



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

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Note that some weblinks, particularly of newspaper articles, are only valid for a short period of time, usually around a month, and that the Scottish and UK Parliament and Government websites have been redesigned, so that links published in previous issues of MEMO may no longer work. To find archive material on these websites, copy details from MEMO into the relevant search facility.

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## Immigration and Asylum

### UK Parliament Debate

#### Nationality and Borders Bill: LGBTQ+ People

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-02/debates/E395330F-1114-4391-9159-38F85F42F348/NationalityAndBordersBillLGBTQPeople>

### UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

#### Visas: Afghanistan

**Chi Onwurah (Labour)** [115898] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

what her timetable is for issuing people who arrived from Afghanistan in 2021 and who were issued with six month temporary visas to be issued with (a) permanent visas and (b) national insurance numbers.

**Reply from Victoria Atkins:** Our aim is to conclude the process of confirmation of Indefinite Leave to Remain status before anyone's leave expires.

Those who entered were granted limited leave to enter with access to public funds and employment. This status is not a bar to them being permanently housed or to starting their life in the UK, including taking employment.

We have made arrangements to ensure prospective employers can contact the Home Office to confirm individuals' right to take employment before the Department of Work and Pensions issue them with a National Insurance number.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-01/115898>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Afghanistan: Refugees**

**Steve McCabe (Labour)** [113681] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress she has made in processing Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme applications.

**Steve McCabe (Labour)** [113682] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people have qualified for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme to date.

**Reply from James Heappey:**The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for those who worked with the UK in Afghanistan remains open. The ARAP scheme is not time limited, and the Government is working to facilitate the continued relocation of those who are eligible.

As of 31 January, over 107,000 applications to the ARAP scheme have been received since the commencement of the scheme in April 2021; many of which are found to be incomplete or duplications.

A dedicated team of caseworkers are working seven days a week to process pending applications, and to date their efforts have resulted in the relocation to the UK of over 8,000 eligible applicants and dependants.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-28/113681>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-27/113682>

*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**

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat)** [116030] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghans are in bridging hotels as of 1 February 2021.

**Reply from Victoria Atkins:** There are currently over 12,000 evacuees in bridging hotel accommodation at the present time.

This cohort is made up of British and Afghan Nationals who may be eligible for Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-01/116030>

*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>

### Refugees: Afghanistan

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [114752] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of applying the residence test rules of those with Calais leave to Afghan nationals relocated under the (a) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and (b) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme wanting to study in higher education.

**Reply from Victoria Atkins:** The Department for Education have confirmed that ACRS/ARAP individuals wishing to access higher education will have access to home fee status and student support from the next academic year.

This puts ACRS and ARAP arrivals on the same footing as refugees.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-31/114752>

*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>*

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

### Visas: Overseas Students

**Neil Coyle (Labour)** [111598] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of requiring Tier 5 visas for EU students in the UK on the ability of those students to (a) study and (b) work in the UK.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** The Temporary Work – Government Authorised Exchange visa provides individuals with the opportunity to complete training, a work experience placement, English language course or conduct research for a period of up to two years. It is not a route focussing on study and does not replace the existing provisions under the student route.

The new Student route was launched in October 2020. The Student route streamlines and simplifies the previous Tier 4 route, making it simpler for international students to apply to study in the UK, and significantly improves on our offer in the global marketplace.

A full impact assessment for the Student route was published on 10 September 2020 and can be found on gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-of-changes-to-the-immigration-rules-hc-707-10-september-2020>

Under the Standard Visitor route visitors may study for up to 6 months, provided the course is provided by an accredited institution. Visitors may also learn about and undertake research as part of a course they are studying overseas, and if they are studying medicine, veterinary medicine and science, nursing or dentistry they can undertake electives relevant to their course.

The Government is committed to ensuring the UK continues to be an attractive destination for individuals to study and work.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-25/111598>

### Migrants

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [107439] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were issued for the first time with Leave to Remain in the UK, subject to the No Recourse to Public Funds condition, in each of the last five years.

**Reply from Tom Pursglove:** We are able to provide data relating to initial

extensions to temporary stay in the UK (further Leave to Remain) under the HR/Complex, Spouse/Partner and Other Non-PBS routes.

This information should be interpreted within the following context:

1. This data is considered provisional management information, is taken from a live database, and is therefore subject to change.
2. The categories included are intended for internal reporting and do not necessarily align with categories used in other published statistics.
3. Subsequent consideration against these cases, such as an application for Change of Conditions, may mean that the No Recourse to Public Funds condition is no longer imposed on some cases.
4. This data should not be relied on as an indication of how many migrants with Leave to Remain on any single or all route(s) are present in the UK at any given time or over a given period.
5. This data does not include overseas applications for Leave to Enter where the vast majority of applications have No Recourse to Public Funds imposed.
6. This data does not include in-country extensions on other routes; for example, work or study routes where the No Recourse to Public Funds condition is imposed in all cases, or Leave to Remain granted to refugees or Discretionary Leave to Remain where the No Recourse to Public Funds condition is not applied.
7. Comprehensive data on visas granted is published by the Home Office each quarter at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>
8. The figures below do not align with figures provided in a previous PQ and published statistics. This is because, while the internal reporting figures below are produced from the same source data as the published statistics, they are categorised differently.
9. This data does not reflect the impact of the NRPF condition on the people to which it applies.

