Swim England to support and promote participation in swimming, including support for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds. We welcome the recent partnership announcement between Swim England and the Black Swimming Association, to further increase numbers of participation in aquatic activity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/hl14475>

Data from the survey referred to above can be read at

<https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives>

The Strategies referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf

and

<https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

Press Release

Tackling race inequality in employment

<https://www.gov.scot/news/tackling-race-inequality-in-employment/>

New Publication

Covid-19 and Apprenticeship Policy for Ethnic Minority Young People

<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/Runnymede%20CoDE%20Apprenticeship%20briefing%20v1%5B98%5D.pdf>

News

Scrap use of BAME label, race commission tells Boris Johnson

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/03/28/exclusive-scrap-use-bame-label-race-commission-tells-boris-johnson/>

Abandon redundant BAME label, race commission tells Downing St

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/abandon-redundant-bame-label-race-commission-tells-downing-st-zxt7zvmms>

Learning lessons from the pandemic

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/blogs/learning-lessons-pandemic>

UK businesses may be forced to reveal ethnicity pay gap

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/26/uk-businesses-may-be-forced-to-reveal-ethnicity-pay-gap>

Unemployment rate has risen by 50% for BME workers aged 16-24 during Covid
<https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/unemployment-rate-has-risen-50-bme-workers-aged-16-24-during-covid>

Black graduates 'shut out' of academic science and technology careers
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/26/black-graduates-shut-out-of-academic-science-and-technology-careers>

Buckingham Palace considers appointing 'diversity chief'
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/buckingham-palace-diversity-chief-racism-meghan-b1820320.html>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament Debate

Online Anonymity and Anonymous Abuse
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-24/debates/378D3CBD-E4C6-4138-ABA6-2783D130B23C/OnlineAnonymityAndAnonymousAbuse>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime

Naz Shah (Labour) [171637] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding his Department has provided to tackle (a) racism, (b) anti-semitism, (c) Islamophobia and (d) other types of hate crime and prejudices since 2015.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: All forms of hate crime are completely unacceptable. The Government takes hate crime very seriously which is why we are clear that victims should be supported and the individuals who carry out hateful attacks must be brought to justice. This Department has, since 2015, supplied over £8,130,000 to combat all forms of hate crime and prejudices.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-18/171637>

Social Media: Harassment

Emma Hardy (Labour) [170720] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to tackle racist and misogynistic abuse in newspaper comment sections.

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.

Complaints about comments on news websites can be directed to the publication itself, or to the appropriate self-regulator.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170720>

Antisemitism

Diana Johnson (Labour) [170565] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to statistics from the Community Security Trust that 2019 recorded the highest number of anti-Semitic hate crimes since 2007, what steps his Department is taking to reduce anti-Semitic hate crime.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we have taken a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms. We are providing £14 million this year, and provided over £65 million to date, for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings.

In October 2019 the Communities Secretary wrote to universities and local authorities to urge them to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of Antisemitism and there has been significant uptake of the definition since. We have also appointed Lord Mann as the Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, who has been providing advice on the most effective methods of tackling antisemitism in communities

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170565>

Hate Crime: Sikhs

Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [172106] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much and what proportion of the £375,000 grant allocated to True Vision in 2017 has been (a) allocated and (b) spent on the Sikh community.

Reply from Luke Hall: MHCLG provided £250,000 to True Vision for the financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18 of which £25,000 was earmarked for supporting Sikh and Hindu communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-19/172106>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Football: Racial Discrimination

Clive Betts (Labour) [170533] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he last requested a report from the football authorities on the steps they are taking to eradicate racism from the game.

Clive Betts (Labour) [170534] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent reports he has received from the football authorities on the steps they were taking to eradicate racial abuse from the game.

Reply from Nigel Huddleston: The Government continues to liaise closely and regularly with all the football authorities about their work to tackle discrimination. This includes actions targeted at and around football grounds, such as improving reporting systems, providing better training and support for referees and stewards, and improving the quality of CCTV around stadia.

We also welcomed the launch of The FA's 'Football Leadership Diversity Code' last year which is a step in the right direction to ensure English football better represents our modern and diverse society, on and off the pitch.

In January, the Government convened a roundtable with footballers, alongside the Chair of The FA's Inclusion Advisory Board and the Professional Footballers' Association, to discuss social media abuse and the upcoming Online Safety Bill.

However, there is still progress to be made and the Government will continue to

press the football authorities to build on their work to date to tackle discrimination.
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170533>
and
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170534>

Football: Racial Discrimination

Clive Betts (Labour) [170535] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he was made aware that Deputy Chief Constable Mark Roberts wrote in January 2021 to the (a) Premier League and (b) English Football League requesting that they work together to tackle racist abuse against players; and will he make a statement.

