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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Afghan Refugees (Housing Assessment)

Katy Clark (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what work it has done to assess how many Afghan refugees can be housed across all local authority areas. (S6O-00121)

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture (Angus Robertson): Scotland will play its part in welcoming refugees from Afghanistan. We are undertaking urgent work with the Home Office, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and local authorities directly, and other partners to assess the contribution that Scotland can make.

Local authorities assess their ability to provide accommodation and services, and offers are then matched with refugees who are accepted for resettlement by the Home Office on the basis of their needs.

We are keen to explore all avenues through which to provide suitable housing. However, we need detailed information from the United Kingdom Government in order to be able to progress work to identify suitable accommodation and service availability to meet the needs of people who arrive.

Katy Clark: It would be useful if the cabinet secretary could keep Parliament updated on the number of refugees who come to Scotland. Could he give more detail on the money that was announced last week and how it will be spent? As he knows, previous work on refugees has been funded by the Home Office. Will he outline what he is doing to look at the pressures on councils, and outline what can be done by the Scottish Government to provide help with wider support services?

Reply from Angus Robertson: ... I held a conversation on Monday with the new UK minister with responsibility for Afghan refugee resettlement. It was a very positive meeting at which I asked the same questions as Katy Clark has asked about funding, in terms of both direct funding and Barnett consequentials. Unfortunately, however, I have had no detailed breakdown of any commitments from the UK Government following the conversation. I will continue to press the UK Government, because we need answers on that matter.

Katy Clark is absolutely right about the pressures on local authorities, which is why we need to understand the financial side of the equation. However, we must also consider the issue of numbers that she addressed. I will add one simple fact to the debate in order that members understand the scale of the challenge. The average Afghan family size is more than six people. We want to ensure that Afghan families remain united, but it does not take a genius to work out that it is a challenge to find, in our housing stock, houses that are appropriate for people in those circumstances. We will do absolutely everything that we can do. I appreciate that members want hard and fast numbers, but it is a fast-moving situation and we are trying our best to identify available housing stock, work with local authorities and get the resources in place to maximise the number of people whom we can take in Scotland.

Collette Stevenson (SNP): Considerable concerns have been raised about the impact that the Home Office's Nationality and Borders Bill might have on vulnerable individuals who seek sanctuary in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK. Does the cabinet secretary agree that the bill's proposals are flawed and risk creating further barriers for vulnerable people who seek protection?

Reply from Angus Robertson: Yes, I do. The UK Government's Nationality and Borders Bill is deeply flawed and will not create an immigration system that is effective and efficient and which delivers for the most vulnerable people. The bill will differentiate between people on the basis of how they entered the UK, not the protection that they need.

The Scottish Government recognises the need to deter and to prevent abuse of our immigration and asylum systems. However, extremely vulnerable people, including children and victims of human trafficking, deserve a system that enables access to the support that they desperately need—not one that erects barriers. The bill puts Scotland's reputation as a country of welcome and refuge at serious risk. The Scottish Government will continue to make the case for immigration and asylum systems that at all times treat people with compassion, dignity and fairness.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13282&i=120507#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Annabelle Ewing (SNP) [S6M-01044] Acorn Aid Afghan Refugee Appeal – That the Parliament welcomes the generous response to a call for help for Afghan refugees from

Acorn Aid, which is based in Crossgates; thanks all those from west Fife and across Scotland who, in just three days, donated more than 35 tonnes of donations; recognises that Acorn Aid was founded in 2016 by Brian and June Miller with the initial intention of providing aid to Bosnia, and notes that, over the last five years, Acorn Aid has also helped local homeless charities, purchased defibrillators and public access boxes, and helped people who have been housebound or self-isolating during the COVID-19 pandemic.
<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-01044>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Immigration Rules: Statement of Changes

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): [HCWS280] We have made changes to the immigration rules which will align the travel document requirements for most EEA and Swiss citizens with those which apply to other third country nationals. From 1 January 2021, the Government have implemented a single global points-based immigration system.

Inconsistency in the design and security features of EEA national identity cards gives rise to document security risks, and the need for manual processing increases border queues. We therefore announced in October 2020 we would be phasing out the use of most EEA and Swiss national identity cards for entry to the UK.

The changes mean that, from 1 October 2021, EEA and Swiss citizens outside of those with status under the EU settlement scheme or rights under the withdrawal agreements will, like other nationalities, need a passport to demonstrate nationality and identity at the UK border, rather than use a national identity card.

We have also made a change to the immigration rules which reflects the change in the security situation in Afghanistan, by making changes to allow current and former Afghan locally employed staff (LES) and their family members who are outside Afghanistan to relocate to the UK under the Afghan relocations and assistance policy and the ex gratia scheme. The schemes had previously only been available to those in Afghanistan.

Further to this we are also making a further change to grant indefinite leave to enter the UK to LES who are approved for relocation to the UK. This will replace the five years' limited leave they are currently granted. Those already in the UK will be able to apply for indefinite leave to remain before their limited leave expires if they choose to.

These changes emphasise the UK commitment to supporting LES and their families to settle in the UK, and our gratitude for the support they provided to UK forces in Afghanistan.

We are launching the new international sportsperson visa category which will amalgamate and replace the tier 2 and tier 5 categories for professional sporting workers with simplified, dedicated visa arrangements.

The tier 5 visa routes are being rebranded to deliver a package of temporary work routes, providing a better service for customers through simplified rules that are aligned with the new points-based system.

We are also launching a dedicated temporary worker-creative worker visa category, tailored to creative workers to better serve the needs of the sector.

Consequential amendments are being made to appendix AR to provide a right of administrative review for eligible decisions under the new international sportsperson route and the rebranded temporary worker routes.

Some changes are being made in respect of the EU settlement scheme (EUSS), which enables EEA and Swiss citizens resident in the UK by the end of the transition period, and their family members, to obtain the UK immigration status they need to continue living in the UK.

The changes reflect in the immigration rules for the EUSS, in appendix EU, the concession outside the rules for applicants whose continuous residence in the UK has been affected by coronavirus (covid-19) which was published in guidance on 10 June 2021. This will ensure, in a range of circumstances where, due to covid-19, the applicant would have exceeded the permitted absence from the UK, and broken their period of continuous residence, they will continue to qualify for status under the EUSS.

The changes also allow a joining family member to apply to the EUSS whilst in the UK as a visitor, replacing the concession to this effect outside appendix EU currently set out in guidance.

Technical changes are being made to reflect the passing of the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EUSS by those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period (though a late application can still be made where there are reasonable grounds why the person missed that deadline), and to reflect the fact that a person who is exempt from immigration control can, if they wish, apply to the EUSS whilst they remain exempt or they can apply once they have ceased to be exempt.

Changes are being made to the youth mobility scheme (YMS) to rebrand the route from T5 (temporary worker) youth mobility scheme to youth mobility scheme.

We are also expanding our YMS to include new arrangements with Iceland and India. This will deliver on international commitments made via a memorandum of understanding with Iceland and mobility agreements with India. Both schemes are expected to launch on 1 January 2022.

The YMS update will also allow citizens and nationals or the rightful holder of a passport issued by a territory, without deemed sponsorship status, to apply for this route from any post that accepts such applications worldwide.

The allocations for 2022 have also been updated in appendix youth mobility scheme: eligible nationals.

Finally, following a concession made outside the rules to allow the partner and, if applicable, child under 18 of a British national (overseas) (BN(O)) status holder to join the BN(O) status holder following a grant on the Hong Kong British national (overseas) route, this has now been incorporated into the immigration rules for the BN(O) route.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-10/debates/2109104000012/ImmigrationRulesStatementOfChanges>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Immigration: Afghanistan

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [43525] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support (a) locally employed staff from Afghanistan, (b) Afghan National Security Forces personnel and (c) their dependants with regularising their immigration status.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: All those evacuated from Afghanistan should already have a valid immigration status, granted either pre-departure or on arrival at the border. We announced on 1 September that all those eligible for the ARAP will be qualify for immediate settlement (indefinite leave to enter or remain). Those already in the UK with temporary status can apply, free of charge, to convert their status to indefinite leave to remain.

Those who qualify under the new ACRS will also be offered ILR

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43525>

Information about the ARAP (Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy), referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Immigration: Afghanistan

Sarah Champion (Labour) [43527] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what eligibility criteria will her Department apply to (a) family members and (b) dependents seeking to enter the United Kingdom via the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The eligibility criteria for family members and dependants seeking to accompany those relocating under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy are set out in paragraphs 276BE1-276BL1 of the Immigration Rules:

[Immigration Rules part 7: other categories - Immigration Rules - Guidance](#)

There is additional published guidance for those family members who do not qualify under the Immigration Rules:

[Additional guidance on the eligibility of additional family members under the Afghan locally employed staff relocation schemes](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43527>

Afghanistan: Immigration

Stephen Morgan (Labour) [43652] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will confirm that (a) applicants who have previously applied to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy do not need to reapply and (b) the timing of their application did not affect whether they were prioritised under the triage system.

Reply from James Heapey: The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) remains open and our commitment to those who worked alongside UK forces in Afghanistan is ongoing. We continue to receive a large quantity of enquiries and applications and have plans in place to work through the backlog of correspondence to ensure they are all responded to in the most appropriate way. All previous applications will be processed as swiftly as possible.

Prioritisation of cases is done according to the individual's status, and the potential threat they face, and not by when they were received.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43652>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Afghanistan: Immigration

John Healey (Labour) [43388] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications were received up to the period 1 April 2021 to 31 July 2021; and how many of those applications were subsequently rejected.

Reply from James Heapey: From the 1 April 2021 to 31 July 2021 approximately 6,500 completed, credible applications for relocation to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) were received.

Following rigorous security and employment checks, eligibility decisions were made and approximately 3,500 applicants were rejected as a result of employment history, security concerns, and other complex factors.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43388>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Afghanistan: Immigration

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [41339] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what

estimate he has made of the number of people who have qualified for relocation under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme up to 18 August 2021.

Reply from James Heapey: Operation PITTING saw the evacuation of many thousands of people from Afghanistan, beginning on 17 August and concluding on 28 August. Prior to Operation PITTING, an estimated 2,000 Afghans eligible for relocation under the ARAP scheme were welcomed to the UK since the launch of the scheme in April 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41339>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Afghanistan: Immigration

John Healey (Labour) [41647] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any special housing arrangements will be made for the family of Afghans currently studying at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to ensure that family members are not separated when they are relocated to the UK.

Reply from James Heapey: Work is underway across the whole of Government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with us in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK. This includes Afghans who are currently studying on professional military training courses in the UK. Defence is working with partners across Government to re-house those evacuated in the best way possible, which in some case includes a number of vacant homes which are normally used by Service families.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41647>

Immigration: Afghanistan

Dan Carden (Labour) [41185] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to expand the Afghan Interpreters Scheme to include people engaged in UK-linked initiatives and human rights activists who are at risk of being targeted by the Taliban.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) launched on 1 April 2021. The scheme enables any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served.

Our Afghan relocation policy is one of the most generous in the world and has already supported over 8,000 directly employed former Afghan staff and their families to start new lives in the UK.

The Home Office is committed to providing protection for vulnerable people fleeing Afghanistan. The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans to the UK, who have been forced to flee the country, in its first year, with up to a total of 20,000 in the long-term.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41185>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Immigration: Afghanistan

John Healey (Labour) [37358] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what financial support is available to people relocated to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy.

John Healey (Labour) [37359] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support for housing the Government is providing to those relocated to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) launched on 1 April 2021. Under the policy, any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served. Since 1 April, the Home Office has relocated former Afghan staff and their families in the UK, including those relocated as part of HMG's evacuation from Afghanistan. The overwhelming majority of those approved by the ARAP scheme have now been evacuated and the scheme remains open for anyone who is eligible.

We are working closely with local authorities to ensure that those relocated to the UK under ARAP are fully supported.

The ARAP programme provides a funding package to resource local authorities who come forward with offers of housing to resettle Afghan staff and their families, enabling delivery of integration support for families and further support on employment, welfare benefits, and access to health, education, and other local services. This is to the value of £10,500 for every Afghan welcomed for up to a year, and also includes their family members who make the journey with them. MHCLG have recently announced a new Afghan LES Housing Costs Fund of £5 million, to support.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37358>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37359>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Afghanistan: Immigration

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [41334] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will expand the Afghan Interpreters Scheme to people engaged in UK-linked initiatives and human rights activists at risk of being targeted by the Taliban.

Reply from James Heapey: The Government is strongly committed to fulfilling its responsibilities to current and former locally employed staff in Afghanistan. The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme is not time-limited and will endure, remaining open indefinitely to Afghan allies who were directly employed by Her Majesty's Government.