	In country extensions with NRPF	Total in-country extensions subject to NRPF (%)
2017 Q1	15,500	92%
2017 Q2	14,000	91%
2017 Q3	19,900	91%
2017 Q4	23,000	89%
2018 Q1	23,400	89%
2018 Q2	21,200	91%
2018 Q3	22,400	92%
2018 Q4	25,500	89%
2019 Q1	28,200	88%
2019 Q2	26,200	90%
2019 Q3	29,200	89%
2019 Q4	26,300	85%
2020 Q1	22,100	86%
2020 Q2	6,900	84%
2020 Q3	12,000	82%
2020 Q4	28,800	85%
2021 Q1	31,100	83%

2021 Q2	29,300	82%
2021 Q3	30,300	88%
2021 Q4	27,400	84%

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-19/107439>

### Asylum

**Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op)** [111694] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when was the oldest outstanding claim for asylum submitted.

**Reply from Kevin Foster:** The Home Office cannot provide an answer on what date the oldest current outstanding asylum application was submitted to the Department because the Home Office does not publish this data as this is internal management information which is not verified to the standard for publication.

However, the Home Office does publish information which shows the number of cases in the entire asylum system, including some information of case age. This data can be found in ASY\_03 of the published Transparency data:

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

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-25/111694>

### Undocumented Migrants: Human Trafficking

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [110278] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps is her Department has taken to tackle illegal migrant trafficking.

**Reply from Tom Pursglove:** The Government stands resolute in its commitment to tackle Organised Immigration Crime (OIC). Migrants are easy victims for Organised Criminal Groups (OCGs) who exploit desperation by offering services in exchange for money, labour, or sexual acts. In the closely related crimes of people smuggling and human trafficking, we bear down on the OCGs who facilitate illegal travel to the UK and who exploit vulnerable migrants, often treating them as commodities and knowingly putting people in life-threatening situations.

- Tackling people smuggling of all types is a priority for Immigration Enforcement, working through its international network upstream as well as conducting OIC investigations within the UK. Additionally, the dedicated multi-agency OIC Taskforce, led by the National Crime Agency, is committed to dismantling OCGs engaged in immigration crime internationally. The Taskforce is active in 17 countries worldwide, and its activities include supporting judicial and intelligence capacity building in source and transit countries, and intelligence sharing in key near Europe countries.
- The tragedy in the Channel last November demonstrates the high risk routes OCGs facilitate, endangering migrants' lives at sea. In response to this increasing threat, the NCA, Home Office, Ministry of Defence and UK police forces have collaborated with French counterparts to tackle the criminals behind the majority of these crossing attempts and protect lives at sea. Our joint efforts are resulting in continued arrests and prosecutions of these criminals, so that we deter, disrupt and dismantle the networks responsible for facilitating many of these crossings.
- We also share information about criminality around small boats between agencies. This includes the Joint Intelligence Cell in France and the international networks of both the NCA and the Home Office. The Joint Intelligence Centre has since July 2020 taken down 17 small boat OCGs and secured over 400 arrests – taking the criminals behind these crossings off the streets. Our cooperation with the French has also prevented more than 23,000 migrant attempts.

- We have also provided continued funding of £2.66m this financial year to support the police to improve the response to modern slavery, build capability to deal with OIC and strengthen the criminal justice response through the Modern Slavery and OIC Unit.

Additional to these ongoing activities, in recent months we have:

- Concluded a ministerially endorsed voluntary Action Plan between NCA and social media companies to enhance joint activity to tackle content advertising illegal OIC services on online platforms, including content relating to small boat crossings.
- Continued to pursue those involved in the financial flows that support people smuggling activity, using criminal powers in the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to seek prosecution of money laundering offences. 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.
- Announced our review of the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy to build on the progress we have made to date, adapt our approach to the evolving nature of these terrible crimes, and continue our leadership in tackling modern slavery.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/110278>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

### Windrush Compensation Scheme

**Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Labour)** [HL5449] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to expedite the processing of Windrush Compensation Scheme claims.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The changes we made to the Scheme in December 2020 means people now receive significantly more money more quickly and this has had an immediate beneficial impact.

Within six weeks of the changes being announced, we had offered more compensation than we had in the first 19 months of the Scheme. As of the end of October, the Home Office has paid more than ten times the total amount paid prior to the changes being announced and offered an average of £3.1 million per month. We are processing claims as quickly as possible - this is our priority. However, we recognise we have more to do to decrease the time between submission and decision on claims.

To do this we are recruiting an additional 30 caseworkers, directing resources to maximise final decision output and refining our processes so cases progress as quickly as possible, including revising our data-sharing agreements with other departments.

Wherever possible, we will make a preliminary payment as soon as someone applying on their own behalf, or on behalf of someone who has sadly passed away, can show any impact on their life under the terms of the Scheme. Individuals do not have to wait for their whole application to be assessed in order to receive a preliminary payment.

We have taken steps to encourage more people to submit a claim and to help those who already have:

- We have removed the end date of the Scheme to ensure that no one is prevented from making a claim if they are eligible.

- We have also launched a package of support to help those making, or who have already made, claims on behalf of a relative who has passed away to obtain the legal documentation required to process their claims.
- In addition, we have published a redesigned primary claim form which is easier for people to complete, and refreshed casework guidance which sets out clearly how caseworkers should apply the balance of probabilities and go about gathering evidence, with the aim of reducing the time taken to process claims and improving peoples' experiences of applying to the Scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5449>

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

### **Visas: Uyghurs**

**Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench)** [HL5413] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create a bespoke humanitarian visa scheme for Uyghurs.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights and will continue this record.

We already welcome vulnerable people in need of protection to the UK through our resettlement schemes. These schemes have provided safe and legal routes for tens of thousands of people to start new lives in the UK.