Reply from Nigel Huddleston: The department is in regular contact with the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs' Council Football Lead, and the UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) across a range of issues including tackling discrimination. I understand the Premier League and English Football League also meet frequently with the UKFPU, including recently with social media companies to focus on tackling online abuse, and hope they will continue to do so as we work together to rid this abhorrent behaviour from the game and society.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170535>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Social Media: Offensive Material

Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are planning to take to remove anonymity from persons who post racist and other similarly offensive material attacking (1) sportspeople, and (2) other high profile public figures, on social media sites.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Baroness Barran): My Lords, the Government are clear that being anonymous online does not give anyone the right to abuse others. We are taking steps through the online harms regulatory framework to ensure that online abuse is addressed, whether anonymous or not. The police already have a range of legal powers to identify individuals who attempt to use anonymity to escape sanctions for online abuse. We are working with law enforcement to review whether the current powers are sufficient to tackle illegal anonymous abuse online.

Lord Faulkner of Worcester: Can the noble Baroness be more specific about what the online safety Bill will achieve? Presumably, it will force social media companies to take down the racist and sexist rantings of some of their customers and lead to prosecutions where the abuse goes far beyond any free-speech justification. How much has happened since the Culture Secretary's welcome statement on 8 February that those companies can start showing their duty of care to footballers today by weeding out racist abuse now, and will football be a specific priority in the hate crime unit looking at online discrimination against protected characteristics, as specified under the 2010 Equality Act?

Reply from Baroness Barran: The Government are absolutely committed to making the internet a safe place for all, and of course that includes footballers and other public figures, but it also, very importantly, includes children, other vulnerable people and the general public. A key part of making this work is the duty of care that we will be imposing on social media companies, with clear systems of user redress and strong enforcement powers from Ofcom. I am happy to take the noble Lord's suggestions regarding the place of footballers within the hate crime unit back to the department and, in relation to the equalities issue which he raises, he will be aware that it was very clear in the 2019 social media good practice code that social

media companies are expected to have regard to protected characteristics.

The Lord Bishop of Oxford: My Lords, the requirement to love our neighbours as ourselves makes practical demands of our online behaviour: not only what is posted but also what is endorsed, what is given the oxygen of repetition and what is tolerated. The digital common good is threatened from both sides: by those who post racist and offensive material and by some social media sites that craft algorithms to curate, propagate and perpetuate in order to maximise income. So will the Government give urgent consideration to implementing a code of practice for both hate crime and wider legal harms, perhaps along the lines of the model code that Carnegie UK and a number of other civil society organisations, including my office, recently co-drafted?

Reply from Baroness Barran: The right reverend Prelate raises very important points. He will be aware that the Law Commission is reviewing the legislation in relation to offensive online communications to make sure that it is fit for purpose, and that its final recommendations will be made this summer. We are also working more widely with law enforcement to review whether we have sufficient powers to address illegal abuse online. ...

Baroness Prashar (Crossbench): My Lords, although we need to protect freedom of speech, urgent action is needed to deal with abuse of free speech on social media. Does the Minister agree that social media outlets should be required to remove material that contravenes race hate and libel laws and limit how many times messages are forwarded, as those who post racist and other offensive materials are not entitled to have their voices amplified?

Reply from Baroness Barran: The noble Baroness is right: what is illegal offline should be illegal online, and it is very clear that the social media companies should remove that content. Where there is harmful but legal content, they need to have very clear systems and processes to make sure that it can be removed quickly. ...

Lord McNally (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I am interested in the Minister's comment that the department is in discussions with the police about the use of existing powers. Would it not be a good idea for the police to pursue a number of high-profile cases of bullying of children, rampant racism or threats to our democracy under existing powers until we get the proper legislation in place?

Reply from Baroness Barran: Just to be clear, I was speaking on behalf of the Government in conversation with the police. The noble Lord will be aware that the primary responsibility for this matter sits with the Home Office. The police are independent in how they pursue these cases. ...

To read this lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-03-23/debates/22CB995D-F2FA-4828-997E-0762E8717E2D/SocialMediaOffensiveMaterial>

The Culture Minister's statement referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/OliverDowden/status/1358690359979741184>

The Law Commission review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/reform-of-the-communications-offences/>

Gypsies, Travellers and Roma: Racism and Discrimination

Lord Woolley of Woodford (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of the blacklisting of Irish Travellers by Pontins, what steps they are taking to tackle racism and discrimination against Gypsies, Travellers and Roma.

Reply from the Minister of state, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Lord Greenhalgh): No one should be discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity. It is right that the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Pontins investigate and address this. To date, we have funded GATE Herts with £150,000 to tackle the discrimination that Gypsy,

Roma and Traveller communities experience.

Lord Wooley of Woodford: ... I have spoken to many Roma, Gypsy and Traveller leaders, such as Zeljko Jovanovic from the Roma Initiatives Office and Yvonne MacNamara from the Traveller Movement. They tell me that it is not just the scandal at Pontins that concerns them but the growing mental health crisis in their communities, which has been exacerbated by Covid-19, not least because many are self-employed and not eligible for furlough, and therefore their incomes have completely dried up. Will the Minister agree to meet with me and representatives of these communities to urgently deal with this crisis?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: My Lords, I am very happy to meet with the noble Lord.