For those not eligible under the ARAP scheme, including human rights activists and employees of UK-linked initiatives, the Home Office is establishing the details of the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This scheme will provide protection for those identified as most at risk, such as women and girls. The Government has committed to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years, making this one of the most comprehensive resettlement schemes the UK has ever established.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41334>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Visas: Afghanistan

Yasmin Qureshi (Labour) [40823] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the visa status is of Afghan staff who have worked, or currently work, for British non-governmental organisations.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: Our Afghan relocation policy is one of the most generous in the world and has already supported over 8,000 directly employed former Afghan staff and their families to start new lives in the UK through the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

The Home Office is committed to providing protection for vulnerable people fleeing Afghanistan. The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans to the UK, who have been forced to flee the country, in its first year, with up to a total of 20,000 in the long-term.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40823>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Visas: Afghanistan

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [41337] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the Government policy is on waiving visa requirements for the families of UK nationals currently fleeing Afghanistan; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Government has waived the visa requirements for the family members of UK nationals evacuating Afghanistan.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41337>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Ian Blackford (SNP) [41893] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office what steps he is taking to ensure people in Afghanistan with refugee reunion visas are able to travel to the UK.

Alan Brown (SNP) [41972] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that people in Afghanistan with refugee family reunion visas are able to travel to the UK.

Reply from Nigel Adams: We stand by our commitment to help all Afghans who are eligible to come to the UK, including those who hold refugee reunion visas, to travel by whatever routes are available. We are clear that the Taliban must ensure safe passage for these people out of Afghanistan, and any engagement with them will emphasise this first and foremost. We are also in frequent contact with neighbouring countries, and wider partners, to help secure safe routes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41893>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41972>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Alan Brown (SNP) [41978] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to allow Afghan refugees in the UK who have naturalised to be eligible to sponsor relatives under the refugee family reunion rules.

Reply from Chris Philp: The refugee family reunion rules allow a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. This route is available until the sponsor chooses to become a British citizen.

A person who wishes to settle in the UK as the spouse, partner, child dependant, parent or adult dependent relative of a British citizen or settled person must apply for leave to enter or remain under Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules and meet the relevant evidential requirements as set out in Appendix FM-SE to the Immigration Rules.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41978>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Paula Barker (Labour) [42198] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the roll out and implementation of the Afghanistan resettlement scheme; and when hon. Members will receive a detailed briefing on that scheme.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: On 18th August the Prime Minister announced a new and bespoke Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) to relocate 5,000 vulnerable Afghans in its first year, rising to 20,000 over the long-term – one of the most generous schemes in British history.

On 6th September, the Prime Minister provided further information on the Scheme, including announcing that those arriving through the ACRS will be granted immediate Indefinite Leave to Remain, allowing them to benefit from full rights and entitlements and providing them with the certainty and stability they need to build their life here.

Given the current complex picture in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries, it is important that the Government fully considers the operational delivery of the scheme with its international partners. We are working urgently to open this route and further details will be announced in due course on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). Parliamentarians will be kept informed in the usual ways.

The ACRS is an integral part of the UK's response to the humanitarian situation and will provide protection for thousands of Afghan citizens and other refugees identified as most at risk.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/42198>

The announcements referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bespoke-resettlement-route-for-afghan-refugees-announced>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-06/debates/9BD7C4E5-F7DB-462A-BD17-655081EB04F5/Afghanistan#contribution-1213D0B4-025C-40B9-B63C-732A029AD518>

Information about the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas (Green) [41802] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will open for applications; for what reasons that scheme was not prepared and available in advance of the US and UK troop withdrawal from Afghanistan; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The UK's military evacuation from Afghanistan concluded on 28 August. It was the largest UK military evacuation since the Second World War. Our armed forces and Civil Service staff worked around the clock to evacuate over 15,000 people.

At the same time the Government has worked at pace to develop a new and bespoke resettlement scheme, announced on 18 August, which will relocate 5,000 vulnerable Afghans in its first year, rising to 20,000 long-term – one of the most generous schemes in British history. The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is in addition to the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy (ARAP), which has brought around 7,000 Afghans to the UK since launching in April 2021.

Under the ACRS we will work with the international organisations to identify those at risk, as we have done in respect of those who fled the war in Syria - but we will also include Afghans who have contributed to civil society or face a particular risk from the Taliban, for example, because of their role in standing up for democracy and human rights, or because of their gender, sexuality or religion. We are working at pace to get the ACRS up and running and we will announce further details as soon as possible.

The UK has an enduring commitment to the people of Afghanistan and the Government is continuing to work with international partners on a shared plan for the people of Afghanistan which will contribute to long-term regional stability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41802>

Information about the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [41342] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will provide specific funding to local authorities to take in refugees under (a) the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy programme and (b) the Government's announcement on taking in 20,000 refugees from Afghanistan over the next five years.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Government has worked at pace to develop and launch a new and bespoke resettlement scheme, announced on 18 August, which will relocate 5,000 vulnerable people in its first year, rising to up to 20,000 over the coming years – one of the most generous schemes in British history. The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is in addition to the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy (ARAP), which offers any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life priority relocation to the UK.

Work is underway across government departments, and with charities and local authorities, to ensure people are properly supported so they can rebuild their lives. Further detail on the support we provide to those we bring to the UK through both schemes, including levels of funding, will be made available in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41342>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Navendu Mishra (Labour) [43693] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much financial support the Government has made available to local authorities for supporting refugees arriving from (a) Afghanistan and (b) other countries as a result of the security situation in Afghanistan.

Reply from Steve Barclay: The government has announced the Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme which will relocate 5,000 vulnerable Afghans in its first year, potentially rising to 20,000 over the long term. The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for those who worked with the UK in Afghanistan also remains open. More detail on funding for local authorities to support those eligible for both schemes will be announced shortly.

In addition to the Afghan schemes, the Home Office also delivers the UK Resettlement Scheme which resettles vulnerable refugees from a range of regions of conflict and instability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43693>

Information about the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the UK Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1011824/Resettlement_Policy_Guidance_2021.pdf

The following seven questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40917] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the news story entitled Bespoke resettlement route for Afghan refugees announced, published by her Department on 18 August 2021, whether the 20,000 Afghan nationals who will be resettled in the UK will include Afghan staff and volunteers who have worked for or with international NGOs to support efforts to extend democracy or education in the last twenty years.

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [41341] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the proportion of the 20,000 refugees under the new resettlement scheme that will come from (a) within Afghanistan's borders and (b) neighbouring countries in which Afghan refugees are residing.

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [41366] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish her Department's assessment of the number of Afghan refugees the UK is able to accommodate in the first year of the proposed Afghanistan resettlement scheme.

Asylum: Afghanistan

Kirsten Oswald (SNP) [40955] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that UK resettlement programmes will offer protection to women and children still in Afghanistan.

Kirsten Oswald (SNP) [40956] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her policy to resettle 5,000 vulnerable people from Afghanistan in the next 12 months is in addition to her pre-existing plan to resettle about 5,000 refugees in the first year of operation of the UK Resettlement Scheme.

Dan Carden (Labour) [41186] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to establish humanitarian visas and a means for people to apply for those visas from Afghanistan to reduce dangerous journeys for people seeking asylum.

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [41335] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing humanitarian visas for people seeking asylum from Afghanistan to avoid people making dangerous journeys to pursue asylum.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: On Wednesday 18 August, the Government announced the launch of a new bespoke Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), to welcome up to 20,000 vulnerable Afghans to the UK. The scheme will focus on those most at risk and in its first year will resettle up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans. This scheme delivers on the Government's commitment in the New Plan for Immigration to create safe and legal routes for those in fear of persecution and oppression in their home country. The Government is working urgently to open this route and further details will be announced in due course on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

The new route is separate from, and in addition to, the Afghan Relocations and

Assistance Policy (ARAP), which offers any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life priority relocation to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40917>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41341>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41366>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40955>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40956>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41186>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41335>

The news story referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ bespoke-resettlement-route-for-afghan-refugees-announced>

The New Plan for Immigration, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration/new-plan-for-immigration-policy-statement-accessible>

Information about the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Asylum: Afghanistan

Neil Coyle (Labour) [43537] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to review and expediate all outstanding (a) asylum claims and (b) asylum appeals made by Afghan nationals currently living in the UK.

Reply from Chris Philp: The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations. All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy. Claims by Afghan nationals will be considered in the same way as claims from any other nationality.

We do not believe it is appropriate to prioritise claims from one nationality over another as many claimants, irrespective of nationality, are potentially vulnerable and no one is expected to leave the UK while they have a claim outstanding.

We are currently reviewing the country situation and will issue updated country policy and information notes shortly for Afghanistan, which reflect revised assessments of risk of persecution. We have therefore temporarily paused asylum decision making for Afghan nationals to ensure that our decision makers are only considering claimants' protection needs in the light of relevant and up-to-date country information.

All asylum appeals from Afghan nationals will be reviewed ahead of any hearing to look at the individual claim in light of the changed country situation, current guidance and any further information submitted by the claimant, to assess whether the decision to refuse is still appropriate. No one who is found to be at risk of persecution or serious harm in Afghanistan will be expected to return there, and enforced returns of those who have been refused asylum and have exhausted all rights of appeal are currently paused while we consider the situation.

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Afghanistan

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat) [41787] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to expedite and review the cases of Afghan asylum seekers currently pending in the asylum system.

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [41948] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to institute an expedited asylum decisions process for Afghan nationals who have applied for asylum in the UK whose claim is (a) still outstanding or (b) subject to further review; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations. All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy.

We are currently reviewing the country situation and will issue updated country policy and information notes shortly for Afghanistan, which reflect revised assessments of risk of persecution. We have therefore temporarily paused asylum decision making for Afghan nationals to ensure our decision makers are only considering claimants' protection needs in the light of relevant and up-to-date country information.

All asylum appeals from Afghan nationals will be reviewed ahead of any hearing to look at the individual claim in light of the changed country situation, current guidance and any further information submitted by the claimant, to assess whether the decision to refuse is still appropriate.

No one who is found to be at risk of persecution or serious harm in Afghanistan will be expected to return there. Enforced returns of those who have been refused asylum and have exhausted all rights of appeal are currently paused.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41787>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41948>

Migrants: Afghanistan

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat) [41788] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals are currently in immigration detention.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office publishes data on people in immigration detention in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. The number of people in detention on the last day of each quarter are published in table Det_D02 of the [Detention detailed datasets](#). The data can be broken down by nationality of detainee, and place of detention.

The latest data relate to the number of people in detention at the end of June 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41788>

Deportation: Afghanistan

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [41950] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government's immigration returns agreement with Afghanistan is no longer valid.

Reply from Chris Philp: Enforced returns to Afghanistan have been paused

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41950>

Immigration: Afghanistan

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40918] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals have been (a) refused Leave to Remain in the UK and (b) returned to Afghanistan in each of the last 10 years.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office published data on asylum, extensions of leave to remain, and returns in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly release](#)'. Data on initial decisions (including refusals) made on asylum applications in each quarter can be found in table Asy_D02 of the '[Asylum & Resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Data on refusals of leave to remain can be found in table Exe_D01 of the '[Extensions detailed datasets](#)'. The latest data relates to the end of March 2021. Data to the end of June 2021 will be published on 26 August 2021. Data on the number of returns from the UK, by nationality and destination group (including returns to 'Home country') can be found in Ret_D01 of the '[returns detailed dataset](#)'. The latest data only relates to the end of December 2020. Data to the end of March 2021 will be published on 26 August 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40918>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Other Immigration and Asylum

Visas: Children

Emma Hardy (Labour) [41178] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has plans to review the cost of a visa application for children.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Fees are set taking account of the charging powers provided by Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which include the ability to set fees based on: the cost of processing the application, the benefits and entitlements provided by a successful application and the wider cost of the migration and borders system. Full details of which can be reviewed via the following link

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>

The Home Office keeps fees for immigration and nationality applications under review and ensures they are within the parameters agreed with HM Treasury and Parliament.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41178>

Windrush Generation: Compensation

Zarah Sultana (Labour) [31324] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce waiting times for claimants of the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

Reply from Priti Patel: Since April 2019 the Scheme has offered or paid more than £34 million in compensation to members of the Windrush generation. On 21 July the Home Office (HO) published the latest set of data on the Scheme which covers the period to the end of June 2021. During the month of June, the HO paid out £2.4 million in compensation. More than £26 million in compensation has been paid across 776 claims.

