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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Ukrainian People (Resettlement Scheme)

Gordon MacDonald (SNP): Does the First Minister agree that Scottish communities have demonstrated that they are fully prepared and willing to engage in a resettlement scheme for Ukrainians that matches the scale and severity of the current crisis? Will the Scottish Government continue to push the United Kingdom Government to urgently implement a more ambitious scheme to support those who are fleeing that appalling war on our continent?

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Yes, I agree, and I hope that we will have unity across the chamber on this issue. I support the actions that the UK Government has taken in the light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I think that

sanctions have been admirably tough and that they can be tougher still, and I think that the Prime Minister and the UK Government agree with that.

I also recognise the movement that has been made on the issue of refugees over the past few days but, on a moral, humanitarian basis, that can and needs to go much further. The estimates are that we are getting rapidly close to 1 million people already having been displaced from Ukraine, as they flee the horror that is unfolding there. In common with countries across the democratic world, we have a moral, humanitarian obligation to play our part in addressing that. Therefore, I appeal again to the UK Government and, directly, to the Prime Minister to follow the example of the Republic of Ireland and the whole European Union, and allow anyone who is fleeing the horror in Ukraine entry to the UK if they wish and to let us deal with the paperwork later. Let us operate now first and foremost on the basis of that humanitarian obligation.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13611&i=123555#ScotParlOR>

Ukraine (Refugees)

Pam Duncan-Glancy(Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to prepare for refugees arriving in Scotland as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. (S6T-00553)

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture (Angus Robertson): Scotland has a long history of welcoming refugees and people who seek asylum, from all over the world. We must all stand ready to offer refuge and sanctuary, where necessary, for people who may be displaced. Asylum is reserved to the United Kingdom Parliament and is handled by the Home Office. That includes operational decisions about the UK asylum system and refugee resettlement programmes.

The United Kingdom Government has not yet confirmed any arrangements for the resettlement of refugees from Ukraine. However, the Scottish Government is engaged with our key partners, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Refugee Council, to ensure that we are ready to support any refugees who may arrive in Scotland.

Pam Duncan-Glancy: Scenes from over the weekend have been horrific, and I know that all of us in the chamber stand in solidarity with those fleeing their homes as a result of Russian aggression. It is crucial that we ensure that Scotland is a safe, supportive and welcoming place for people who come here, and we need to be ready for that.

We also need to make sure that people get advice and support on their rights, including through helplines run by the third sector. That is particularly important for disabled people. There are 2.7 million disabled people in Ukraine and they face a disproportionate risk of abandonment, death and a lack of access to safety, relief and recovery support. The European Disability Forum has heard that the situation is appalling. Shelters are inaccessible and disabled people are being forced to stay at home, not knowing where they can go to be safe.

It is vital that political leaders across the globe ensure that disabled people are included in the response—we cannot leave them behind. Can the cabinet secretary set out what plans he has put in place to do that, what discussions he has had with COSLA on Scotland's preparedness for refugees, and what support will be given to the third sector?

Reply from Angus Robertson: The issues at hand have already been subject to discussion in the resilience settings in the Scottish Government, in meetings that we held over the weekend, and they will be discussed in the meeting that we will hold this afternoon. Those meetings include representatives of COSLA. Our conversations with the third sector are on-going.

Pam Duncan-Glancy raises specific issues relating to support for disabled people

in Ukraine. We have already been providing material that has been requested by the Ukrainian Government and we will continue to do so. I will look at what has been requested by the Ukrainian authorities, to satisfy myself that what is being asked for and provided will be of assistance to people with disability in Ukraine. I will highlight, in our on-going discussions, the issues that the member raises.

I am happy to write to Pam Duncan-Glancy in detail to answer any of her questions that I was unable to answer in the curtailed time that we have available today.

Pam Duncan-Glancy: I know that this Parliament will also stand ready to support Ukrainian children and their families. The children's commissioners for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have written to the Prime Minister highlighting the need to protect children as far as possible from conflict. It is vital that the 7.5 million children in Ukraine are also factored into the preparedness, which means ensuring that all four nations are ready to provide much-needed safety and hope.

Children in conflict zones have made clear over the past eight years how important it is for them to continue their education. We must do what we can. What steps is the Scottish Government taking to ensure that those fleeing Russian invasion are able to find suitable accommodation—accessible when needed—and proper support services, and that children are able to get the education that they are so desperate not to miss out on?

Reply from Angus Robertson: I will, if I may, highlight something that perhaps gets a little bit missed in this context—people from Ukraine have to get here first. In preparation for that, we have to follow all the steps that are requested, including in this topical question session. At present, though—shamefully, in my view and that of the Scottish Government—the United Kingdom is not offering a visa waiver for people from Ukraine seeking sanctuary. It is possible for countries right across the European Union, including for our neighbours in the Irish Republic, to do so.