Lord Lucas (Conservative): ... will he make it clear that, when the police Bill eventually leaves this House, its provisions will fully support the continued flourishing and existence of Gypsy and Traveller communities?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: My Lords, any measures introduced, including those in the Bill, would be undertaken in compliance with equality and human rights legislation.

Baroness Falkner of Margravine (Crossbench): My Lords, I declare an interest as chair of the EHRC. As noble Lords will know, we signed a legally binding agreement with Pontins to prevent racial discrimination and will take further enforcement action if needed. The problem is that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups face particular discrimination in housing, with a severe shortage of adequate sites. New police powers in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will reduce the ability of these communities to reside somewhere. What steps are the Government taking with local authorities to increase authorised sites for these groups?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: My Lords, the Government's policies to improve site provision are working. There are now 356 transit pitches provided by local authorities and private registered providers. That is up 41% on January 2010. Local authorities and registered providers, including housing associations, can bid for funding for permanent Traveller sites or transit sites from the £11.5 billion affordable homes programme.

Baroness McDonagh (Labour): ... Children from the Traveller community pre pandemic were the most behind of any group of children, and now they have missed even more education. Please can the Minister take us through the specific education booster plans that the Government are putting in place to bring children in Traveller families up to speed so that they have real choices for work as adults, especially the girls, as this is what levelling- up really looks like?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: My Lords, I point to the £400,000 invested by my department in education and training programmes for over 100 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people to receive extra tuition to catch up on lost learning during the pandemic. This is in addition to the £700 million provided by the Department for Education for the most disadvantaged young people, including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, to access high-quality tuition. We are working on a cross-Whitehall GRT strategy to further improve the life chances of this community.

Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, as it stands, will have a devastating effect on nomadic Gypsy and Traveller communities. Clause 4 enables the police to seize a family's home. This is discrimination on a grand scale. Can the Minister say what other section of people living in our country will be targeted in this inhumane way?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: The Bill is not the draconian legislation that it is painted as by the noble Baroness. The focus is on people who wilfully break the law, wilfully trespass on property, and wilfully damage public amenities. They are a very small minority. Regarding property, the police will need to consider their obligations around human rights legislation.

Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Labour Co-op): ... This is a scandal against Gypsies, Travellers and Roma people. Does the Minister agree, and can he discuss with colleagues in government whether the laws are strong enough to ensure that the people who have perpetuated this disgusting racism are prevented from doing so again, either at Pontins or any other company that they may work for or be associated with in the future?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: I join the noble Lord in condemning those actions. ... It is important that a full review of hate crime is carried out. The Law Commission started it last year and will be reporting to Ministers shortly on whether we need to build on the approach taken by the current hate crime action plan.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative): My Lords, following my noble friend's comments regarding the Law Commission report on hate crime, and the consideration of proposals for reform, which the Government will be bringing forward this year, can he offer assurance that there will be thoroughgoing support and protection for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, which—[Inaudible]—as demonstrated by the race disparity audit that we set up?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: My Lords, I am happy to give that assurance to my noble friend.

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): My Lords, on 15 February, the Minister gave me a helpful reply concerning roadside evictions of people from the Travelling community. What progress has been made in the discussions that he said he would be having with local authorities to ensure that, at least during the pandemic, there would be no further roadside evictions and that there would be access to safe water and safe sanitation? Given that he told the House that a cross-departmental review was taking place, can he confirm that this was announced originally in June 2019? When will it be published?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: I wrote to local authorities emphasising the need to take a negotiated, stopping-model approach, which has been taken up by a number of local authorities during the pandemic. I commit that the cross-departmental strategy will be forthcoming. Obviously the focus has been on the Covid-19 pandemic.

Baroness Young of Old Scone: What note are Her Majesty's Government taking, in respect of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, of the fact that over 75% of police respondents to the Home Office consultation did not support the proposed new criminal offence of trespass with intent to reside?

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: I note the points around that consultation, but 66% of local authorities that responded to the 2019 consultation were in favour of introducing a new criminal offence for those who reside on unauthorised encampments, and 94% supported one or more of the proposed amendments in the Bill under consideration.

The Lord Bishop of St Albans: Research published by the FFT in January 2021 found that there were only 59 permanent and 42 transit pitches available across England. In response to the new police and crime Bill and proposals to allow for greater enforcement against unauthorised encampments, what provisions are being made to provide authorised sites for the GRT community? ...

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: My Lords, Part 4 of the Bill essentially seeks to make something that is a civil offence into a criminal offence. It is based on a similar change in law undertaken in the Republic of Ireland some years ago. I will write to the right reverend Prelate with the specific figures, but looking at transit site provision in addition to the 356 transit pitches that exist will be part of the upcoming cross-Whitehall GRT strategy.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-03-25/debates/551D918C-86C5-4241-BF0D-1A3555AAB569/GypsiesTravellersAndRomaRacismAndDiscrimination>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Hate Crime

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated) [HL14049] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 5 December 2018 (HL Deb, col 1019), whether the definition of a hate crime used by the police and Crown Prosecution Service has been (1) debated, and (2) approved, by Parliament; and if so, when.