In December we overhauled the Scheme and the changes have had an immediate effect on the speed and value of offers of compensation. Since the end of December, we have paid more than eight times the total amount paid previously. However, the HO recognises that there is more still to do to speed up the time between submission and decision on claims. On 21 July the HO published a redesigned primary claim form which is easier for people to complete, and refreshed caseworker guidance which sets out clearly how caseworkers should apply the balance of probabilities and gather evidence to ensure claimants are only asked to provide the minimum information necessary. Together, these should reduce the time taken to process claims and improve peoples' experiences of applying to the Scheme.

The HO is also recruiting more case workers. Since the end of April, casework FTE has been increased by seven caseworkers and a team of 14 experienced caseworkers onto the scheme from elsewhere in the HO. The HO is in the process of recruiting a further 15 caseworkers and plan to hold a large reserve list so vacancies created through attrition can be filled more quickly.

The HO is also directing resources to where it is needed most to maximise final decision output. In addition, we are improving the evidence-gathering process, including by revising the data-sharing agreements with other government departments.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41324>

Information about the Windrush Compensation Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-windrush-compensation-scheme>

Visas: Hong Kong

Steve Reed (Labour Co-op) [36653] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from Hong Kong have (a) applied for and (b) been granted a Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on visas and the British National Overseas (BN(O)) route in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release' on GOV.UK:

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

The data relates to the first and second quarter of 2021, January to June, and are derived from management information. These data sets are rounded to the nearest hundred. Data for Q3 2021 will be published on 25 November 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36653>

British National (Overseas): Hong Kong

Steve Reed (Labour Co-op) [36651] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, where welcome hubs have been created for new arrivals from Hong Kong arriving with British National (Overseas) status.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: MHCLG has established a network of 12 Welcome Hubs across the 9 regions of England, and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to coordinate preparations to welcome BN(O) status holders to the UK and help to ensure they are able to quickly integrate and contribute to their newfound communities. Details of the Welcome Hubs can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regional-vcse-grant-scheme/regional-vcse-grant-scheme-prospectus>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36651>

British National (Overseas): Hong Kong

Steve Reed (Labour Co-op) [36652] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support new arrivals from Hong Kong arriving with British National (Overseas) status.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: In April, MHCLG announced £43.1 million of government funding to welcome Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) [BN(O)] status holders to the UK and to support them to access housing, work and educational support.

MHCLG has published an online bilingual Welcome Pack on GOV.UK and is establishing a network of 12 welcome hubs across the UK, alongside funding to enable local authorities in England to provide English language provision and destitution support, where needed.

Additionally, MHCLG has invited Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to bid for a share of a £2.6 million fund to support

programmes that will help BN(O) status holders make the best start to rebuilding their lives. The grant schemes will provide regional community support, support on a national level, educational resources for schools, and a hate crime reporting service. We expect successful VCSE organisation to begin delivery in the autumn.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36652>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Clive Betts (Labour) [41643] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of EU Settlement Scheme Family Permits missed the 30 June 2021 deadline; and what proportion of those that missed that deadline were due to departmental delay.

Reply from Kevin Foster: There is no deadline for applications for an EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) family permit by eligible family members wishing to join an EEA or Swiss citizen with EUSS status who was resident in the UK by the end of the transition period. They can continue to apply for an EUSS family permit after 30 June 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41643>

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

Helen Hayes (Labour) [42028] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the proportion of eligible people in the cohort aged 65 and above who have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the [EU Settlement Scheme statistics](#)

The latest published information on EUSS applications received and applications concluded to 31 March 2021, by Local Authority can be found in tables EUSS_LA_01, EUSS_LA_02 and EUSS_LA_03 available at:

[EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, March 2021](#).

These tables, updated to 30 June 2021, will be published on 16 September 2021.

Published EUSS figures refer specifically to applications made to the EUSS and cannot be directly compared with estimates of the resident population of EU/EEA nationals in the UK.

The published figures include non-EEA national family members, Irish nationals and eligible EEA nationals not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in estimates of the resident EU/EEA population.

Furthermore, the population estimates do not take account of people's migration intentions and will include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a blog on 2 July 2021, further discussing the differences and their plans for future population estimates:

[Are there really 6m EU citizens living in the UK?](#)

The Office for National Statistics are currently transforming their population and migration statistics to put administrative data at the core of what they do. The latest information on their work programme and longer term plans to transform migration and population statistics was published on 16 April 2021:

[Population and migration statistics system transformation – overview](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/42028>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [36621] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much the view and prove immigration status telephone line has charged callers

inquiring about any aspect of their Settled Status or application for Settled Status (a) on average per day since that line opened, (b) in each of the last 30 days and (c) in total since that line opened.

Reply from Kevin Foster: EU citizens seeking support via the Support Resolution Centre can do so for free. The SRC has helped millions of people with their applications and continues to do so every day.

We identified a technical error on 20 July which meant a very small percentage of customers calling the UKVI Resolution Centre may have been charged. This technical issue was resolved by 17:00 on 20 July.

We are currently working with the supplier to identify any customers who were charged incorrectly and arrange refunds for these customers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36621>

Immigration: EU Nationals

John Penrose (Conservative) [40810] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many occasions the online verification service for the EU Settlement Scheme has been out of service since it was launched; and for how long it was out of service on each of those occasions.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The online 'View and Prove your immigration status' service has been operational since the EU Settlement Scheme was launched. Between October 2019 and March 2021 the service has seen over 3.9m profile views by individuals, and over 330,000 views by organisations checking immigration status.

Our digital services are designed to be highly resilient, and undergo rigorous testing and quality assurance. Service outages are rare, and where they do occur, teams work to resolve these as quickly as possible. Data on service outages is not routinely collated or published.

Our dedicated Resolution Centre is able to assist users who may experience technical issues, and where necessary, enable individuals' immigration status to be verified through alternative means.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40810>

Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals

Helen Hayes (Labour) [42039] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of claimants granted pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme who will lose access to benefits; and what support her Department is putting in place in those cases.

Reply from Justin Tomlinson: The Home Office's EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) allows EU citizens to apply for an immigration status and ensure that they have the right to live, work and access income based benefits. EU citizens may be granted settled or pre-settled status, depending on whether they have been resident in the UK for a continuous period of more than five years.

EU citizens with pre-settled status have the same access to benefits as they did prior to the introduction of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). They will satisfy the right to reside element of the Habitual Residence Test and can access benefits if they are exercising a qualifying right to reside, such as a worker or self-employed person, and are habitually resident in the UK.

As long as an individual continues to exercise a treaty right, those with pre-settled status can continue to access benefits. Moving from pre-settled status to settled status will not result in losing benefits if the application is made in time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/42039>

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

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Anne Marie Morris (Conservative) [40908] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to monitor the use of the £54 million given to the French authorities to tackle migrant Channel crossings.

Anne Marie Morris (Conservative) [40909] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to report on the effect of the £54 million given to the French authorities for the purposes of border control on the number of migrants reaching the UK via Channel crossings.

Reply from Chris Philp: On 20 July 2021, the Home Secretary and her French counterpart, Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin, signed an agreement that further strengthens UK-France joint cooperation to tackle illegal immigration across the Channel.

The UK-France Joint Statement, which contains further information on that agreement, can be found on the GOV.UK website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-france-joint-statement-next-phase-of-tackling-illegal-migration>

The impact on migration pressures of our investment under the Sandhurst Treaty is jointly assessed by France and the UK. The UK and France monitor the impact of funding through maintaining operational and policy level contact and regular strategic reviews. In line with previous arrangements, the impact of this year's funding package will be reviewed through jointly agreed results frameworks and via a joint UK-France Monitoring Committee.

We are not intending to publish reports on the results frameworks, as these relate to sensitive operational activity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40908>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40909>

Undocumented Migrants: Amnesties

Zarah Sultana (Labour) [41322] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to take steps to grant urgent amnesty to undocumented migrants residing in the UK.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Government remains committed to an immigration policy which welcomes and celebrates people to the UK through safe and legal routes but deters illegal immigration, partially from safe countries like France

The Immigration Rules already provide routes for undocumented migrants, who have not broken the law except for remaining here without lawful immigration status, to obtain permission to stay.

These Rules help to ensure public confidence in the immigration system. Whilst the Rules are kept under continuous review, there are no current plans to introduce an amnesty for undocumented migrants in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41322>

Undocumented Migrants: Medical Examinations

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [44370] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to introduce dental x-rays to help to determine the age of undocumented migrants; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Chris Philp: Assessing someone's age is an extremely challenging task and it is only right we explore how the current system can be improved by harnessing scientific evidence alongside existing methods. We will be guided by the research and evidence on which scientific methods to use.

The UK is one of the only countries in Europe not to use scientific age assessment

methods to help determine a person's age when they arrive into the country. Various scientific methods are used to assess age in, among others, Sweden, Norway, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

We should not underestimate the significant safeguarding risks there are if an adult were to successfully pass themselves off as a child and be placed in young people's accommodation or schools. It also reduces the resources available to help genuine asylum-seeking children.

We have already laid marker clauses in the Nationality and Borders Bill on the use of scientific methods of age assessment will shortly bring forward amendments with the full clauses at the committee stage in October

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-07/44370>

Refugees

Chris Green (Conservative) [41909] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were granted refugee status in each year since 2010 broken down by local authority allocation.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of the initial decisions made on asylum applications and the number of refugees resettled by local authority through one of the UK's resettlement schemes are published in tables Asy_D02 and Res_D01 of the [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#); breakdowns by year are available. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest published statistics relate to data up to the end of June 2021.

Please note the Home Office does not publish local authority breakdowns on asylum applications as the asylum system operates on a national level. Additionally, when an individual is granted refugee status they are no longer required to inform the Home Office of their address and are free to move around the UK. Additionally, the Home Office publishes further data on asylum and resettlement in the [asylum and resettlement 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/2021-09-03/41909>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Immigration Appeal Tribunal

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [41082] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were waiting to be listed by the Immigration Appeal Tribunal on 31 August 2021.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [41083] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time was between the submission of an appeal and a case being listed for a hearing in the Immigration Appeal Tribunal on 31 August 2021.

Reply from Chris Philp: As at 31 March 2021 the number of cases without a hearing date:

a) In the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) was 17,334.

b) In the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) was 1,086.

These figures include appeals that have been adjourned following an initial hearing. The average waiting time from receipt to the first substantive hearing in the period April 2020 to March 2021

a) in the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) was 40 weeks

b) in the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) was 17 weeks.

Figures are provided for the most recent time period covered by official statistics.

Since the outset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic steps have been taken to increase listing with the introduction of remote hearings and the return of face-to-face hearings in covid-secure tribunal buildings.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41083>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Applications

David Linden (SNP) [41168] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of asylum claimants are being advised of timescales as to when decisions will be taken on their cases.

David Linden (SNP) [41169] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department will be able to offer timescales on decisions to all asylum claimants.

David Linden (SNP) [41170] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the average timescale for her Department to make a decision on an asylum application in 2019.

David Linden (SNP) [41171] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the average timescale for her Department to make a decision on an asylum application in 2021 to date.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office is unable to state what proportion, offer timescales currently or provide average timescales to make an decisions on asylum application in 2019 and 2021 as this information is not published.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. This data can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2021/list-of-tables>

The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives that will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000 by March 2022 and providing improved training and career progression opportunities to aid retention of staff. We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system.

We have three key areas of focus in the short to medium term to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases by improving efficiency and productivity, reducing the number of outstanding claims and building high performing teams. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41168>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41169>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41170>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41171>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Applications

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40923] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what percentage of people seeking asylum issued with a Notice of Intent since 1st January 2021 stating their claim would be considered under the inadmissibility process, and for whom the long-stop period of six months has passed, have subsequently been accepted into the

substantive asylum process to have their claim considered and decided in the UK.

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40925] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who have been issued with a Notice of Intent since 1 January 2021 have been moved into the substantive asylum process to have their claim considered and decided in the UK before the end of the six month long-stop period set out in the inadmissibility guidance.

Asylum: Deportation

Neil Coyle (Labour) [40924] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people seeking asylum who have been issued with a Notice of Intent since 1 January 2021 stating their asylum claim would be considered under the Government's guidance on inadmissibility have subsequently been removed from the UK.

Reply from Chris Philp: The latest published Immigration Statistics detail inadmissibility decisions made as well as the number of returns. These can be found online at: [How many people do we grant asylum or protection to?](#)

Quarterly statistics relating to the period between June and September 2021 are due to be published on 25 November. We are working to bring data in respect of the six month long-stop in line with current reporting and hope to publish that information in the same timeframe.

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/2021-08-18/40923>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40925>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40924>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [41945] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of the 4,561 persons by (a) sex and (b) nationality received a Notice of Intent in the period 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021.