While we sympathise with the many people facing difficult situations around the world, we have no plans to introduce a bespoke humanitarian visa scheme for Uyghurs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5413>

### **Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat)** [HL5261] To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will select those who are currently in Afghanistan to take part in the Afghans Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) commenced on 6 January 2022 and will provide up to 20,000 women, children and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK. We helped over 15,000 people to safety in the emergency evacuation under Operation PITTING and have continued to bring people to the UK, with around 1,500 people helped to enter since the evacuation.

From Spring 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will refer refugees to the scheme, based on assessments of protection need.

In the first year, the Government will honour its commitments to resettle those British Council contractors and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni who are most at risk under the ACRS

There will not be an application process for the ACRS. Instead, eligible people will be prioritised and referred for resettlement through one of three ways.

More detail can be found on GOV.UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-10/hl5261>

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

### **Undocumented Migrants**

**Lord Marlesford (Conservative)** [HL5329] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the screening of illegal immigrants includes a comparison with biometric details held by the

EU in order to detect the entry of terrorists into the UK.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Illegal migrants detected in the UK are subject to comprehensive identity and security checks, including biometric checks.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-11/hl5329>

### **Asylum**

**Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Labour)** [HL5448] To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent estimate they have made of the number of asylum applications pending initial decision.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on asylum applications awaiting an initial decision are published in table Asy\_04 of the asylum 'summary tables'.

The published data show that, as at 30 September 2021, there were 67,547 asylum applications awaiting an initial decision.

The latest data are as at 30 September 2021. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'. The 'contents' sheet of the summary tables contains an overview of all available data on asylum. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5448>

*The statistics referred to above can be read at*

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

### **Refugees: Resettlement**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL5491] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of support among (1) businesses, and (2) individuals, in the UK for the resettlement of refugees, both by (a) returns to countries of origin, and (b) moves to third countries; and whether they will be publicising to UK businesses and individuals the opportunities to assist refugees wanting to return to countries of origin or move to third countries.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We are committed to supporting individuals to return to their country of origin, or other third countries where they hold valid leave to enter, through a dignified and compassionate approach.

The Voluntary Returns Service (VRS) work with a wide range of external stakeholders to promote the options that are available to individuals who may require tailored support to help facilitate their journey, such as medical needs, assistance with securing appropriate travel documents or financial support.

These external stakeholders typically include public bodies or third sector organisations who may signpost individuals towards VRS support, but could also include any other business or organisation who may encounter individuals requiring the support of the Service.

The VRS and our stakeholders will also signpost individuals towards resettlement support in the country of return where possible and appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-18/hl5491>

## **New Publications**

### **Supreme Court judgement relating to child citizenship fees**

This appeal concerns whether subordinate legislation was ultra vires because it set the fee at which a child or young person could apply to be registered as a British citizen at a level



which many young applicants have found to be unaffordable.

... O was born in the United Kingdom in July 2007, attends school and has never left the UK. She has Nigerian citizenship, but from her tenth birthday she has satisfied the requirements to apply for registration as a British citizen ... but was unable to afford the full amount of the fee, which was £973 at that time. It was not disputed that many children and their families cannot afford the fee charged where an applicant is a child. Because the full fee was not paid, the Secretary of State refused to process O's application ...

The appellants challenge the level of the registration fee on the basis that the Secretary of State did not have the power to set the fee at a level which rendered nugatory the underlying statutory right to become a British citizen.

The Supreme Court unanimously dismisses the appeal. ...

The appropriateness of imposing the fee on children is a question of policy which is for political determination, and not a matter for the court. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/press-summary/uksc-2021-0062.html>

**To read the full judgement see**

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

**Use of hotels to accommodate asylum seekers: correspondence with UK government**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/use-of-hotels-to-accommodate-asylum-seekers-correspondence-with-uk-government/>

## News

**Scottish Refugee Council new information line for Afghans resettled in Scotland**

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/our-new-information-line-for-afghans-resettled-in-scotland/>

**UK hotel bill for 37,000 migrants is £1.2m a day, MPs told**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60236406>

**Home Office spends £4.7m a day housing Channel migrants and asylum seekers in hotels**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/02/02/home-office-spends-12m-day-housing-channel-migrants-asylum-seekers/>

**Home Office criticised for not housing asylum seekers properly as hotel costs mount**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/03/government-spending-47m-hotels-asylum-seekers-home-refugees>

**Hotel rooms for asylum seekers costs taxpayer almost £5m per day**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hotel-rooms-for-asylum-seekers-costing-taxpayer-1-2m-per-day-8l9glz29l>

**Home Office spends £1.2m a day housing asylum seekers and Afghan refugees in hotels**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seeker-hotels-refugees-afghanistan-b2005910.html>

**Urgent call for four nations meetings as asylum seekers housed in hotels in Scotland by Westminster without telling Scottish authorities**

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/urgent-call-for-four-nations-meetings-as-asylum-seekers-housed-in-hotels-in-scotland-by-westminster-without-telling-scottish-authorities-3548777>

**Afghanistan evacuee feels "stuck" in London hotel room**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-60272538>

**Refugee hotel rooms 'not good value for money' says Afghanistan evacuee**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/government-afghanistan-kabul-london-british-b2008348.html>

**'Unchecked criminality' as six times as many migrants cross the Channel compared with last January**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/01/31/six-times-many-migrants-cross-channel-january-compared-month/>

**Migrant Channel crossings in January six times higher than last year**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrant-channel-crossings-in-january-six-times-higher-than-last-year-qj87hk9b8>

**'We thought we'd die' – after their treacherous journeys, what awaits the refugees landing on British beaches?**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/05/channel-crossings-treacherous-journeys-refugees-landing-in-britain>