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated) [HL14050] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 5 December 2018 (HL Deb, col 1019), how many UK citizens have a non crime hate incident registered on their police record but have not been (1) charged with, or (2) found guilty of, such an offence.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The police and Crown Prosecution Service define and record hate crime as “any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”

This definition has been produced for operational purposes. Any arrest, charge or prosecution taken forward by the police or Crown Prosecution Service must relate to a criminal offence laid out in legislation that has been approved by Parliament. Information on how many UK citizens have a hate crime registered on their police record but have not been (1) charged with, or (2) found guilty of, such an offence is not held centrally.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-09/hl14049>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-09/hl14050>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-12-05/debates/49F2CB46-26D3-4D04-9FCD-A30804DB1FC9/ReligiousHateSpeech#contribution-629B0994-C119-47BC-B5A9-DF1C81C9059B>

Press Release

What is Wales doing to eliminate racial discrimination?

<https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/what-is-wales-doing-to-eliminate-racial-discrimination/>

New Publication

Accessible Travel: Hate Crime Charter

https://accessibletravel.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Hate-Crime-Charter-A4-10_3_2021-1-649x1024.png

News

Anas Sarwar subjected to racist rant outside Scottish Parliament

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19181914.anas-sarwar-subjected-racist-rant-outside-scottish-parliament/>

Scottish Labour leader harassed by 'racist bully' outside Scottish parliament
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/scottish-labour-anas-sarwar-racist-abuse-b1821650.html>

Labour leader Anas Sarwar racially abused by a bystander outside parliament
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/labour-leader-anas-sarwar-racially-abused-by-a-bystander-outside-parliament-3wgzwtfbq>

'Unacceptable' no black MSPs as candidate left 'utterly broken' by experience of racism
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/unacceptable-no-black-msps-as-candidate-left-utterly-broken-by-experience-of-racism-3174263>

BAME: 'Governments failed to tackle racial discrimination'
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-56487001>

'What's happening in Wales?': The anti-racism movement sweeping the country
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/wales-racism-black-lives-matter-b1820407.html>

Home Office paid white man less than black female colleague as he was 'less risk in a discrimination case'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/23/home-office-paid-white-man-less-black-female-colleague-less/>

Civil servant 'better paid because she was black'
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/civil-servant-better-paid-black-race-claims-93bd2dbnv>

Race crisis threatening police legitimacy, police chair warns
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-56559834>

'Daughters' deaths not as urgent because of race'
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-56450969>

UK schools record more than 60,000 racist incidents in five years
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/28/uk-schools-record-more-than-60000-racist-incidents-five-years>

Children 'may lose out' due to lack of policy on racism in UK schools
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/28/children-may-lose-out-lack-policy-racism-uk-schools>

Scottish school fears: Racism remains a blight, warn experts
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19185265.scottish-school-fears-racism-remains-blight-warn-experts/>

'Systemic racism': teachers speak out about discrimination in UK schools
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/24/systemic-racism-teachers-speak-out-about-discrimination-in-uk-schools>

'I was terrified': pupils tell of being victimised in UK schools
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/24/i-was-terrified-pupils-tell-of-being-victimised-in-uk-schools>

After assembly, I cried': Surrey school grapples with race issues

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/28/after-assembly-i-cried-surrey-school-grapples-with-race-issues>

Exclusion rates five times higher for black Caribbean pupils in parts of England

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/24/exclusion-rates-black-caribbean-pupils-england>

'People brand you': UK universities sign pledge to fight hate against Gypsies, Travellers and Roma

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/27/people-brand-you-uk-universities-sign-pledge-to-fight-hate-against-gypsies-travellers-and-roma>

Police arrest man after pregnant Jewish woman assaulted

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/police-hunt-for-man-who-assaulted-pregnant-jewish-woman-bp7zkhnp>

Police arrest man after pregnant Jewish woman assaulted

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/police-hunt-for-man-who-assaulted-pregnant-jewish-woman-bp7zkhnp>

Children who overhear just one racist remark on TV are less likely to be friends with that ethnic group, study finds

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/24/children-overhear-just-one-racist-remark-tv-less-likely-friends/>

Bafta diversity scheme participant says casting director made racist comments

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/mar/26/bafta-diversity-scheme-participant-says-casting-director-made-racist-comments>

Bafta diversity scheme under scrutiny after recruit claims she 'faced racist comments'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/bafta-diversity-elevate-india-eva-rae-b1822943.html>

Bafta 'used my brown face to make them look good', actress claims

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/26/bafta-used-brown-face-make-look-good-actress-claims/>