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [41946] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of the 4,561 persons who received a Notice of Intent in the period 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021 have been moved into the substantive asylum process and had their claim registered.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The latest published Immigration Statistics detail inadmissibility decisions made and can be found online at:

[How many people do we grant asylum or protection to?](#)

A breakdown of these figures into nationality and gender is not currently available.

Quarterly statistics relating to the period between June and September 2021 are due to be published on 25 November. We are working to bring data in respect of the six month long-stop in line with current reporting and hope to publish this information in the same timeframe.

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/2021-09-03/41945>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41946>

Asylum

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [41955] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average period of time is that asylum seekers have been on Section 95 support by the time of case resolution in each of the last three years.

Reply from Chris Philp: The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers on Asylum Support. These statistics can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which shows the average period of time that asylum seekers have been on Section 95 support by the time of case resolution of the last three years. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41955>

Asylum: Finance

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [41947] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, under what circumstances and asylum support provision persons issued with a Notice of Intent are being supported.

Reply from Kevin Foster: An asylum seeker who receives a “notice of intent” stating their asylum claim may be treated as inadmissible, is eligible to receive support under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 if they would otherwise be destitute.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41947>

Asylum: Finance

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [41597] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will set support for asylum seekers at 70 per cent of universal credit entitlement in line with the representations made by the Safe Passage campaign.

Reply from Chris Philp: Asylum seekers and their dependants who would otherwise be destitute are supported under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The package of support provided usually consists of free furnished accommodation with utility bills and council tax paid. Individuals are able to access free NHS healthcare and free education for children. They are also provided with a cash allowance to cover other essential living needs.

The level of the allowance is currently set at £39.63 per week for each person in the household. There are no plans to adjust the amount so that it is set at 70% of the rate of Universal Credit or align it with other mainstream benefits.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41957>

Asylum: Poverty

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [41954] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people who are seeking asylum and in receipt of Section 95 support are estimated to be below the (a) 60 per cent of median income relative and (b) absolute poverty lines.

Reply from Chris Philp: The package of support provided to asylum seekers and their dependants supported under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 because they would otherwise be destitute usually consists of free furnished accommodation with utility bills and council tax paid. Individuals are also able to access free NHS healthcare and free education for children. They are also provided with a cash allowance to cover their other “essential living needs” (the statutory test set out in the 1999 Act). The level of the cash allowance is currently set at £39.63 per week for each individual in the household, as this is the level assessed as necessary to meet the statutory test.

The income available to asylum seekers in receipt of section 95 support is lower than a figure based on 60% of the median income of UK households (approximately £17,000 per year) and lower than other measures of poverty levels. However, the

level of cash allowance is regularly reviewed using a methodology endorsed by the Court of Appeal and Inner Court of Session.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41954>

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Paula Barker (Labour) [42382] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the standard of temporary asylum accommodation in the UK; and what plans she has to increase the amount of available accommodation as part of the New Plan for Immigration.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We expect appropriate standards from our providers, who are expected to conduct regular checks across the accommodation estate. Throughout the pandemic, the ability to inspect accommodation in the usual way has faced some understandable logistical challenges, however we have robust systems in place to monitor and ensure continued accordance with the standards of service we and those we accommodate expect.

Service users can also raise specific issues or concerns about their accommodation through the 24/7 Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) service operated by Migrant Help. The Home Office and our providers receive feedback on complaints raised through our regular dialogue with Migrant Help, which enables attention to be focussed on any areas of concern.

All Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contracts (AASC) must adhere the Asylum Accommodation and Support Schedule Statement of Requirements. The standards of accommodation and service are set within the AASC contract and represent a higher standard of quality than the preceding COMPASS contracts.

The new contracts have resulted in significant investment in the accommodation estate and its itinerary – improved facilities in Initial Accommodation, clear requirements on room sharing and greater inventory in Dispersal Accommodation. The new AIRE contract also introduces more independent and transparent oversight of standards through clearer complaints mechanisms for service users and supporting data which allows more intelligent targeting of performance improvement.

We are working closely with local authorities across the UK to secure additional accommodation and ensure service users can move through and ‘move-on’ from the support system. We urge local authorities to work with us to identify new accommodation.

Procurement of properties is being conducted at pace, but in all cases is subject to the consultation process set out within the Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts (AASC), whereby Local Authorities are able to raise objections to procurement of each specific property being proposed for use.

The Home Office is committed to working closely with communities and stakeholders to ensure destitute asylum seekers are housed in safe, secure and suitable accommodation, and they are treated with dignity while their asylum claim is considered.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41382>

The New Plan for Immigration, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration/new-plan-for-immigration-policy-statement-accessible>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Accommodation Centres

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [43550] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to commence specific sections within Part 2 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [43551] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to consult Ministers in the devolved Administrations before making any arrangements for the provision of accommodation centres in their respective nations (a) pursuant to s16 Nationality Immigration Act 2002 and (b) generally.

Reply from Chris Philp: The New Plan for Immigration, published by the Home Office on 24 March 2021, included plans to set up Reception Centres to provide basic accommodation for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute.

As part of these plans consideration is being given to commencing some of the measures set out in the Nationality Immigration and Asylum 2002 which relate to supporting asylum seekers in accommodation centres.

The locations for accommodation centres have not yet been determined. Any proposals to establish accommodation centres in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would be discussed with the devolved governments.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43550>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43551>

The New Plan for Immigration, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration/new-plan-for-immigration-policy-statement-accessible>

Asylum: Employment

Janet Daby (Labour) [37573] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing refugees and asylum seekers to gain employment whilst waiting for their asylum decisions.

Reply from Chris Philp: Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee. Those with refugee status have immediate and unrestricted access to the labour market.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37573>

Asylum: Glasgow

Ian Murray (Labour) [36608] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who took the recent decision to stop cash payments for asylum seekers placed in hotels in Glasgow.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office have not taken the decision to stop support for any service users in Glasgow or anywhere else the UK, where they remain entitled to it.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36608>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Health Services: Asylum

Patrick Grady (SNP) [41936] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of exempting refused asylum seekers from NHS overseas charges.

Patrick Grady (SNP) [41937] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total amount of NHS charges that have been (a) charged to and (b) collected from refused asylum seekers was in each of the last ten years.

Reply from Edward Argar: The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015, include exemptions from charge for certain categories of vulnerable migrants and overseas visitors. Failed asylum seekers who are receiving state support are exempt from National Health Service charges on the

basis of recognised barriers to return or because they have children. The Department continues to consider evidence relating to the Regulations under review, including evidence on charges for failed asylum seekers.

The Department does not hold the requested data on the amount charged to and collected from, failed asylum seekers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41936>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41937>

Asylum: Clothing

Helen Hayes (Labour) [36701] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that destitute asylum seekers arriving in the UK are provided with (a) underwear, (b) shoes and (c) clothing.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The United Kingdom has a statutory obligation to provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation and other support whilst their application for asylum is being considered.

The level of financial assistance provided to supported asylum seekers is reviewed by the Home Office annually. Following the completion of last year's review in October 2020 it was decided people who have been found eligible to receive support under Section 95 or 4(2) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, and who are accommodated in full-board facilities, including the sites, should receive a payment of £8 per week. This sum is intended to provide sufficient funds to cover the cost of buying items to meet clothing needs and pay for non-prescription medicines and any necessary travel.

For those in dispersed accommodation the standard package of support consists of accommodation and a cash allowance of £39.63 per week for each asylum seeker and any dependants in their household.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-20/36701>

Asylum: Detainees

Rupa Huq (Labour) [41080] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of asylum-seeking women held in detention in the UK have received treatment for their mental health in 2021.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Home Office does not hold this information centrally. Healthcare services in all immigration removal centres (IRCs) in England are commissioned by NHS England. At Dungavel IRC in Scotland, and Larne House Short Term Holding Facility in Northern Ireland, healthcare is commissioned by the service providers.

We take the health and welfare of those detained in our care very seriously, and all individuals who are detained have access to medical care, whether they are seeking asylum or not. All detained individuals entering an IRC receive a healthcare screening within two hours of their arrival, which identifies any immediate or long-term healthcare risks. Unless they decline, individuals in IRCs are given an appointment with a doctor within 24 hours. Clinical pathways into other healthcare services are initiated at this point depending on the outcomes of the reception screen, including into mental health services. Furthermore, all centres have mental health in-reach services available.

Additionally, all IRC staff employed by our commercial suppliers are trained to recognise vulnerability, including mental health issues.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41080>

Asylum: Detainees

Neil Coyle (Labour) [38279] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what

recent assessment she has made of the suitability of hotel detention for people seeking asylum.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office are not detaining asylum seekers in hotels; we are accommodating them. Our accommodation providers do not have enforcement powers and those we are accommodating are free to come and go as they please. All sites have security staff, and the numbers vary depending upon the size of the sites. Some sites will have additional measures including fencing installed to reduce access and unmanned access points to sites. Our accommodation providers work with local police forces, and generally our sites are added to Police “red” lists should a call out be needed because someone is trying to access the site.

Increased asylum intake, alongside measures taken to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, has meant the Home Office has had to deal with growing demand for asylum support and accommodation services.

Throughout the pandemic we have taken decisive action to ensure those seeking asylum in the UK have the support they need. We have provided accommodation for everyone in asylum, including those whose applications have been rejected and new applicants claiming asylum.

Given the challenges in the property market during lockdown, we have had to move at pace to support a growing population, ensuring we meet our legal obligation to house destitute asylum seekers. We have therefore had to source hotel accommodation across the United Kingdom. We must be clear hotels are only ever a contingency option and we do not view them as a long-term solution.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38279>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Deportation

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37575] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the Government’s policy on deportations.

Zimbabwe: Deportation

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37576] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of deporting Zimbabwean citizens to Zimbabwe in the context of the humanitarian situation in that country.

Reply from Chris Philp: We expect those with no legal right to be in the UK to leave voluntarily but make no apologies for enforcing their removal if necessary.

The Home Office only seeks to remove people to Zimbabwe when they have no right to remain in the UK and there are no obstacles to their safe return.

Those who have asked for protection will have had their claims carefully considered on their merits, taking into account up-to-date and reliable country information including, where relevant, the impact of the humanitarian situation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37575>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37576>

Asylum: Zimbabwe

Patrick Grady (SNP) [37493] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what impact the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's advice to avoid all but essential travel to Zimbabwe will have on her policies on the deportation of asylum seekers to that country.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office’s travel advice to British nationals is not the correct legal test for determining whether or not a person qualifies for international protection or whether to remove a foreign

national from the UK who has no right to remain here.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37493>

Deportation: Jamaica and Zimbabwe

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [41845] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any of those people deported on the charter flight to (a) Zimbabwe on 21 July 2021 and (b) Jamaica on 11 August 2021 or any of those who were scheduled for deportation on those two flights but were not placed on the planes on the day were under the age of 12 when they came to the UK.

Reply from Chris Philp: The Government is fully committed to discharging the obligation under the UK Borders Act 2007, which is that a non-British citizen convicted of an offence in the UK and sentenced to 12 months or more imprisonment and to whom an exception does not apply is deported from the UK. A person's age upon arrival to the UK or their nationality are not exceptions to automatic deportation, but may be relevant factors in considering whether an exception applies.

The length of time a person has lived in the UK, as well as the strength of their social, cultural and family ties to the UK, are factors considered when determining any Article 8 claim and whether there are very compelling circumstances which satisfy the requirements of the Immigration Rules. A foreign criminal is given the opportunity to make submissions as to why they should not be deported and all claims raised are fully considered and decided upon before deportation, including, where applicable, via the Courts.

We only return those with no legal right to remain in the UK, including foreign national offenders. Individuals are only returned to their country of origin when the Home Office and, where applicable, the Courts deem it is safe to do so.

Our priority will always be to keep our communities safe and since January 2019 we have removed 8,441 foreign criminals.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41845>

Human Trafficking: Organised Crime

Gareth Thomas (Labour Co-op) [37349] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people-smuggling gangs operating to smuggle people into UK in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Reply from Kit Malthouse: The Organised Immigration Crime (OIC) threat to the UK is exceptionally complex, spanning multiple countries, nationalities and criminal methodologies. The Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) behind this crime range from large, sophisticated, poly-criminality networks to individuals in a single area who provide smuggling services as an extension to an otherwise legitimate business. There is therefore no comprehensive estimate of the total number of gangs involved in people smuggling to the UK over the last five years.

The Government and law enforcement agencies work tirelessly to tackle the criminal networks who facilitate people smuggling from source countries to Europe and then the UK, knowingly putting people in life-threatening situations. The National Crime Agency alone has around 50 ongoing investigations into networks or individuals involved in the highest harm of OIC or human trafficking; and is supporting partner agencies in more than 40 other cases.