**Ministry of Defence tells Priti Patel it will not deploy 'pushback' against Channel migrants**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ministry-of-defence-tells-priti-patel-it-will-not-deploy-pushback-against-channel-migrants-dhwt3hhl7>

**Channel migrants forced to wait on concrete floor for hours, say border staff**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrants-asylum-border-force-staff-home-office-dover-uk-b2007786.html>

**Asylum support to increase by just 17p per day amid cost of living crisis**

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/asylum-support-to-increase-by-just-17p-per-day-amid-cost-of-living-crisis/>

**Home Office to stop paying for Afghan refugees' toiletries and medication**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/04/home-office-stop-paying-asylum-seekers-toiletries-medication>

**Refugees in hotels told free access to toiletries and medication will be cut**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/refugees-home-office-government-priti-patel-universal-credit-b2007888.html>

**Afghan resettlement places filled by those already in UK**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/afghan-resettlement-places-filled-by-those-already-in-uk-jwvzljrbv>

**Sri Lankan man left in immigration limbo for decades can stay in UK**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jan/30/sri-lankan-man-left-in-immigration-limbo-for-decades-can-stay-in-uk>

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## Community Relations

### UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Community Centres**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [113176] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of developing a model of interfaith centres in communities.

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [113177] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of developing cultural centres in all communities.

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [113178] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to ensure the provision of (a) community centres and (b) other public spaces in communities to allow minority and other groups access to premises to carry out civic activities.

**Reply from Neil O'Brien:** The Government recognises the contribution which faith organisations and minority communities make to our civic and cultural life, and we are committed to supporting all our communities to have the power to shape their local area and work together to improve their neighbourhoods.

In initiatives the department has funded, we have sought to support efforts to build friendly, working relationships between people of different faiths to promote tolerance and understanding and to help focus efforts to tackle social problems.

The £150 million Community Ownership Fund demonstrates our determination to ensure that all communities are able to protect the community assets and local facilities which are important to them by bringing them into community ownership.

In round one of the fund, we have provided £983,088 of support to help community groups take ownership of community centres.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-27/113176>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-27/113177>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-27/113178>

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## Equality

### UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

#### **Social Services: Food**

**Henry Smith (Conservative)** [112532] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps care regulators are taking to ensure appropriate care for people with diets arising from philosophical or religious beliefs.

**Reply from Gillian Keegan:** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care providers in England and acts to ensure that providers take account of preferences and religious and cultural backgrounds when providing food and drink. Under Regulation 14 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, providers must meet any reasonable requirement for people with nutrition and hydration needs arising from their preferences and religious or cultural background. The CQC's

Assessment Framework takes into account the personalisation of care with regards to nutrition where providers are inspected and rated. The CQC has a range of enforcement options it can take against providers who do not comply with the regulations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-26/112532>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

### Civil Servants: Recruitment

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL5683] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to close the acceptance gap between white students and ethnic minority students who join the Civil Service Fast Stream.

**Reply from Lord True:** The proportion of ethnic minority groups overall being appointed to the Civil Service Fast Stream in 2021 was 23.3%, this aligns with the 2019/20 Higher Education Statistics Agency graduate population level of 23.7% for ethnicity.

Steps to ensure that students from minority ethnic backgrounds are successful in their application to the Civil Service Fast Stream start with outreach, attraction and marketing activity, which is designed to encourage applications from individuals from all backgrounds and locations. This is undertaken via early stage schools, college and apprenticeship engagement, along with industrial and internship placements. We have developed an inclusive website, social media strategy, and refreshed the target university list for outreach.

Further to this, the Cabinet Office is:

- expanding the range of internships we offer,
- undertaking cultural bias reviews of our selection processes,
- increasing assessor diversity, and
- improving our fair and inclusive selection processes by incorporating more regional/virtual assessment.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-25/hl5683>

## New Publication

**Gypsy/Traveller accommodation fund and site design guide:  
fairer Scotland assessment – summary**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/gypsy-traveller-accommodation-fund-site-design-guide-fairer-scotland-assessment-summary/>

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## Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

### UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

**IOPC Report on Metropolitan Police Officers' Conduct: Charing Cross Police Station**  
**Matthew Offord (Conservative):** To ask the Home Secretary if she will make a statement on the Independent Office for Police Conduct report on police officers' conduct at Charing Cross police station.

**Reply from the Minister for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse):** ... the

Independent Office for Police Conduct yesterday published the findings of an investigation into bullying and discrimination at Charing Cross police station between 2016 and 2018. The report makes extremely disturbing reading. It describes abhorrent behaviour and misogynistic, racist and homophobic communications between officers, which appear to have become commonplace. ... It is right that individuals found to have committed gross misconduct have been dismissed and cannot re-join policing. However, this is obviously about more than individuals; it is about how a toxic culture can develop and fester in parts of a police force—a culture that is allowed to go unchallenged until a brave officer blows the whistle or a message is discovered on an officer's phone. These events have a corrosive impact on public trust in policing and undermine the work of the thousands of diligent and brave police officers who keep us safe every day. ...

**Sarah Jones (Labour):** ... Sadly, this is not just an issue in London; there have been disgraceful cases involving misogyny or racism among officers in Sussex, Hampshire, Leicestershire and Scotland. ... It is not good enough to leave police forces to solve these problems, or to wait until all the different reviews are completed. We need action now from the Government to tackle discrimination and prejudice within policing, and to help rebuild confidence.