Sesame Street's black Muppets teach children about racism

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sesame-streets-black-muppets-teach-children-about-racism-zzq0pwmfd>

Neo-Nazi group targeting children as young as 14 during coronavirus lockdown

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/neo-nazis-children-online-radicalisation-b1819754.html>

Players prepared to walk off the pitch after 'heartbreaking' racist abuse of Rangers midfielder Glen Kamara

<https://www.scotsman.com/sport/football/rangers/players-prepared-to-walk-off-the-pitch-after-heartbreaking-racist-abuse-of-rangers-midfielder-glen-kamara-3173427>

Police probe 'racist abuse' during Rangers Europa League match

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-56503601>

Thierry Henry quits social media with online racism and abuse 'too toxic to ignore'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news/thierry-henry-twitter-instagram-b1822910.html>

Thierry Henry urges action on racism after quitting social media

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/thierry-henry-urges-action-on-racism-after-quitting-social-media-z3bhlbtw>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Release

Electors top 4.2 million

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/2021/electors-top-42-million>

New Publications

New Organ Donation System

Leaflets explaining the new organ donation system in Easy Read, Large Print, Audio, Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Farsi, French, Gaelic, Hindi, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Slovak, Sorani, Spanish, Somali, Traditional Chinese, Turkish, Vietnamese, and Urdu

<https://www.organdonationscotland.org/resources>

What do I need to do?

https://www.organdonationscotland.org/sites/default/files/resources/Waht_do_I_need_to_do.mp4

Will my religion, faith or beliefs be taken into consideration before donation goes ahead?

https://www.organdonationscotland.org/sites/default/files/resources/Will_my%20religion_faith_or_beliefs_be_taken_into_consideration_before_donation_goes_ahead.mp4

What happens if I become a potential donor?

https://www.organdonationscotland.org/sites/default/files/resources/What_happens_if_I_become_potential_donor.mp4

To record your decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register

https://www.organdonationscotland.org/sites/default/files/resources/To%20record_your_decision_on_the_NHS_Organ_Donor_Register.mp4

News

Scottish Parliament election 2021: A really simple guide

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-54825291>

Scotland election 2021: Who should I vote for? Compare party policies

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-56510773>

Scottish independence: Draft bill for indyref2 published

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-56482881>

Former SNP leader Alex Salmond launches new political party

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-56539696>

Scots become automatic organ donors under new law

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-56522628>

Opt-out organ donation Scotland: Everything you need to know about how Scottish law is changing

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19187565.opt-out-organ-donation-scotland-everything-need-know-scottish-law-changing/>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Forced Marriage: Children

The Lord Bishop of St Albans [HL14165] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 8 March (HL13499), what estimate they have made of the number of girls resident in the UK who were married abroad when they were underage and brought back to the UK in (1) 2014, (2) 2015, (3) 2016, (4) 2017, (5) 2018, (6) 2019, and (7) 2020.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK is a world-leader in the fight to end the practice of forced marriage, with our dedicated Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) leading efforts to combat it both at home and abroad. The FMU provides support and advice for victims, those at risk, and professionals, through its public helpline, and delivers training and awareness raising activities to professionals and others across the country.

The Home Office does not have estimates of the number of girls who are resident in the UK who were married abroad when they were underage and who were brought back to the UK. Information on the cases of actual or potential forced marriage dealt with by the FMU, including age breakdowns, can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forced-marriage-unit-statistics>

Statistics for 2020 will be added to this page later this year.

[Forced Marriage Stats 2019](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-11/hl14165>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-22/hl13499>

Forced Marriage

The Lord Bishop of St Albans [HL14198] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 8 March (HL13499), how many cases were brought forward for (1) forcing someone to marry, and (2) breaching a forced marriage protection order, under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, in (a) 2014, (b) 2015, (c) 2016, (d) 2017, (e) 2018, (f) 2019, and (g) 2020.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The number of offences forced marriage recorded by police forces in England Wales able to supply data to the Home Office can be found in the table. Data for the whole of 2020 is not yet available. This will include cases where an attempt to commit a forced marriage offence was thwarted as well as completed offences.

Table: Forced marriage offences, England and Wales*

Year	Number of offences
2015	44
2016	99
2017	76
2018	128
2019	131

*Excludes police forces: Kent, Wiltshire, Staffordshire, Humberside and Greater Manchester Police

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-12/hl14198>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-22/hl13499>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [1685] Unauthorised encampments: criminalisation of trespass – That this House believes the response to unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers lies not in criminalising trespass but by providing sufficient permanent and temporary sites and by greater use of negotiated stopping; is concerned that Part 4 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will destroy a nomadic way of life that has existed in Britain since the early sixteenth century; notes that the local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites which currently exist in England only came into being because of the duty to provide sites established by the Caravan Sites Act 1968 but repealed by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994; further notes that the Welsh Government have reintroduced a duty to meet the assessed need for sites through Section 103 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014; urges the UK Government to accept the reintroduction of such a duty as essential to avoid breaching the human rights of Gypsies and Travellers; and requests that Part 4 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill should be withdrawn immediately and replaced with a legal duty to provide adequate permanent and temporary sites.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58318>