Since the inception of the multi-agency UK OIC Taskforce in 2015, the UK government's multi-agency response to tackling people smuggling, it has been involved in more than 1000 arrests, both in the UK and overseas, with suspects convicted sentenced to more than 720 years in prison. It takes a whole of route approach, deploying over 150 officers to operate in 17 countries, with Crown

Prosecution Service prosecutors placed in key source and transit countries to disrupt OCGs profiting from people smuggling.

In March 2021, the Government published the New Plan for Immigration containing provisions to establish legislation to deter illegal entry into the UK, thereby breaking the business model of criminal people smuggling networks and protecting the lives of those they endanger. In July 2021, the Government introduced this legislation through the Nationality and Borders Bill.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37349>

The New Plan for Immigration, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration/new-plan-for-immigration-policy-statement-accessible>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

EU Bilateral Agreements for Asylum Seekers

Lord Liddle (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in negotiating bilateral agreements with European Union member states for the return of asylum seekers arriving in the United Kingdom.

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

My Lords, we are in discussions with a number of EU member states and other third countries to reach bilateral arrangements for the return of asylum seekers and intend to open further talks with others. The political declaration agreed by the UK and the EU alongside the TCA noted the importance of this issue and our intention to engage bilaterally with member states on such arrangements. These take time and it would be inappropriate to disclose the nature of those talks.

Lord Liddle: My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for her Answer, but is not the answer that very little progress has actually been made? It would be nice if she acknowledged the fact that it is because of Brexit that we have lost the right to return asylum seekers who could have claimed asylum in other EU countries. More to the point, without these agreements, does it not make the Government's plan to legislate to make all unauthorised arrivals on UK shores illegal not only unjust and possibly in breach of our international legal obligations but completely unsustainable?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: ... everything we are doing complies with all our international obligations, including the refugee convention. I see the noble Lord shaking his head, so let me underline that this allows for differentiated treatment where a refugee has now come to the UK directly from a country of persecution and did not "present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence." That is from Article 31.

The Archbishop of York: My Lords, care and justice for asylum seekers is obviously a matter very close to the heart of the Church, Jesus himself being a refugee. Last week, the Church of England published a toolkit for the many churches that have asked us what they can do to support Afghan refugees. The Minister will know that the Church and other faith communities are among the main support works for asylum seekers. There are more than 3,000 Afghan nationals with existing asylum claims waiting for a decision, some of whom have been waiting a long time. What steps are the Government taking to expedite procedures for dealing with existing or new asylum claims by Afghan nationals, given the very changed situation and the particular stress and trauma felt by these people?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I say to the most reverend Primate that I thank the Church of England in particular for everything it has done to support asylum seekers; the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury has been the first person to take part in community sponsorship. The work of the Church has been incredibly important. Clearly, we will be trying to expedite asylum claims as

quickly as possible. We have suspended returns to Afghanistan—understandably so—and I hope that the claims of all those who are waiting in the queue will be seen to as quickly as possible.

Lord Balfe (Conservative): My Lords, does the Minister accept that asylum seekers, who are not required to take any PCR test when they land in the United Kingdom—unlike double-vaccinated Members of this House—are put at a great disadvantage? Does she envisage that they will be required to take a PCR test before they can be sent back anywhere?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: It would be helpful to outline the process here. All migrants are tested on arrival with a lateral flow test and any refusing are treated as though they are infectious and are isolated. Due to a small possibility of false positives associated with lateral flow, any individual who receives a positive result at a residential short-term holding facility in England or an immigration removal centre will be offered a PCR test to confirm the result, and any detained individual with symptoms of Covid, or testing positive for Covid, will be placed in protective isolation for at least 10 days.

Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick (Crossbench): My Lords, is there not another question for the Home Office? Given the difficulties of last year's endless reporting on Windrush and the Wendy Williams report that said the Home Office was institutionally racist and ignorant, how will it handle new asylum and refugee cases? Is this the right department to handle the increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees? Given that the United Kingdom is one of the poorest countries for receiving refugees and then processing asylum claims, and noting that the BBC reported this morning that from 2008 to 2019 the UK sent back almost as many Afghans as we have just received, is the Home Office the right department to be operating this scheme?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I disagree with the noble Lord on a number of points. I think this country is incredibly generous in terms of how it supports and welcomes people who need our help. He mentioned Wendy Williams. I very much look forward to welcoming her back later this month when she reports on the findings of her first report. ...

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Labour Co-op): ...is not the truth that the Home Office has been unable to negotiate any bilateral agreements—indeed, none is in sight in the near future—causing chaos and confusion? The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has said that we are breaching the 1951 agreement. The truth is also that if we were still in the European Union, we would have the common European asylum system, which worked extremely well. Is this not all a self-inflicted disaster?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord will not be surprised to hear me say that no, it is not a self-inflicted disaster. Of all EU states, we have been one of the most generous. As I said previously, we do not think we are doing anything that breaches our international obligations.

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the Minister claims that the UK is very generous but, according to the Home Office, in 2019, there were around five asylum claims per 10,000 people living in the UK, compared with the EU 28, where there were 14 asylum claims per 10,000 people. What success does the Minister expect to achieve in returning asylum seekers to the EU when the UK does not appear to be taking its fair share?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I absolutely dispute that. We have granted protection or other forms of leave to 2,742 children alone, and to more than 47,000 since 2010. As I previously said, in 2020, the UK received the second highest number out of all European countries—nearly 3,000—of asylum applications from unaccompanied children.

Lord Rosser (Labour): My Lords, there appear to have been agreements involving money reached with the French authorities in connection with what the Government regard as irregular migrants who are trafficked across the channel in small boats. First, how much

has been paid to the French authorities over the past five years and how much is still due to be paid? Secondly, since record numbers of people fleeing desperate situations have already crossed the channel this year, against what specific criteria do and will the Government assess whether that money paid has or has not delivered on whatever it is the Government expect from the French in return?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I fear that I do not have details of payments made to the French, but I can say that, so far this year, up to 25 August, our co-operation with French law enforcement has helped to prevent more than 10,000 migrant attempts. That compares to just over 4,000 for the previous period, in 2020. Clearly, how we are working together is having some effect.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): My Lords, does the Minister agree that asylum seekers who sometimes risk their lives in small, leaky boats, desperately trying to rebuild shattered lives, are human beings deserving of compassion, not unwanted objects to be shuttled between countries—particularly between countries that call themselves Christian?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I have no hesitation in agreeing with the noble Lord that asylum seekers are human beings who deserve our respect; they are not objects. Our Nationality and Borders Bill seeks to address the point that the people who are so culpable here are the criminals, who have no regard for lives, vulnerable or otherwise, and seek only to make money out of other people's vulnerability.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-09-06/debates/A430F425-6989-4B69-9D87-00F4BD4109D8/EUBilateralAgreementsForAsylumSeekers>

The report 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

EU Borders: Refugees from Afghanistan

Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the European Union about refugees from Afghanistan who may have a right to settle in the United Kingdom being processed through EU borders. ...

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford): My Lords, the UK has committed to resettle up to 20,000 at-risk individuals through the Afghanistan citizens' resettlement scheme, in addition to relocating those who supported our Armed Forces or the UK Government in Afghanistan through the Afghan relocations and assistance policy, or ARAP. We continue to work with EU partners to co-ordinate our response to Afghanistan and support those most at risk.

Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale: My Lords, I am grateful for that response but it does not really answer the Question. We all know that, over recent years, significant numbers of potential Afghani refugees have come through Europe to relocate either in other European countries or, if they felt that they had a connection to here, here in the United Kingdom. I would be very concerned if there was any suggestion at all that the Government's more difficult relationship with the European Union might inhibit safe passage for those who have a right to come to the United Kingdom to move perhaps from the eastern European border to here in order to be processed suitably. Will the Government guarantee that there will be discussion with the European Union to ensure that not only are there processes in place in Pakistan and in neighbouring countries but, where potential Afghani refugees have come to the European Union in order then to move to the United Kingdom, there will be a system in place to allow them due consideration?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: One thing I can assure the noble Lord of is that today the Home Secretary is meeting EU Commissioner Johansson and that migration, including the provision of safe and legal routes, is also being discussed today at the G7. An EU resettlement forum, also attended by the US and

Canada, is also due to take place on 27 September. Finally, let me say to the noble Lord that anyone who makes a journey to Europe should claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach.

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (Crossbench): In our mid-August debate, I asked—without getting an answer then or since—about the fate of the 3,200 Afghan asylum seekers already here in this country. They are unable to work, they have to subsist on £5 a day and most of them must be traumatised by events back home. They are stuck in this limbo of a backlog of asylum cases that is now longer than ever before. Clearly, it is now as impractical to send them back as it would be immoral to do so. Clearly, they need to be given permission to stay. Clearly, their cases should now be approved en bloc. Can the Minister tell us when that will happen?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord talked about a mid-August debate—I do not recall, but I may have misheard him. On asylum seekers, I certainly agree with him on several fronts, including that asylum applications should be expedited as quickly as possible. However, I do not agree that we should grant asylum to people en bloc because we need to be very sure that the people we welcome here are not a threat to this country.

Lord Dubs (Labour): My Lords, in discussions with the European Union, are the Government seeking to distinguish between those Afghans who left after the Taliban takeover and those who fled the Taliban before the takeover and reached Europe some time ago? Surely they should all be treated equally.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Again, as I said to the noble Lord, Lord Kerr, every asylum application should be treated on its merit. If a person left Afghanistan some time ago, before the Taliban takeover, and their application is in the system, that application will be treated on a case-by-case basis. Clearly, others came through Operation Pitting and the ARAP scheme. I repeat: anyone who finds themselves in Europe should claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach.

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, can the Minister clarify two of the answers that she has just given? The Government maintain that all refugees must claim asylum in the first safe country they arrive in and that they will seek to return any asylum seeker who travels to the UK, particularly through EU countries that the Government consider safe. Is the Minister really saying that, if those Afghans who helped the British forces are unable to fly back to the UK and have to travel by land through EU countries, they will be refused entry to the UK because they travelled through EU countries?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Let me clarify: no, that is not the case at all. If anyone has been accepted through the ARAP scheme or Operation Pitting, they can go to a VAC or be processed in any country in the world, so I am absolutely not saying that. What I am saying is that if someone is not coming through a legal route, they should claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach.

Lord Rosser (Labour): I think that the answers to the last few questions show the difficulties since the Government have not yet outlined the full details of the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme, confirmed when it will begin or confirmed how many people are expected to join it. We are seeing some of the difficulties arising from that. The Government's responsibility to Afghan citizens who have worked closely with our troops over the past 20 years extends beyond giving them the basic right to settle in the UK. The Home Office and other departments must surely support their integration into British life by beginning to help them to find permanent accommodation. In their Statement on Afghanistan this week, the Government said: "Years before this episode, we began to fulfil our obligation to those Afghans who had helped us".—[*Official Report*, Commons, 6/9/21; col. 21.]

Can the Minister say how many evacuated Afghans are currently being housed in hotels and other temporary accommodation, and how many are now in permanent accommodation?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord raises the issue that many of the people who have now arrived here are still in quarantine; many of the people whom we have flown here will be in quarantine until tomorrow, I think. He is absolutely right that it must be a prime consideration that those people can eventually be found permanent accommodation.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-09-09/debates/FFA7ED04-0D40-49A5-8F5F-B0C2B5E4FA4C/EUBordersRefugeesFromAfghanistan>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Deportation: Afghanistan

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green) [HL2334] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people whose applications to stay in the UK had been refused were returned to Afghanistan in the past five years.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK in each quarter in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly release'. The latest data are published in Ret_D02 of the Returns detailed tables. This includes information on the number of people returned to each country. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relate to the year ending December 2020. Data to the end of March 2021 is due to be published on 26 August.

The table below covers the period of Quarter 1 - 2017 to Quarter 1 2021 over the last five years.

	2017 Q1	2017 Q2	2017 Q3	2017 Q4	2018 Q1	2018 Q2	2018 Q3	2018 Q4
Grand Total	13905	11912	13005	12418	11656	10456	11036	11445
	2019 Q1	2019 Q2	2019 Q3	2019 Q4	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4
	10439	9237	9004	9529	7207	1495	4479	5075
								2021 Q1
								4565

The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

- enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry);
- overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK;
- breach their conditions of leave;
- are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction and
- have been refused asylum.