Police training needs overhauling now, so that police officers get ongoing training throughout their careers, including on anti-racism and on tackling violence against women and girls. Action is needed now on the wholly inappropriate use of social media to perpetuate prejudice or bullying. What are the Government doing now to make sure that that happens? Action is needed now to tackle racism within the police force, but the National Police Chiefs' Council action plan on race is 18 months overdue. Why is the Home Office not making sure that this happens sooner? ...

**Maria Miller (Conservative):** ... The racism, misogyny and bullying uncovered by the report are damning, but I do not believe that it is reflective of the vast majority of our police forces ... We owe it to those officers to root out this behaviour. ...

**Marsha De Cordova (Labour):** The findings of this report were deeply shocking, but if we look just at this last year, we have seen that the Metropolitan police have deep-rooted structural problems, from racism to bullying to misogyny. ... Does the Minister agree that, to really tackle the broken culture in the Metropolitan police, we also need to change the commissioner?

**Reply from Kit Malthouse:** Given the incidents we have seen ... it is hard not to agree with the IOPC conclusions. ... several inquiries in this area are ongoing within the Met, and I think it best to wait for them to conclude before deciding on what the next steps may be.

**To read this very long question and answer session in full see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-02/debates/0155C7E0-9309-49CE-BD59-A425C4EDD419/IOPCReportOnMetropolitanPoliceOfficersConductCharingCrossPoliceStation>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

### Hate Crime

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL5389]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to require (1) web hosting services, (2) technology companies, and (3) non-UK based service providers such as Cloudflare, to do more to identify and remove hateful content in order to protect the public; and whether they believe 'incel' content constitutes terrorism.

**Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Our objective is to ensure that there are no safe spaces online for all forms of terrorists to promote or share their extreme

views. To tackle terrorism online, the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit refers illegal terrorist content to tech companies for removal. Within the Home Office, we encourage tech companies to work together as one coordinated body through the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism to reduce the availability of terrorist content online.

We have also published the draft Online Safety Bill, which gives effect to the regulatory framework outlined in the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper. The Joint Committee for pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Bill published its report on 14<sup>th</sup> December, and we will prioritise introduction of the Bill once we have carefully considered the Committee's recommendations.

We want the internet to be a safe space for all users - we are clear that what is unacceptable offline should be unacceptable online. However, we recognise the complexities in adapting our approach against an ever-changing technological landscape. We have committed to publishing a new Hate Crime Strategy, building on our achievements under the 2016-2020 Hate Crime Action Plan, which improved the response to all forms of hate crime, including online.

Whether or not online content relates to an offence contrary to terrorism legislation is a matter for the police to investigate and will be determined by the facts of each case. The Government is however clear that the definition of terrorism within the Terrorism Act 2000 remains fit for purpose and capable of responding to modern forms of terrorism. Serious violence or the threat of serious violence for the purpose of advancing an ideological cause, including where this is inspired by incel beliefs, is capable of satisfying the definition of terrorism. This is a position supported by the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-13/hl5389>

*The Government response referred to above can be read at*

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

*The Joint Committee report referred to above can be read at*

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt5802/jtselect/jtonlinesafety/129/129.pdf>

### **Hate Crime: Travellers**

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL5566] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Runnymede Trust report England Civil Society Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, published on 14 July 2021; and what plans they have to include measures to prevent hate crimes against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in their next Hate Crime Action Plan.

**Reply from Lord Greenhalgh:** This Government is firmly committed to delivering its reporting obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). We have noted the Runnymede trust's Civil Society Report to the ICERD Committee. We look forward to submitting the UK's State Report highlighting our work to combat racial disparities and discrimination and the progress we have made since our last report in 2016.

Government will publish a new hate crime strategy in due course, which will include tackling racial hate crime, to help stamp out the abhorrent crimes that harm victims and their communities. We have sought views from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community representatives in the development of this new strategy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-19/hl5566>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/CERD/Runnymede%20CERD%20report%20v3.pdf>

## Cricket: Racial Discrimination

**Lord Pendry (Labour) [HL5590]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take, alongside sporting bodies and associations, to tackle racism in cricket.

**Reply from Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** Racism has no place in cricket, sport, or wider society. The Government is committed to ensuring that sports bodies do all they can to tackle racism and all forms of discrimination.

In December 2021 DCMS's arm's-length bodies UK Sport and Sport England published an [updated version of the Code for Sport Governance](#). As part of this, sports at Tier Three of the Code are required to publish an annual diversity and inclusion action plan with Sport England and/or UK Sport.

Sport England, UK Sport, and the other sports councils across the UK also published the results of a detailed, independent review into tackling racism and racial inequality in sport. In December 2021, the five Sports Councils released a [joint update](#) outlining the current actions being taken to address the commitments. The Government welcomes the recent developments from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC). We will continue to monitor their actions, including the implementation of the ECB's new [plan for diversity and inclusion](#) and YCCC's pledge to work with it on a game-wide diversity and inclusion action plan.