Press Releases

Queen's Speech to be held on 11 May

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/queens-speech-to-be-held-on-11-may>

Prime Minister's Passover message

<https://twitter.com/10DowningStreet/status/1375458282823880708>

Foreign Secretary's Passover message

<https://twitter.com/DominicRaab/status/1375384600378273795>

UK bolsters Islamic finance offering with second Sukuk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-bolsters-islamic-finance-offering-with-second-sukuk>

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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://nhsnss.org/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 Debate

Churches (Support During Lockdown)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13220&i=119739#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Impact of COVID-19

Neil Findlay (Labour) [S5W-34239] To ask the Scottish Government whether it considers the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on (a) people from the lowest income groups, (b) BAME people, (c) disabled people and (d) older people to be a breach of their human rights.

Reply from Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on individuals and groups across the whole of society, including people on low incomes, disabled people, older people and people from minority ethnic communities.

We recognise that the pandemic has had a detrimental impact on access to, and enjoyment of, a broad spectrum of human rights as the Scottish Government has had to take unprecedented and necessary action to suppress Covid19 and preserve life.

Human rights and equality have, however, been embedded throughout our COVID response and recovery work. We have sought, as far as possible, to minimise both direct and indirect impacts for everyone in Scotland and to use every opportunity to address inequality, to ensure dignity, fairness and respect and to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/debates-and-questions/questions/2020/12/22/s5w34239?qry=S5W-34239>

COVID-19: BAME Groups

Claire Baker (Labour) [S5W-35756] To ask the Scottish Government, as part of the COVID-19 recovery process, what research it is undertaking into the impact of the pandemic on BAME groups, and how the needs of Polish people are being (a) identified and (b) addressed.

Reply from Jeane Freeman: Public Health Scotland (PHS) has periodically published statistics on the impact of COVID-19 on minority ethnic groups in its weekly COVID-19 statistics report. The latest report was published on 3rd March 2021 and showed that the findings from previous PHS analysis were re-enforced, that is, that there is continued evidence of increased risks of hospitalisation or death due to COVID-19 in some ethnic minority groups, which have persisted during the second wave of the pandemic.

A link to the PHS report is here:

<https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/3-march-2021/>

Public Health Scotland will continue to update this analysis as more data becomes available. The Scottish Government is also working with PHS and other agencies to implement the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and ethnicity. Implementing these recommendations will make improvements to the data and evidence held on minority ethnic groups, which will include Polish people. The ERG cover further research in their recommendations, for example on better understanding ethnic inequalities in health. We are working closely with organisations that support minority ethnic communities to address issues around vaccine hesitancy and to encourage uptake, including amongst Polish people.

'Minority ethnic' groups refers to people who are protected under the Equalities Act 2010, which defines race as colour, ethnicity, nationality and citizenship. Polish people are included in this definition.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/debates-and-questions/questions/2021/03/04/s5w35756?qry=S5W-35756>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Imran Ahmad Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps [is the Minister's] Department taking to increase BAME uptake of the covid-19 vaccine in West Yorkshire.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: On 13 February we published the 'UK COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake Plan', which aims to improve uptake across all communities. The approach set out in the plan is underpinned by four enablers at national, regional and local level. These are working in partnership; removing barriers to access; data and information; and conversations and engagement. The plan takes a local, community-led approach, with support provided from Government, NHS England and NHS Improvement and local authorities to coordinate and enable action.

The Department, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the National Health Service hold regular meetings with local authorities, faith leaders and black, Asian and minority ethnic organisations to provide advice and information about COVID-19 vaccines and how they will be made available. In West Yorkshire, we have been delivering 'pop up' clinics in local community areas in Bradford such as local mosques and providing regular updates and resources to faith and community leaders to share. Local NHS staff and council officials have attended online question and answer sessions facilitated by local community leaders and engagement workers have been visiting areas of low vaccine uptake to provide information in spoken and written community languages.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-16/169989>

The Plan referred to above can be read at

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

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Steve Baker (Conservative) [145009] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce the spread of anti-vaccination material in BAME communities.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: The Department, the National Health Service and Public Health England are providing advice and information to support those getting the vaccine and who might have questions about the vaccination process. Our communications include targeted information and advice via TV, radio and social media. This has been translated into 19 languages including Bengali, Chinese, Filipino, Gujarati, Hindi, Mirpur, Punjabi and Urdu. Print and online material, including interviews and practical advice has appeared in hundreds of national, regional, local and specialist titles including black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) media for Asian, Bangladeshi, Bengali, Gujarati and Pakistani communities.