The published data relate to all returns, regardless of reason for return.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'

[Returns Data DO2](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/hl2334>

Press Release

UK and Switzerland strike deal to secure healthcare access and other benefits for citizens living and travelling abroad

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-switzerland-strike-deal-to-secure-healthcare-access-and-other-benefits-for-citizens-living-and-travelling-abroad>

New Publications

Windrush Compensation Scheme data: August 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015765/Windrush_Compensation_Scheme_Published_data_-_July_2021.ods

Your immigration status: an introduction for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/view-and-prove-your-immigration-status-evisa/your-immigration-status-an-introduction-for-eu-eea-and-swiss-citizens-accessible-version>

News

Home Office and Kent Council face legal challenge over treatment of child migrants

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-refugees-home-office-kent-council-b1915066.html>

Windrush victims fear being ‘forgotten’ amid Afghan crisis

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/windrush-claimants-afghan-refugees-b1913933.html>

MPs criticise slow pace of dealing with Afghan relocations to UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/sep/09/mps-criticise-slow-pace-of-dealing-with-afghan-relocations-to-uk>

Afghan refugees left without cash or essential supplies after arriving in UK, says council

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/08/afghan-refugees-left-without-cash-essential-supplies-arriving/>

Afghan refugees arriving in UK left without nappies or toothpaste, charity warns

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghan-refugees-toothpaste-nappies-hotels-home-office-uk-b1915908.html>

Abandoned Afghans in UK forced to steal nappies, says charity

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/abandoned-afghans-in-uk-forced-to-steal-nappies-says-charity-2036w3d7w>

For Afghan refugees Britain’s warm welcome will soon become cold comfort

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/sep/06/afghan-refugees-britain-warm-welcome-cold-home-office-immigration-system>

Afghans fleeing Kabul bowled over by Britons’ warm welcome in cricket match

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/06/afghans-fleeing-kabul-bowled-britons-warm-welcome-cricket-match/>

Channel crossings: Border Force fleet to get £200m upgrade

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/channel-crossings-border-force-fleet-to-get-200m-upgrade-nph6pwnmp>

Channel crossings: Migrant boats can be turned back in new UK move approved by Patel

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58495948>

Priti Patel sanctions 'pushback' tactics to turn away migrant boats at sea

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/09/09/priti-patel-sanctions-pushback-tactics-turn-away-migrant-boats/>

Tory MPs urge Priti Patel to return migrants who attempt to enter UK illegally

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/07/tory-mps-urges-priti-patel-to-return-migrants-to-france>

Home Secretary Priti Patel reportedly sanctions tactics to turn back migrant boats in Channel

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/home-secretary-priti-patel-reportedly-sanctions-tactics-to-turn-back-migrant-boats-in-channel-3376297>

Channel crossings: France and UK clash over Border Force tactic plans

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-58504016>

Stop more migrants crossing Channel or pay the price, France warned

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/more-than-1-000-migrants-cross-channel-in-new-daily-record-7bfc7zjsl>

Priti Patel accused by France of 'breaching trust' over channel crossings

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-migrant-crossing-channel-franch-b1916242.html>

France accuses Patel of blackmail in row over Channel migrants

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/09/france-accuses-patel-of-blackmail-in-row-over-channel-migrants>

Fury as French mayor questions whether UK will shoot at migrant boats on Channel

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/09/10/britain-furious-french-mayors-claims-will-shoot-migrant-boats/>

Nearly 1,000 migrants cross Channel as Boris Johnson demands France get tougher

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/06/migrants-continue-channel-crossings-amid-spell-warm-weather/>

France warns UK plan to 'push back' migrant boats risks 'theatre of human tragedies'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-channel-migrant-boats-france-b1917335.html>

Concern for migrants' safety as hundreds resume Channel crossings

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/06/record-numbers-of-migrants-picked-up-crossing-channel>

Channel Migrants: Five children among latest group to reach Dover

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-58456993>

Baby strapped to woman among ‘1,000 migrants’ who crossed Channel on Monday
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-english-channel-baby-rescued-b1915200.html>

GP surgeries that wrongly refuse to register undocumented people rated ‘good’ by CQC
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gp-surgeries-undocumented-migrants-healthcare-uk-b1912319.html>

Mother granted refugee status after 13 years fears she will never find daughter
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/refugees-family-reunion-ludford-bill-b1917775.html>

TOP

Community Relations

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Patrick Grady (SNP) [413] 40th anniversary of the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple in Glasgow – That this House congratulates the leadership and community of the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple on Otago Street, Glasgow, on the occasion of its 40th anniversary; notes that that anniversary was celebrated at a special event at the Gurdwara on 29 August 2021; thanks all those associated with the Gurdwara who provide selfless service and support to the wider local community through a range of charitable and voluntary activities; notes that that service and support has been particularly important during the covid-19 pandemic; and looks forward to the Temple and its community continuing to be a welcome and valued part of Glasgow's vibrant and diverse cultural and religious life for many years to come.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58878>

TOP

Equality

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Gypsy Travellers

Elena Whitham (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on progress with its joint action plan with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, “Improving the Lives of Scotland’s Gypsy/Travellers (2019-2021)”. (S6O-00108)

Reply from the Minister for Social Security and Local government (Ben Macpherson): First, we welcome Ms Whitham’s interest in this area, which she has had since her days as COSLA’s community spokesperson. She was also an active member of the Scottish Government’s Gypsy Traveller ministerial working group. Due to the pandemic, the Gypsy Traveller action plan was extended to October 2022 to provide us with more time to deliver on the remaining actions and to build on the excellent work that has already been undertaken. Covid-19 and the pandemic crisis have already allowed us to make unexpected progress in some areas such as remote and distance learning and digital access, which have improved, and improving sites and accommodation. We will continue to work closely with the community, COSLA and partners to ensure that we meet our

objectives and improve outcomes for our Gypsy Traveller communities.

Elena Whitham: As well as seeing their traditional lifestyle eroded, we know that our Gypsy Traveller communities often experience extreme and persistent stereotyping and hostility as they go about their lives. I know that the minister agrees that it is hugely important that we challenge such negative attitudes and ask that progress be made in tackling racism and discrimination, which is a central part of the action plan.

Reply from Ben Macpherson: The member is right; we are working hard to address racism, prejudice and discrimination against the community. For example, some of the practical steps that we have taken include the development by NHS Fife and NHS 24 of an e-learning module, to be promoted to tackle the stigma and discrimination that some Gypsy Travellers experience when using national health services. Uptake of the module has been high. Work has also involved developing learning and development resources for Social Security Scotland, to support the needs of Gypsy Travellers when they access front-line services.

As the member will know, COSLA works with councillors across the country to raise awareness of the issues that Gypsy Travellers face, to ensure that they feel involved in their local communities.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13282&i=120491#ScotParlOR>

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-lives-scotlands-gypsy-travellers-2019-2021/>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Alexander Stewart (Conservative) [S6M-01131] Diversity Week Fife 2021 – That the Parliament welcomes Diversity Week Fife, which runs from 6 to 12 September 2021, where partners from the private, public and voluntary sectors work together to celebrate what they see as the vibrancy and diversity of life in Fife; understands that Diversity Week Fife aims to promote mutual appreciation and inclusiveness by highlighting and showcasing the many and varied communities and social interests in the region; notes that the theme for 2021 is Rebuilding Community and looks at recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and how Fife's residents can support each other to move into the so-called new normal; understands that, in previous years, organisations and community groups hosted events such as coffee mornings or open doors days; further understands that there are also other ways of participating and that Fife Centre for Equalities, which is running the event, can advise if interested residents have another kind of event they would like to run, in support of the inclusion of all members of Fife's diverse community; wishes everyone involved all the very best for the event's continued success, and commends them all on their truly sterling work.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-01131>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Ethnic Groups: Equality

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [43562] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the findings of the Charity Commission's investigation into the Runnymede Trust's analysis of the report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, the Sewell Report.

Reply from Matt Warman: Where concerns are raised that a charity is acting

outside of its charitable purposes, it is right that such concerns are considered by the Charity Commission as the independent registrar and regulator of charities in England and Wales.

The Charity Commission has concluded its compliance case involving the Runnymede Trust, and a statement can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-concludes-compliance-case-involving-the-runnymede-trust>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43562>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Higher Education: Ethnic Groups

Lyn Brown (Labour) [40806] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to page 25 of the report, Higher Education awarding gaps and ethnicity in London: Going beyond BAME, published by AccessHE on 16 July 2021, what steps his Department is taking to tackle differences in higher education attainment by ethnic background.

Lyn Brown (Labour) [40806] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report, Higher Education awarding gaps and ethnicity in London: Going beyond BAME published by AccessHE on 16 July 2021, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing the recommendations made in that report.

Reply from Michelle Donelan: It is vital that all young people entering higher education (HE) in the UK do so with the same opportunities as their peers to fully benefit from their chosen course of study.

Under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, the Office for Students (OfS) has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity for disadvantaged and traditionally under-represented groups. This includes non-continuation and attainment levels of students from those backgrounds.

The OfS has set itself and the HE sector targets to address longstanding inequalities, including to eliminate the gap in degree outcomes between white and black students.

On 11 March 2021 the OfS published the access and participation data dashboard, which is used to identify gaps in access, continuation, attainment, and progression, at English providers delivering undergraduate provision by different student characteristics. This is available here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/>

In our latest strategic guidance to the OfS we asked them to urge providers to do more to ensure that all students, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, are recruited onto courses that will deliver good outcomes. We have also asked that the OfS encourage universities to work with schools to meaningfully raise attainment in schools, as this is one of the strongest predictors of future participation in HE.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40806>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40807>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.accesshe.ac.uk/yYdlx0u7/SBT2331-AccessHE-Going-beyond-BAME-Report-v4.pdf>

Unemployment: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37578] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the levels of unemployment in the Black and minority ethnic community.

Reply from Mims Davies: The latest data from the Office for National Statistics from the Labour Force Survey estimates there were 116,000 individuals in

unemployment from the Black African/Caribbean ethnic group in January-March 2021. This was an increase of 16,000 individuals from January-March 2020. In total, there were 397,000 ethnic minorities in unemployment in January-March 2021, an increase of 119,000 from January-March 2020.

The Government is committed to supporting people from all backgrounds, including those from ethnic minorities, to move into work. It provides a national offer of support ensuring that no matter where they live, all customers receive the help they need, when they need it.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37578>

Prisoners: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37577] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of the number of children in prison from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Reply from Alex Chalk: Monthly statistics on the population of children and young people within secure children's homes (SCHs), secure training centres (STCs) and young offender institutions (YOIs) can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-custody-data>

The publication contains detailed information on the make-up of the custody population, including ethnicity.

The number of children and young people in custody has decreased considerably over the past ten years across all ethnic minority groups, however we recognise that this decrease has not fallen evenly for children of different ethnicities which is a matter of concern.

Addressing race disparities is extremely important to the Ministry of Justice and we continue to prioritise this work, examining and acting on the issues highlighted in several reviews, recent independent inspections, and collecting and interrogating data in the spirit of "explain or change".

The MoJ and the Youth Justice Board work closely together in seeking to tackle racial disparities in the youth justice system, including custody. Work in this area includes providing the tools and data to help frontline youth justice services to understand the needs of ethnic minority children, work with the Magistrates' Association to build awareness of disparity among sentencers, securing over £1m in funding to use physical activity to improve outcomes for 11,000 ethnic minority children at risk of entering the criminal justice system and improving Youth Custody Service workforce diversity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37577>

Prison Officers: Ethnic Groups

Lyn Brown (Labour) [41775] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Recruitment diversity statistics June 21, published on 19 August 2021, if he will make a statement on the Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's commitment that 14 per cent of new prison officer recruits would come from BAME backgrounds by December 2020.

Reply from Alex Chalk: In response to recommendation 28 of the 2017 Lammy Review, HMPPS remains committed to achieving a target of 14% of all staff recruited being from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background.

The proportions for offers formally accepted by BAME candidates for prisoner officer roles varied each quarter between December 2019 and March 2021 ranging from 8.7% to 32.0%.

HMPPS regularly reviews and evaluates candidate performance during the prison officer recruitment process for fairness and efficacy and no adverse impact has been found against any group participating in the prison officer recruitment process

at any stage of the recruitment process, including BAME candidates. We continue to recruit prison officers and tailor our marketing and attraction to increase diversity of applications. HMPPS is targeting prisons where there is disparity between the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workforce population and the local population through using an enhanced recruitment approach.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41775>

The statistics referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-june-2021/recruitment-diversity-statistics-june-21>

Travellers: Local Plans

Navendu Mishra (Labour) [44458] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities have included provision for sites for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in their local plan.

Reply from Christopher Pincher: This Department does not keep a record on how many local authorities have included provision for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in their local plan. This information is held by each individual local authority

The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites asks local planning authorities to assess the need for gypsy and traveller sites in their area, and then plan to meet that need, in the same way that they plan for all forms of housing.