The Government will continue to liaise with the cricket authorities on tackling racism and hold them to account on this. We reserve the right to take further measures if necessary.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-20/hl5590>

## New Publications

**Media That Moves: Creating anti-racist representations of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK media**

<https://publicinterest.org.uk/MediaThatMoves-FullReport.pdf>

**Conversations on delivering anti-sectarian youth work: Mark Adams, Social Inclusion Officer at Glasgow City Council (podcast)**

<https://www.actiononsectarianism.info/news/conversations-on-delivering-anti-sectarian-youth-work>

**Living Black at University**

[https://www.unite-group.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Living-Black-at-University-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.unite-group.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Living-Black-at-University-Report_FINAL.pdf)

**Operation Hotton Learning Report**

<https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Operation%20Hotton%20Learning%20Report%20-%20January%202022.pdf>

## News

**Racism an issue in NHS, finds survey**

<https://www.bma.org.uk/news-and-opinion/racism-an-issue-in-nhs-finds-survey>

**NHS 'riddled with racism' against ethnic minority doctors**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-60208523>

**NHS is 'riddled with racism', says British Medical Association**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/02/02/nhs-riddled-racism-says-british-medical-association>

**NHS is 'riddled with racism', says British Medical Association chair**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/nhs-british-medical-association-chaand-nagpaul-bbc-b2005689.html>

**Doctors of colour in NHS 'live in fear', says psychiatrist**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/nhs-british-medical-association-london-people-muslim-b2006138.html>

**Met Police: Misogyny, racism, bullying, sex harassment discovered**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-60215575>

**Metropolitan Police officer who sent racist messages threatened to stab female colleague to death**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/02/02/metropolitan-police-officer-sent-racist-messages-threatened/>

**Met officer was promoted despite misconduct over sexist and racist messages**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/02/met-officer-was-promoted-despite-misconduct-over-sexist-and-racist-messages>

**Priti Patel condemns 'failure of leadership' after racist and sexist messages shared by Metropolitan Police officers**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-met-police-racism-sexism-b2005884.html>

**Racist, sexist and homophobic messages exchanged by Met Police officers exposed**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/met-police-iopc-met-auschwitz-facebook-b2004992.html>

**Cressida Dick 'put on notice' over toxic culture at the Met**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cressida-dick-put-on-notice-over-toxic-culture-at-the-met-3pfg2k5q>

**Black civil servant handed six-figure payout amid warning of 'systemic' race issues in Whitehall**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/civil-servant-race-discrimination-whitehall-b2007705.html>

**Report condemns racism in UK's 'racially segregated' student housing**

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/feb/03/report-condemns-racism-in-uks-racially-segregated-student-housing>

**London's silence about anti-Semitism is deafening**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2022/02/06/londons-silence-anti-semitism-deafening/>

**Teenager charged with membership of neo-Nazi terrorist group and possessing bomb-making manuals**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/neo-nazi-terror-benincasa-cardiff-b2006880.html>



**Football fan pleads guilty to online racial abuse of Rio Ferdinand**

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/football-fan-pleads-guilty-online-racial-abuse-rio-ferdinand>

**Government tells counties to do more to tackle racism**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/government-tells-counties-to-do-more-to-tackle-racism-3zfv8zf23>

**Yorkshire racism scandal: Clique believe Yorkshire being ‘sacrificed at altar of Black Lives Matter’, says Lord Patel**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/yorkshire-racism-scandal-lord-patels-warning-over-delay-to-reforms-hhvdzxwrl>

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## Other Scottish Parliament and Government

### Press Releases

**MSPs seek views on COVID Recovery Bill**

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/newsandmediacentre/117590.aspx>

**Analytical exchange programme 2022**

<https://blogs.gov.scot/statistics/2022/01/31/analytical-exchange-programme-2022/>

**Faith and belief engagement**

<https://blogs.gov.scot/participation/2022/02/03/faith-and-belief-engagement/>

**First Minister’s Lunar New Year message**

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1488497451493433348>

### New Publications

**Organ and tissue donation - opt-out system: five year monitoring and evaluation plan**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/five-year-monitoring-evaluation-plan/>

**Organ and tissue donation: baseline report 2021**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/baseline-report-2021/>

**The Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Act 2019: qualitative research - October 2019 to January 2020**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/human-tissue-authorisation-scotland-act-2019-qualitative-research-nhs-staff-involved-donation-october-2019-january-2020/>

**Citizens' Assemblies - an international comparison**

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/2022/2/1/12a76138-5174-11ea-8828-000d3a23af40/SB%2022-07.pdf>

**Vitamin D: advice for all age groups**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/vitamin-d-advice-for-all-age-groups/>

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## Other UK Parliament and Government

### UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Donors: Ethnic Groups**

**Feryal Clark (Labour)** [110622] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with NHS Blood and Transplant to encourage greater donations of blood, plasma, and bone marrow amongst ethnic minority communities.

**Reply from Maria Caulfield:** The Department and NHS Blood and Transplant have regular discussions on communication plans to promote donation in England, including those directed at ethnic minority communities. This includes a range of media, marketing activity, donor and patient case studies, partnerships and engagement with faith organisations.

NHS Blood and Transplant's Community Investment Scheme invested £400,000 in 2020/21 to support 35 grassroots, community and faith-based organisations to raise awareness of organ, blood and stem cell donation. Since September 2021, the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation forms part of the secondary school curriculum in England, aimed at promoting awareness in young people.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/110622>

#### **Religion: Education**

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour)** [110554] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps has his Department taken to support the teaching of religious education in schools.

**Reply from Robin Walker:** The government firmly believes in the importance of good quality religious education (RE) as it is essential in developing children's knowledge of British values and traditions, and those of other countries. It is a compulsory subject for all state-funded schools, including academies, for all pupils up to the age of 18.

The department supports the teaching of RE in several ways, including through central funding, curriculum support and teacher training.