The Department of Health and Social Care, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the NHS are holding regular meetings with local authorities, faith leaders and BAME organisations to provide advice and information about COVID-19 vaccines and how they will be made available.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-28/145009>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Non-affiliated) [HL14463] To ask Her Majesty's

Government what discussions they have had with community-based organisations about supporting BAME communities to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reply from Lord Greenhalgh: Government has been engaging with community-based organisations to reach, engage and communicate with those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, in particular people from Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Through our community champions scheme we are working with organisations, such as Strengthening Faith Institutions and Near Neighbours, that have successful track record of delivering initiatives in grass root communities to support BAME communities recover from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

These organisations work directly with communities to identify and train community champions. Government is working with them to promote relational community engagement, including up-to-date public health messages and to promote positive messages within government guidelines on how to make local activities safer. Government is also working with them to develop resilience and increase mechanisms for outreach, communication and engagement, and is developing strategic communications which trains those communities and supports BAME community organisations to sustain, scale-up and develop COVID-19 response projects and activities to recover from impact of the pandemic.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-22/hl14463>

Scottish Parliament and Government Press Releases

Commemorating COVID-19

<https://www.gov.scot/news/commemorating-covid-19/>

National Day of Reflection to be marked at the Scottish Parliament

<https://www.parliament.scot/newsandmediacentre/117302.aspx>

Places of worship in Level 4 can reopen from Friday

<https://www.gov.scot/news/places-of-worship-in-level-4-can-reopen-from-friday/>

Scottish Government Publications

Coronavirus (COVID-19): daily data for Scotland

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19): trends in daily data

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's statement – 30 March 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-30-march-2021/>

Coronavirus (Covid-19) update: First Minister's statement - 23 March 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-23-march-2021/>

UK Government Press Releases

30 million people in UK receive first dose of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/30-million-people-in-uk-receive-first-dose-of-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine>

New study finds strong immune response following COVID-19 vaccination
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-study-finds-strong-immune-response-following-covid-19-vaccination>

COVID-19 vaccines have prevented thousands of deaths in older adults
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-vaccines-have-prevented-thousands-of-deaths-in-older-adults-new-data-shows>

Sir Lenny Henry urges Black Britons to take COVID-19 vaccine
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sir-lenny-henry-urges-black-britons-to-take-covid-19-vaccine>

UK Government Publications

The R value and growth rate in the UK
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk>

Letter from Baroness Berridge to Lord Bishop of St Albans regarding COVID-19 ethnic minority disparities: question regarding engaging with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GRT) communities to raise awareness of the vaccination programme
[http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0261/Baroness Berridge to Lord Bishop of St Albans.docx](http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0261/Baroness_Berridge_to_Lord_Bishop_of_St_Albens.docx)

PM statement at coronavirus press conference: 29 March 2021
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-at-coronavirus-press-conference-29-march-2021>

PM statement at coronavirus press conference: 23 March 2021
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-at-coronavirus-press-conference-23-march-2021>

Court of Session

Judicial Review of the closure of places of worship in Scotland
<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/cos-general-docs/pdf-docs-for-opinions/2021csoh032.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Other Organisations

Office for National Statistics
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey: characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19 in England, 25 March 2021
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19infectionsinthecommunityinengland/characteristicsofpeopletestingpositiveforcovid19inengland25march2021/pdf>

News

Covid: Living with the increased risk to BAME groups

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-56505593>

Covid: BAME doctors 'still waiting for risk checks'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-56500589>

Covid: Ethnic jab gap 'not due to area or education'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-56564817>

Covid blanket ban on church worship in Scotland ruled unlawful

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/covid-blanket-ban-on-church-worship-in-scotland-ruled-unlawful-3176715>

Scottish churches reopen for communal worship after 'important' legal victory

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/people/scottish-churches-reopen-for-communal-worship-after-important-legal-victory-3178565>

Covid Churches: Scottish places of worship reopen after lockdown deemed unlawful

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19187573.covid-churches-scottish-places-worship-reopen-lockdown-deemed-unlawful/>

Banning Christians from church worship is unlawful, court rules

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/covid-in-scotland-church-ban-on-christians-unlawful-judge-rules-5cwhrttbp>

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Other News

Muslim Council of Britain Responds to Developments at Batley Grammar School

<https://mcb.org.uk/community/mcb-responds-to-developments-at-batley-grammar-school/>

Gavin Williamson condemns protest at school where Muhammad cartoon shown in religious studies class

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/batley-grammar-school-prophet-muhammad-teacher-cartoon-protest-b1822370.html>

Batley Grammar row: Why are protesters lining up over Prophet Muhammad cartoon?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/batley-grammar-school-cartoon-protest-b1822798.html?amp>

'We'll keep coming until he's gone': Anger grows as Batley protesters demand cartoon row teacher be fired

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/batley-grammar-school-protest-cartoon-teacher-b1823129.html>

Ricky Gervais appears to react to Prophet Muhammad cartoon row: 'It's 2021 for f*'s sake'**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/comedy/news/ricky-gervais-muhammad-school-cartoon-b1823281.html>