Plans are robustly tested at examination by an independently appointed Inspector before they can be adopted. The examination of the plan will consider whether adequate site provision has been made for gypsies and travellers based on assessed needs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-07/44458>

The Planning Policy referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37581] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of Black and ethnic minority staff employed in his Department.

Reply from Nigel Adams: As of 30 June 2021, 16.9% of FCDO UK Based Staff who declared an ethnicity self-identified as Black, Asian or minority ethnic.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37581>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour): [37588] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Black and ethnic minority staff hold management positions in his Department.

Reply from Nigel Adams: In the FCDO, "management positions" might apply to staff in any grade. As of 31 March 2021, 80% of UK Based staff in the FCDO declared their ethnicity and 17% self-identified as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. The cross civil service BAME average is 14.3%. This data is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021>
[Table 37](#)

We do not currently have the data for our Country Based Staff.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37588>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Department for Work and Pensions: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37584] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate he has made of the number of Black and ethnic minority staff employed in his Department.

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37590] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Black and ethnic minority staff hold management positions in her Department.

Reply from Guy Opperman: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) overall and managerial Ethnicity Data as at 30 June 2021:

Ethnicity declaration	DWP		Managers	
Ethnic Minority	14,168	15.30%	1,015	7.10%
White	68,179	73.60%	12,170	84.70%
Prefer not to say	4,327	4.70%	567	3.90%
unknown	6,016	6.50%	616	4.30%
Total DWP staff	92,690		14,368	

To further support ethnic minority career progression, we continue to actively promote Civil Service development opportunities, which include:

- Early and Summer Diversity Programme
- Beyond Boundaries Development Programme
- Race to the Top Shadowing Programme
- Future and Senior Leaders Scheme
- Minority Ethnic Talent Association programme

We are also building our internal pipeline through internal development schemes such as the Aspire Programme, which specifically targets development of Black and Ethnic minority staff.

We have built a number of improvements into our recruitment and selection including:

- Developed and introduced a new strengths based approach to our recruitment
- Implemented permanent recruitment as external applications by default
- Implemented anonymised recruitment applications to minimise bias
- Improved marketing of DWP as a diverse and inclusive employer of choice
- Increasing our pool of ethnic minority recruitment panellists
- All senior recruitment panels include an ethnic minority panellist and we have piloted panels of all grades featuring an ethnic minority panellist

These actions are supporting DWP commitment to the Civil Service ambition of becoming the UK's most inclusive employer, by improving representation of ethnic minority colleagues across all levels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37584>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37590>

Department of Health and Social Care: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37585] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of Black and ethnic minority staff employed in his Department.

Reply from Edward Argar: The Department published the report 'Equality in 2020: how DHSC met the public sector equality duty' on 24 June. This includes the most recent statistics published on the number of black and ethnic minority staff employed in the Department. The report shows that 43.1% of staff declared their ethnicity. The data on number of staff is rounded to the nearest five to maintain anonymity. In September 2020, the Department employed 2,435 members of staff.

Of these, 210 identify as black or ethnic minority, 840 as white and 1,385 are undeclared. We are committed to achieving a representative workforce and providing equality of opportunity. We monitor protected characteristics across the Department, although declaration of ethnicity is voluntary.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37585>

Northern Ireland Office: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [31587] To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent estimate he has made of the number of Black and ethnic minority staff employed in his Department.

Reply from Robin Walker: To effectively collate and capture diversity data, the department encourages staff to complete a diversity declaration questionnaire. The HR team regularly analyses this data. Current data held suggests 2.5% of staff have declared to be from a Black and ethnic minority background. 35% of staff have not declared their background and 2% have stated "Prefer not to say". These figures are based on 92 staff members completing their diversity data, out of a total of 164.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37587>

Ministry of Defence: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37589] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Black and ethnic minority staff hold management positions in his Department.

Reply from Leo Docherty: Defence has committed to a Diversity and Inclusion strategy and is working hard to achieve a more diverse workforce. That is why we have renewed our levels of ambition at the highest levels in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as we work to fulfil the key objective in our 2018-2030 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to eliminate discrimination and improve diversity.

As at 30 June 2021, 633 civilian personnel working in MOD (Main) and Defence Equipment and Support had self-declared their ethnicity as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and had at least one other active position reporting to them. This means that 4.4 per cent of civilian managers had self-declared as BAME; an additional 11.4 per cent (approximate) of civilian managers either had no recorded ethnicity or had chosen not to declare.

Defence publishes biannual statistics on diversity declarations for MOD civilian staff. The latest edition can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-diversity-dashboard-index>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-21/37589>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Cabinet Office: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [37591] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Black and ethnic minority staff hold management positions in his Department.

Prime Minister: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones (Labour) [38414] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff employed in Number 10 are from a black or minority ethnic background.

Reply from Julia Lopez: The Cabinet Office has a headcount of 8,889 as of 31 July 2021 (Data Source: SOP platform) of which 4,972 staff have declared their ethnic background. There are 984 ethnic minority members of staff in management grades that have declared their ethnicity; this is 19.8% of all staff that have declared their ethnic background. This is higher than the Civil Service average of 14.3% (Source: Annual Civil Service Employment Survey) and the Economic Active Population for ethnic minority people which is 13.6% (Source: [ONS August 2021](#))

The absolute number of ethnic minority staff in management positions is likely to be higher given the number of staff who have not made a declaration. The Cabinet Office has plans to increase the declaration rate in the department with a campaign during National Inclusion week in September.

Number 10 is an integral part of the Cabinet Office and is included in this figure.

Management grades are identified as grades Executive Officer (EO) and above.

For more wider information the government publishes statistics on Civil Service demographics annually on March 31st via the Office for National Statistics. This can be found on the Gov.uk website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38414>

Press Release

Next Step Towards Scottish Human Rights Bill

<https://www.gov.scot/news/next-step-towards-scottish-human-rights-bill/>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Motion

James Dornan (SNP) [S6M-00979] Holding Racists Accountable – That the Parliament unequivocally condemns the anti-Irish racism and religious bigotry reported to have been exhibited in Glasgow by a group of people, mostly dressed in black, on 29 August 2021, who, it believes, and as reported by the media, were supporters of Rangers FC; commends the reported swift actions taken by Rangers FC in previous instances of hate crimes committed against its own supporters, and hopes that similar professionalism will be employed this time; requests that Rangers FC conducts an internal investigation into the reasons for these reported instances of anti-Irish racism, and what it believes to be the root cause of any racism, so that it may proceed to finally resolve this plight; urges Rangers FC, Police Scotland, the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council and any other interested parties to hold a summit to deal with what it sees as this longstanding and dangerous issue, which it considers tarnishes the football club and the country, and assures the Irish and Catholic communities in Scotland that they are welcome and valued citizens of Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-00979>

UK Parliament Debate

Definition of Islamophobia

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-09/debates/B2667B41-FDA9-4BFD-BCD3-AFD4AF5165FD/DefinitionOfIslamophobia>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime

Alex Cunningham (Labour) [44339] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to support the appointment of a hate crime commissioner.

Reply from Kit Malthouse: There are currently no plans to appoint a hate crime commissioner.

The Law Commission is examining the pros and cons of such a role as part of their review of hate crime laws. We will consider the Law Commission's recommendations and respond to their report when it is complete.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-07/44339>

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

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

Antisemitism

Bambos Charalambous (Labour) [41130] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to tackle hate crime towards the Jewish community in the UK since the lifting of covid-19 restrictions.

Reply from Luke Hall: Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we are taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms. We are clear that victims should be supported and the individuals who carry out these heinous attacks must be brought to justice. We are providing £14 million this year for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings and we have encouraged the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism across universities and local authorities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41130>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Higher Education: Antisemitism

Karen Bradley (Conservative) [38256] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to promote (a) adoption and (b) implementation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism across higher education institutions.

Universities: Antisemitism

Christian Wakeford (Conservative) [903339] What steps his Department is taking to tackle anti-Semitism on university campuses.

Reply from Michelle Donelan: There is no place in our society, including within higher education (HE), for antisemitism. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition is an important tool in tackling antisemitism. Adopting the widely recognised definition sends a strong signal that HE providers take these issues seriously.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to the sector in October 2020, calling upon leaders to adopt the IHRA definition. He repeated this message in May 2021, reinforcing the government's expectation that providers adopt the IHRA definition, stressing the even greater importance of doing so in light of increased number of antisemitic incidents recorded (as a result of the conflict in the Middle East). We are aware of over 100 HE providers which have now adopted the IHRA definition. This includes over 80 universities.

In his February 2021 strategic guidance letter, the Secretary of State for Education also asked the Office for Students (OfS) to undertake a scoping exercise, to identify providers which are reluctant to adopt the definition. On 29 July 2021, the OfS announced they intend to publish a list of HE providers who have adopted the IHRA

working definition of antisemitism in autumn 2021, alongside resources for providers.

The decision on adoption of the definition rests with individual providers, but the government will continue to urge them to adopt the definition and ensure that HE is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

Adoption of the IHRA definition is only a first step, and while the government considers that adoption of the definition is crucial, it is not enough on its own. That is why I will continue to work with the sector to ensure it better understands antisemitism and does more to end it.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38256>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/903339>

The Secretary of State for Education's letters, referred to above, can be read at

<https://twitter.com/GavinWilliamson/status/1314506646115278848>

and

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/48277145-4cf3-497f-b9b7-b13fdf16f46b/ofs-strategic-guidance-20210208.pdf>

The Office for Students announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/student-safeguarding-evaluation-and-resources/our-position-on-antisemitism/>

Antisemitism: Prosecutions

Bambos Charalambous (Labour) [41129] To ask the Attorney General, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the CPS has adequate resources to prosecute hate crime against the Jewish community (a) on social media and (b) in communities across the UK.

Reply from Lucy Frazer: I know the CPS recognises the serious impact hate crimes have on peoples' lives and will always seek to prosecute where there is sufficient evidence to do so, regardless of the offence or how it is committed. Their efforts have led to a continued rise in successful sentence uplifts for recorded hate crime, which this year reached its highest rate yet at 79.1% of cases.

Each CPS Area also has a Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor as a strategic hate crime lead and nationally there is a hate crime lead at Chief Crown Prosecutor level. A network of dedicated Hate Crime Coordinators operate across all 14 CPS Areas, providing experience and expertise on matters relating to hate crime and supporting front line prosecutors to secure sentence uplifts.

The CPS directly engages with communities affected by hate crime to ensure a greater awareness of the law and how it is applied. Within the Jewish community, the CPS sits on the cross-government antisemitism working group with the Community Security Trust, Board of Deputies, and Jewish Leadership Council. The CPS External Consultation Group on hate crime provides a further community perspective on prosecutorial activity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/41129>

Hate Crime: Travellers

Beth Winter (Labour) [38464] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the number of hate crimes committed against the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

Reply from Luke Hall: All forms of hate crime are completely unacceptable, which is why this Government has funded projects to tackle racially motivated hatred, including that targeted at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This includes funding to GATE Herts for an assessment published in 2020 of hate crimes directed

against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38464>

Press Releases

Supporter convicted of online racial abuse of former Premier League footballer

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/west-midlands/news/supporter-convicted-online-racial-abuse-former-premier-league-footballer>

Cheshire man sentenced for racist abuse of England players

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/mersey-cheshire/news/cheshire-man-sentenced-racist-abuse-england-players>

New Publications

Thousands of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff in mental health trusts experience harassment, bullying, or abuse at work, new analysis finds

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2021/09/09/thousands-of-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-staff-in-mental-health-trusts-experience-harassment-bullying-or-abuse-at-work-new-analysis-finds>

New Resources for Holocaust Memorial Day 2022

Days to Remember – worksheets

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/days-to-remember-secondary-learning-resource/>

Sharif Barko – life story

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/sharif-barko/>

The Babi Yar massacre

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/the-babi-yar-massacre/>

Kindertransport lesson plan – Secondary

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/secondary-kindertransport-lesson-plan/>

Kindertransport lesson plan – Primary

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/primary-kindertransport-lesson-plan/>

Franziska Mikus

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/franziska-mikus/>

News

Government fails to create Islamophobia definition 2 years after pledge

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/islamophobia-uk-definition-government-appg-b1914012.html>

SNP's Humza Yousaf reveals death threats and racist abuse in shocking email chain

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19559771.snps-humza-yousaf-reveals-death-threats-racist-abuse-shocking-email-chain/>

Green MSP Maggie Chapman speaks out over racist online abuse

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19560138.green-msp-maggie-chapman-speaks-racist-online-abuse/>