Each local authority is required by law to establish a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), and department funding is provided via the central schools services block of the national funding formula. We do not specify what proportion of funding is allocated to specific services, but it is expected that some is allocated by local authorities to their SACRE-related activity. The responsibilities of each SACRE include:

- advising the local authority on all aspects of its provision for RE in its schools
- advising on matters relating to training for teachers in RE and collective worship
- developing ways of supporting schools in the delivery of locally agreed RE syllabuses and monitoring its delivery

In relation to the curriculum, Oak National Academy, funded by the department, provides lesson plans, teaching materials and curriculum maps for RE for key stages 1 to 4. Further information is available here: [www.thenational.academy](http://www.thenational.academy)

In relation to teacher training, subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses may be appropriate in cases where a Schools Direct lead school or an initial teacher training provider identifies applicants who have the potential to become outstanding teachers but who need to increase their subject knowledge in a range of subjects, including an 8 week religious education course. Further information is available here:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-knowledge-enhancement-an-introduction](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-knowledge-enhancement-an-introduction)

The 8 week SKE can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis, and it must be completed before qualified teacher status can be recommended and awarded.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/110554>

### **UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**

**Hilary Benn (Labour)** [113688] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will list the types of kosher food that currently cannot be sent from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

**Reply from Victoria Prentis:** The vast majority of Kosher foods, including Products of Animal Origin (POAO), can currently move from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI). A small proportion of POAO commodities are classed by the EU as 'Prohibited and Restricted' (P&R), which ordinarily would prevent them from moving into the EU or NI from a third country. At present, these POAO P&R goods are still able to move from GB to NI by virtue of the 'standstill period', which has preserved existing grace periods for GB-NI trade while we work with the EU on a more sustainable solution. This includes the Kosher commodities that fall into a P&R category.

However, POAO (including Kosher) commodities moving from GB to NI must be accompanied by an Export Health Certificate, and also meet further regulatory conditions. The certification process is complicated and time consuming, which has rendered the supply of Kosher commodities to the small NI Jewish community uneconomical for most suppliers. The community can therefore technically access Kosher goods, but in practice they are still unable to do so by virtue of how the NI Protocol works.

This is not sustainable, and it is an example of the bottom line that the Protocol is not working. We are proposing a common-sense solution: goods going to the EU should go through regulatory checks and customs formalities, and those staying in the United Kingdom should not. That means no checks or documentation for goods moving from GB to NI and staying there, such as Kosher foods for the NI Jewish community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-28/113688>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Judaism: Festivals and Special Occasions**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [109283] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to ensure that local authorities seek to celebrate and commemorate the history, recent and historical, of Judaism within their areas.

### **Community Development**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [109284] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to assist local Jewish communities engage with their local history, including former synagogues and other significant sites.

**Reply from Eddie Hughes:** I would encourage all local authorities to celebrate and commemorate Judaism and to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the Jewish community in their area.

The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) recently launched a new resource to enrich teaching and learning about the Holocaust. The new website, [www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk](http://www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk) will help communities across the country learn about their local connections to the Holocaust, Jewish refugees and British responses to Nazism.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-21/109283>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-21/109284>

## Press Release

### **UK Government sets out ambitious blueprint to transform UK**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-sets-out-ambitious-blueprint-to-transform-uk>

## New Publications

### **Investigation into alleged gatherings on government premises during Covid restrictions: Update**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1051374/Investigation\\_into\\_alleged\\_gatherings\\_on\\_government\\_premises\\_during\\_Covid\\_restrictions\\_-\\_Update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051374/Investigation_into_alleged_gatherings_on_government_premises_during_Covid_restrictions_-_Update.pdf)

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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>

#### **Book a coronavirus booster vaccination**

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

#### **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 Oral Answers**

### **Face Coverings (Places of Worship)**

**John Mason (SNP)** [S6O-00698] To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the lifting of some Covid-19 restrictions, whether it will provide an update on when it anticipates the requirement to wear face coverings in places of worship will be lifted.

**Reply from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery (John Swinney):** Face coverings remain an important measure in reducing the spread of Covid-19, and they are required in most indoor public settings. However, an exemption from wearing a face covering applies for those who are leading an act of worship, and for performers. The exemption applies if the person is separated from other people by a screen or maintains a distance of at least 1m from other people.

We understand that many people are keen to see restrictions regarding face coverings removed entirely in places of worship, and we continue to engage closely with faith and belief organisations on the issue, most recently on 26 January. We are required by law to regularly review all protective measures that are currently in place, and our most recent review concluded that the regulations on face coverings remain proportionate. We will continue to review that regularly and have been clear that protective measures in places of worship, as in other settings, will not be in place for any longer than is necessary.

**John Mason:** I think that churches and others would totally accept that they should not be given any privileged position. However, given that many sectors, not least schools, are arguing that the restrictions should be lifted for them and people should not have to wear masks, I would like reassurance from the Deputy First Minister that churches and places of worship will not be forgotten about.

**Reply from John Swinney:** I give Mr Mason that assurance. I express my warm thanks to those in our faith communities who have been assiduous in applying the necessary restrictions that we have had in place and who, as a result, have enabled members of the public to participate in public worship, which I acknowledge to be immensely important for many people in our society.

I assure Mr Mason of our determination to continue to engage with faith and belief organisations. I give the assurance that we will not keep the restrictions in place for any longer than we judge to be appropriate and necessary for the continued suppression of Covid.

**Murdo Fraser (Conservative):** Individuals attending places of worship are often seated in rows and facing in one direction, and are very often socially distanced from one another. Should we not soon be getting to the point where it becomes an issue of personal responsibility and people can choose to wear face masks in such settings rather than being required in law to do so? That is particularly the case given that we know that, in some cases, having to wear a face mask discourages people from attending places of worship.