Jenrick weighs in on Prophet cartoon row: 'Issues should not be censored'
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/batley-grammar-mohammed-cartoon-robert-jenrick-b1822768.html>

Batley cartoon row 'hijacked by extremists on both sides', says Warsi
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/26/robert-jenrick-condemns-batley-school-protest-intimidation>

'It's about raising awareness': Muslims in Batley on school protest
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/26/its-about-raising-awareness-muslims-in-batley-on-school-protest>

Religious leaders and politicians call for calm in Batley cartoon row
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/27/religious-leaders-and-politicians-call-for-calm-in-batley-cartoon-row>

Mosque leaders ask protesters to step back after school takes action in Prophet Mohammed row
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/28/mosque-leaders-ask-protesters-step-back-school-takes-action/>

Teacher at centre of cartoon row 'defended right to free speech in call with parent'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/27/teacher-centre-cartoon-row-defended-right-free-speech-call-parent/>

Showing Prophet Mohammed images 'should be as unacceptable as using n-word'
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/26/showing-prophet-mohammed-images-should-unacceptable-using-n/>

Islamic charity 'put Batley cartoon row teacher in danger' by outing him
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/26/islamic-charity-put-cartoon-row-teacher-danger-outing/>

Gavin Williamson enters row over cartoon of Prophet Muhammad
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/grammar-school-teacher-suspended-for-showing-class-image-of-muhammad-8508tqtfm>

No religion has the right to escape ridicule
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/no-religion-has-the-right-to-escape-ridicule-6bn08vcvm>

Prophet cartoons 'shown before' at school that suspended teacher
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/students-launch-petition-to-save-teacher-suspended-for-showing-mohammad-cartoon-pj367s0zk>

Tens of thousands want Prophet teacher reinstated
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tens-of-thousands-want-prophet-teacher-reinstated-mw/kgtdvw>

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Bills in Progress

** new or updated this week

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!**

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/>

**** Meeting the Charity Test Guidance – updates** (closing date 5 May 2021)

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/consultation-on-our-meeting-the-charity-test-guidance-updates/>

**** New Plan for Immigration** (closing date 6 May 2021)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration>

**** Patient Safety Commissioner role for Scotland** (closing date 28 May 2021)
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-patient-safety-commissioner-role-scotland/>

**** Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS): Documenting the Lives of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in a Time of Crisis**
(temporarily suspended)

Glasgow Museums Legacies of Slavery & Empire Questionnaire (closing date not stated)
<https://surveys.glasgowlife.org.uk/s/legacies/>

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>

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>

Equality and Human Rights Fund

Closing date 14 May 2021

Scottish Government funding to support work which advances human rights, promotes equality and tackles discrimination around age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability and race. Grants will support projects over the next three years, and there is no minimum or maximum amount that can be applied for. For information and to apply see <https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/our-funds/equality-and-human-rights/>

See <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8240754> for a series of short presentations introducing the Equality and Human Rights Fund.

Short one-to-one surgery sessions will be available every Wednesday afternoon until 28 April. This is an opportunity to speak with one of the Equality and Human Rights Fund team and ask any questions specific to your organisation and proposed application. See <https://www.picktime.com/a7e36ee9-56cd-4891-8179-262758c331a7> to book an appointment.

New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project

Closing date 22 May 2021

Scottish Government funding for organisations and community groups across Scotland involved in supporting refugees and people seeking asylum. Projects will enable refugees in Scotland to live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities where they are able to build diverse relationships and connections; understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and exercise these to pursue full and independent lives; access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs; and ensure their rights, needs and aspirations inform the policy, strategic planning and legislation which impacts upon them. For information see

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-delivery-fund-guidance/pages/background/>

Adapt and Thrive

Running until June 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>

Vaccine Information Fund

Running until August 2021

Grants of up to £1,000 are available to eligible organisations to create appropriate resources and activities to ensure that all people in Scotland have informed and equal access to information about the vaccine. For information see <https://bemis.org.uk/vif/>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

SAFE by CST: Q & A Session

31 March 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust question and answer session about the safety of your community. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y6js3ax2>

**** next week!**

Basic security for your place of worship

7 April 2020 (online, 2.00)

Community Security Trust webinar providing an introduction to security for places of worship and faith communities. For information about the March event see <https://tinyurl.com/y4gakb6y> and for the April event <https://tinyurl.com/y23d82hn>

**** next week!**

Organising security for your place of worship

12 April 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust webinar about security and risk management, and how to develop a security plan for places of worship. For information about the February webinar see <https://tinyurl.com/yxdc7kwg> and for April see <https://tinyurl.com/y329uhx7>

Event security for your community

20 April 2021 (online, 7.00)

Community Security Trust webinar about appropriate security measures to ensure the safety of large numbers of people. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y5ahbbgu>

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Useful Links

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438) <https://www.scojec.org/>*



***BEMIS** is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. (Scottish Charity, no. SC027692) <http://www.bemis.org.uk/>*



*The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.gov.scot/>*

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