Third of BAME staff in NHS mental health services face racist abuse at work

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/09/third-of-bame-staff-in-nhs-mental-health-services-face-racist-abuse-at-work>

Racism and Islamophobia among extremist views 'widespread across classrooms'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/extremist-views-school-england-racism-b1915191.html>

Didsbury Mosque: Police investigate fire as hate crime

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-manchester-58528886>

Blistering barnacles! Schools burn Tintin books in racism storm

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/blistering-barnacles-schools-burn-tintin-books-in-racism-storm-bkxlqx5j7>

How a racist taunt prompted me to reclaim Britain's countryside

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/sep/07/racist-taunt-reclaim-britain-countryside-prejudice>

Aristocrat convicted of antisemitic attack has links to alien conspiracy theorist

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/antisemitic-aristocrat-alien-serpents-piers-portman-dkzrl6xtk>

Yorkshire accept Azeem Rafiq was victim of racial harassment and bullying

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/sep/10/yorkshire-accept-azeem-rafiq-was-victim-of-racial-harassment-and-bullying-cricket>

Yorkshire racism findings: 'No question' Azeem Rafiq victim of racial harassment and bullying

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cricket/2021/09/10/yorkshire-racism-findings-no-question-azeem-rafiq-victim-racial/>

Azeem Rafiq slams Yorkshire racism investigation process as 'atrocious'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cricket/azeem-rafiq-yorkshire-racism-investigation-b1917759.html>

Yorkshire accused of 'lack of genuine contrition' by MPs over Azeem Rafiq racism

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cricket/azeem-rafiq-yorkshire-mps-nasser-hussain-julian-knight-b1918042.html>

Yorkshire admit Azeem Rafiq a victim of racism and bullying

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/yorkshire-admit-azeem-rafiq-a-victim-of-racism-and-bullying-3tnkkn2f>

Internet troll who sent racist abuse to Bukayo Saka apologises

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/07/internet-troll-who-sent-racist-abuse-to-bukayo-saka-apologises>

Man sentenced over racist post after Euro 2020 final

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/08/man-sentenced-over-racist-post-after-euro-2020-final>

Football fan spared jail after posting racist comments online at Euro 2020

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/08/football-fan-spared-jail-posting-racist-comments-online-euro/>

Rio Ferdinand believes failure to tackle online racism is fuelling return of terrace bigotry

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2021/09/09/rio-ferdinand-believes-failure-tackle-online-racism-fuelling/>

Rio Ferdinand had to explain monkey emoji to his children after racist abuse

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/rio-ferdinand-bill-mps-home-affairs-committee-england-b1917043.html>

Rio Ferdinand: I had to explain racist emojis to my children

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rio-ferdinand-i-had-to-explain-racist-emojis-to-my-children-3bzwlfxg9>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Debate

Programme for Government 2021-22

First Minister's Statement

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13278&i=120433#ScotParlOR>

Debates

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13278&i=120434&c=2338991#ScotParlOR>

and (focusing on the economy)

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13281&i=120457#ScotParlOR>

Press Releases

Building Scotland's prosperity

<https://www.gov.scot/news/building-scotlands-prosperity/>

A Fairer, Greener Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/news/a-fairer-greener-scotland/>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2022: First Minister's statement - 7 September 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-minister-programme-government-2021-2022/>

COP26

<https://www.gov.scot/news/cop26/>

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Travellers: Caravan Sites

Beth Winter (Labour) [38461] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment his Department made of the adequacy of the provision of authorised caravan sites for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

Beth Winter (Labour) [38462] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the facilities available on authorised caravan sites for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

Beth Winter (Labour) [38463] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many households are currently on waiting lists for authorised caravan sites.

Reply from Christopher Pincher: The Department has made no assessment on the adequacy of the provision of authorised sites. It is the responsibility of local planning authorities to make their own assessment of need for traveller sites and in producing their local plan, to identify sites to meet that need. Local authorities are best placed to make decisions about the number and location of such sites locally, having had due regard to national policy and local circumstances.

The Department does not hold data on how many households are currently on waiting lists for authorised sites. This information is held by each individual local authority

Local authorities are responsible for repairs and maintenance of permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites they own, under the Mobile Homes Act 1983. Local authorities set out these responsibilities in individual Mobile Homes pitch agreements. Privately run Gypsy and Traveller sites with appropriate planning permission are subject to the local authority site licencing regime under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. Local authorities have discretion to attach conditions to a licence and can issue a compliance notice for a breach of a condition.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38461>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38462>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38463>

Meat: Labelling

Greg Knight (Conservative) [38147] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to require labelling of meat to show animals slaughtered without prior stunning; if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing more detailed food labelling to promote animal welfare, including the method of slaughter; and if he will make statement.

Reply from Victoria Prentis: There are currently no regulations that require the labelling of meat with the method of slaughter, but where any information is provided voluntarily it must be accurate and not misleading to the consumer. The

Government expects the industry, whether food producer or food outlet, to provide consumers with all the information they need to make informed choices about the food they eat.

The Government has committed to consult on what can be done through labelling to promote high standards and high welfare across the UK market. We will shortly launch a call for evidence to assess the impacts of different types of labelling reforms for animal welfare, including method of slaughter. This will feed into the Government's wider work on food labelling to ensure that consumers can have confidence in the food they buy and to facilitate the trade of quality British food at home and abroad.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-22/38147>

Press Release

Prime Minister's Rosh HaShanah Message

<https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1434885265152258050>

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Health Information: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS

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>

Get a record of your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination status

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/after-your-vaccine/get-a-record-of-your-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-status>

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

COVID Vaccine Certification Scheme

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13282&i=120511&c=2339920#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Motion

John Swinney (SNP) [S6M-01123] COVID Vaccine Certification Scheme – That the Parliament commends the extraordinary effort of vaccination teams throughout Scotland, which means that, as of 6 September 2021, 84% of eligible over 18-year-olds were double-vaccinated against COVID-19; recognises that case numbers remain stubbornly high and that action is needed from all sectors to ensure that baseline COVID measures are rigorously implemented; acknowledges that a number of other countries have introduced COVID certification schemes and that the UK Government has plans to introduce a vaccine certification scheme in England; believes that, in line with the Scottish Government's strategic intent, a COVID Vaccine Certification scheme can provide a targeted means to maximise Scotland's ability to keep certain higher risk settings open, while reducing the impact of transmission and encouraging the remaining sections of the population to get vaccinated; supports the implementation of a COVID Vaccine Certification scheme; agrees that the scheme will apply to nightclubs, sexual entertainment venues, indoor unseated live events with 500 or more attendees, outdoor unseated live events with 4,000 or more attendees and all events with 10,000 or more attendees; notes that measures are being taken to ensure digital inclusivity and to ensure that disabled people are not disproportionately impacted, and agrees that this scheme will be kept under regular review.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-01123>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Adam Holloway (Conservative) [40751] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risk that routine requests by NHS vaccination centres for NHS and National Insurance numbers may make people who are in the UK illegally less likely to engage with the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Reply from Nadhim Zahawi: No such assessment has been made.

However, a National Health Service (NHS) number or national insurance number is not needed to make a booking for a COVID-19 vaccine or when attending a vaccination appointment.

As vaccination against COVID-19 is offered to every eligible adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of their immigration status. No immigration checks are needed to receive a COVID-19 vaccination and the NHS is not required to report undocumented migrants to the Home Office.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-08-18/40751>

Scottish Government Press Releases

Coronavirus (COVID-19): mandatory vaccine certification

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-mandatory-vaccine-certification/>

Vaccine certification plans approved by Scottish Parliament

<https://www.gov.scot/news/vaccine-certification-plans-approved-by-scottish-parliament/>

Second doses offered to all eligible adults

<https://www.gov.scot/news/second-doses-offered-to-all-eligible-adults/>

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 – 8 September 2021

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

UK Government Press Releases

Prime Minister to set out next steps in Covid response

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-to-set-out-next-steps-in-covid-response>

4 in 5 people aged 16 and over vaccinated with both doses

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/four-in-five-people-aged-16-and-over-vaccinated-with-both-doses>

UK Government Publication

The R value and growth rate

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-value-and-growth-rate>

News

Scotland to launch vaccine passports on 1 October

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-58506013>

Covid in Scotland: Opposition increasing towards vaccine passports

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-58453551>

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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/2995>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2918>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) (No. 2) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3003>

Asylum Seekers (Return to Safe Countries) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2961>

Barnett Formula (Replacement) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2982>

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3002>

Human Trafficking (Child Protection) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2953>

Human Trafficking (Sentencing) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2963>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2986>

Immigration (Health and Social Care Staff) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3005>

Modern Slavery (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2892>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

**** Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2883>

Second Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-09-10/debates/2E1F55F1-84A5-4F5F-BFC1-248B449607AA/Refugees\(FamilyReunion\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-09-10/debates/2E1F55F1-84A5-4F5F-BFC1-248B449607AA/Refugees(FamilyReunion)Bill(HL))

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

Blood Cancer: lived experiences of people from ethnic minority communities

(closing date 13 September 2021)

<https://clearviewresearch.org/BCxCVR>

Coronavirus (Compensation for Self-isolation) Bill (closing date 24 September 2021)

<https://consult.gov.scot/covid-public-health/compensation-for-self-isolation/>

**** Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee: Pre-Budget Scrutiny**

(closing date 24 September 2021)

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/ehrc/pre-budget-2022-23/consult_view/

Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 (closing date 30 September 2021)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/our-strategic-plan-2022-2025-have-your-say>

Fearless Scotland – National Youth Survey (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/fearless-Scotland>

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Job Opportunities

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

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

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

Debiasing Our Systems, Debiasing Ourselves – An Introduction To Tackling Unconscious Bias

14 September 2021 (online, 10.30–1.30)

Interfaith Scotland session exploring the evidence of unconscious bias, methods for reducing its impact on decisions and behaviour, and describing the steps that we can take to become more aware of potential bias and how to reduce its impact. For information see

<https://tinyurl.com/tamye4rv> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Meet the Charity Regulator

23 September 2021 (online, 2.00–3.00)

Meet the board of the Scottish Charity Regulator and learn more about how they work to inspire public trust and confidence in charities. For information see

<https://tinyurl.com/4dhacsvw>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

6 October 2021 (online, 10.00–12.30)

12 January 2022 (online, 10.30–12.30)

2 March 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAiH training on fundamental issues of housing, homelessness and welfare entitlements of EEA nationals, and look at how service users might prepare themselves to avoid the threats of Brexit. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/24ba4stk>

Know Your Rights: Hate Crime Workshop

13 October 2021 (online, 11.00–1.30)

Migrants' Rights Network workshop for migrants, caseworkers, charities, and others who want to learn how to better identify hate crime in their communities. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/u9xfdbdy>

Interpreting Culture – Improving Cross-Cultural Communication

14 October 2021 (online, 10.30-13.00)

Interfaith Scotland course to explore how culture forms a lens through which we interpret behaviour, and learn how to improve our inter-cultural communication. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/27mj9h3b> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

20 October 2021 (online, 10.00–12.30)

19 January 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

9 March 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAiH course to explore how the asylum system works from the perspective of a claimant and the process involved in making a claim for asylum. The course will also explore the barriers faced by both refugees and asylum seekers building a new life in Scotland and their respective entitlement to services. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/24ba4stk>

No Recourse to Public Funds

27 October 2021 (online, 10.30–12.30)

26 January 2022 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAiH workshop to help frontline workers identify a tenant's current status, clarify what this means in terms of access to public funds and plan effective support where difficulties arise. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/24ba4stk>

Transparency and Trust

27 October 2021 (online, 1.00–2.00)

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator webinar to help charity trustees and advisors to charities think about what they can do to help boost public confidence in charities. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y99b8av3>

Scottish Interfaith Week 2021

31 October to 7 November 2021 (Scotland-wide)

Scottish Interfaith Week will coincide with COP26 (United Nations Climate Change Conference 2021), and the theme for 2021 is Together for Our Planet. Sign up to the [Scottish Interfaith Week newsletter](#) to receive updates.

3 Mottos For Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

17 November 2021 (online, 13.00–16.30)

Interfaith Scotland course considering diversity in its widest sense, looking at three models which provide insight on our experience of difference: the role of the dominant identity in shaping organisations; why some people overlook the disadvantages that others experience; and how to respond to misunderstandings or offence. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/b762err8> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

Working With People From Diverse Religion & Belief Identities

14 December 2021 (online, 13.00–16.30)

Interfaith Scotland course on improving confidence in discussing and responding to the religion and belief of those we work with. The event will explore the core beliefs and cultural practices of the main faiths, and individual needs that may arise from a person's faith or belief identity. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/83rwadrb> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

TOP

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/disclosure-types>

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/>

SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

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



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

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