**Reply from John Swinney:** I certainly hope that that last point is not the case. My answer to the question might help to address some of those issues. I want members of the public who wish to take part in public worship to feel confident about doing so, which brings me to Mr Fraser's first point. The matter cannot really be left to individual choice, because we are trying to create an environment in which it is safe for people who wish to take part in public worship to do so. As I said in my answer to Mr Mason, I acknowledge that to be a significant commitment of individuals in our society. I assure Mr Fraser that these issues are looked at carefully and that we engage closely with the faith communities.

The faith communities have been marvellous at working with us to apply the regulations in places of worship around the country. I thank them warmly for doing so and assure them that the restrictions will not be in place for any longer than is necessary.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13561&i=123054#ScotParlOR>

## Scottish Government Press Releases

**Coronavirus provisions extended**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/coronavirus-provisions-extended/>

**Booster jab reminder**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/booster-jab-reminder/>

**15 million milestone reached for Coronavirus tests**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/15-million-milestone-reached-for-coronavirus-tests/>

## 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 – 1 February 2022**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-1-february-2022/>

## UK Government Publication

**The R value and growth rate**

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

## News

**“Alarming” racial inequality in third vaccine doses for the immunocompromised**

<https://bloodcancer.org.uk/news/alarming-racial-inequality-in-third-vaccine-doses-for-the-immunocompromised/>

**'Alarming' racial inequality in booster vaccinations, charity says**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/covid-booster-vaccine-racial-inequality-b2002872.html>

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## **Other News**

**Apply now for the Scottish Charity Awards 2022!**

<https://scvo.scot/p/48769/2022/02/01/apply-now-for-the-scottish-charity-awards-2022-2>

**Ethnic background of child abusers 'must be recorded'**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ethnic-background-of-child-abusers-must-be-recorded-3lts6vqrs>

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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>

Committee Stage, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-01/debates/27B38534-29F7-4BAB-A06F-3D76133377EE/NationalityAndBordersBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-01/debates/DB8DE906-AF60-4B7D-9334-4362B62CC74F/NationalityAndBordersBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-03/debates/9DC6EED3-5277-4E39-B2E5-CE25FEA89DA3/NationalityAndBordersBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-03/debates/613D1EE1-4E4A-43BF-8CBB-3CDDDB76159B/NationalityAndBordersBill>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/45100/documents/1360>

## **\*\* Online Safety Bill (Draft)**

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

Evidence session, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee Sub-committee on Online Harms and Disinformation

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/3377/html/>

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

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

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated this week

**Draft Northern Ireland Refugee Integration Strategy** (closing date 21 February 2022)

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/draft-refugee-integration-strategy>

**\*\* Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 25 February 2022)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/covid19/recovery-bill/>

**Review of the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland**

(closing date 7 March 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/2h pz9wu9>

**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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## Funding Opportunities

\*\* new or updated this week

### **Workplace Equality Fund**

*Closing date for applications: 11 April 2022*

Scottish Government funding to support employers in identifying, addressing, and diminishing longstanding barriers facing particular priority groups in entering and progressing within the labour market. The central goal of the fund is to incentivise and support collaborative projects that aspire to reduce employment inequalities and cultivate positive, fair, and inclusive workplace practices, with the intention of improving employment opportunities and progression policies within Scottish workplaces; particularly for the identified priority groups, improving knowledge, skills, and practices with respect to addressing employment inequalities; thereby engendering significant improvement for priority groups, and create and maintain an inclusive working environment through employees and employers working in partnership. For information and to apply see

<https://equalityadvice.scot/>

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## Events, Conferences, and Training

\*\* new or updated this week

**\*\* this week!**

### **Refugee Week Conference**

7 February 2022 (online, 10.30–12.45)

11 February 2022 (online, 10.30–12.45)

Online conference to share inspiration, learning and ideas ahead of Refugee Week 2022 in June. The Refugee Week conference is for anyone who is interested in taking part in Refugee Week, an annual festival celebrating the contributions of refugees. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p9bdva9>

### **Supporting Refugee Integration**

15 and 16 February 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

28 and 29 April 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

11 and 12 October 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

15 and 16 December 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day course to enable participants to understand the principles of a refugee-led integration framework, understand how dependency is created and how to build on people's resilience, and feel confident to facilitate refugee-led integration effectively. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/ukvn5rs5>

### **Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals**

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>

### **Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

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>

### **Working with Interpreters**

15 and 16 March 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

27 and 28 September 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

24 and 25 November 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day courses to enable participants to understand the legal context and qualifications governing interpreters in the EU, UK and Scotland, know the different types of interpreting, identify the differences between an interpreter and a bi-lingual support worker, and who to use when, and recognise when it is inappropriate to use a family member, a friend or a community member to interpret. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/puykxxnu>

### **Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement**

29 and 30 March 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

16 and 17 June 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

6 and 7 September 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

27 and 28 October 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day course drawing on the experiences of people seeking asylum and people who have been resettled in the UK, to examine why people might need to flee their own country, how they seek asylum in the UK, and what opportunities exist for rebuilding their lives here in the UK. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/jd2tey6w>

### **Working with Unaccompanied Refugee Children**

21 and 22 April 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

10 and 11 November 2022 (online, 11.30–3.30 both days)

Scottish Refugee Council 2-day course to enable participants to recognise the legal difference between children seeking asylum, children who have been trafficked, refugees and migrants, appreciate the journeys that children have made to be in the UK including being trafficked, understand the Age Assessment process, identify the rights and entitlements of separated children, and become familiar with the statutory responsibilities of the Scottish Guardianship Service. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3fedr5xn>

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## **Useful Links**

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

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

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

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

**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/>

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

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**SCoJeC**  
Scottish Council of  
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

**BEMIS**  
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and  
Cultural Minority Communities

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



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

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