The UK is saying that it is prepared to allow people to come here to work if they have family members already resident in the United Kingdom. Apparently, humanitarian pathways are set to be opened if someone is sponsored in the UK. That is not good enough. People need sanctuary and we should be taking them in. We should be making the necessary preparations, as highlighted by Pam Duncan-Glancy. We need to get everything in place for when people arrive. I really hope that the UK Government reconsiders its approach, which, to my mind—and, I am sure, for the majority of people across the chamber—is frankly not good enough.

Christine Grahame (SNP): Skyrora, a rocket launching company with a base in Midlothian, has Ukrainian employees here in Scotland but also has 44 employees in Dnipro in the east of Ukraine. It is asking what contingencies there will be for its employees. The cabinet secretary mentioned sponsorship. Does he consider that corporate sponsorship should be introduced by the UK, which would allow those employees and their families, if they so wish, to come to Scotland to be employed?

Reply from Angus Robertson: Christine Grahame highlights something that should be part of a broad and welcoming package of measures by the United Kingdom Government. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has been outlining some changes, which may allow companies to play a role in bringing people out of Ukraine. We have to see how that will operate in practice. If that is indeed what it is, it is welcome. However, it is still not enough.

May I also take the opportunity to say to colleagues in the chamber, because this will have impacted on quite a lot of us, that we will have become aware of offers from companies and third sector organisations. I would encourage those companies and third sector organisations to get in touch. We are in a fast-moving situation, and if we are able to co-ordinate those offers, not only can we ensure that we get aid to people in country—in theatre—but we will know whether there are people who may be able to come to the UK. Hopefully, that will be far more than the UK currently has in mind. ...

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Liberal Democrat): A freedom of information request last week revealed that 300 Afghani refugees are still languishing in hotels and bridging accommodation. We need to be ready for what is coming. We hope that the UK Government will waive the visa requirement so that more Ukrainians can reach here. We have also witnessed a tremendous outpouring of support from the Scottish people, who are saying, “Open our borders and we will open our homes”.

First, will the cabinet secretary urgently refresh the new Scots strategy, which is due to expire this year? Secondly, will he make sure that funding is available to local authorities to house Ukrainian refugees? Thirdly, will he make it easier for Scottish people who are willing to give their own accommodation to Ukrainian refugees to do so?

Reply from Angus Robertson: I am pleased to agree with everything that Alex Cole-Hamilton has just said. At the heart of his question is an important point. Ukraine is a massive challenge at the present time, but we must not lose sight of what is happening in other parts of the world. There are terrible developments in Afghanistan in particular, but in other countries as well. We must not see the response that we require to get in place for Ukraine displace what we also need to be doing for other parts of the world.

Alex Cole-Hamilton asked a number of questions. We need to be speaking to local authority partners, but I stress to him that, at the present time, Ukrainians who will be able to get here will be people who have family members here, whom they are expected to stay with. The people who he is talking about, and who I and the Scottish Government are concerned about, are all those who do not have contacts or family members here. To be frank, they have every right to be here, just as every other refugee does.

We need to unify our voices, as has been appealed for across the chamber. I appeal to all colleagues: let us please be united in calling for visa restrictions to be waived in order to allow people to come to the United Kingdom. Most will want to stay close to Ukraine, in central Europe, but we should welcome with open arms those who wish to come to the United Kingdom.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13606&i=123467#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Pam Gosal (Conservative) [S6M-03257] Clydebank High Pupils Create Welcoming Messages for Refugees – That the Parliament applauds the efforts of pupils from Clydebank High School, who have created messages of encouragement and kindness for Afghan refugees; understands that the messages will be put into books, which will be delivered to refugees as gifts; appreciates that the pupils understand how difficult it is for refugee children to move into a new school without knowing the language, and considers that the efforts made by the people of Clydebank will be greatly appreciated by those seeking to integrate into their new communities.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-03257>

UK Parliament Debate

Windrush Compensation Scheme

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-03/debates/5ACC58B3-8685-4AE1-9F2A-4E41D0341BBC/WindrushCompensationScheme>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Citizenship: Legislative Framework

Martin Docherty-Hughes (SNP): Whether [the Minister] plans to review the legislative framework for granting citizenship. (905732)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): While we do not plan a wider review, the Nationality and Borders Bill will make several changes to the British Nationality Act 1981, allowing people to acquire citizenship where they had previously been unable to do so because of historical anomalies.

Martin Docherty-Hughes: It is often overlooked that this political state shares a common travel area with our neighbours across the sheuch, as some of us would call it. I dare say that, from citizenship frameworks to asylum policy, this Government have a lot to learn from Ireland about implementing humane and just policy for those coming to the UK. What steps, if any, has the Department taken in recent days to learn from the best practice seen in the Republic of Ireland in terms of its legislative frameworks for citizenship?

Reply from Kevin Foster: We always look at the practices in other countries, and I would point out that our visitor route is more generous than the equivalent in the Republic of Ireland. I am actually meeting an Irish Minister later today. We are looking at how we can amend nationality law to make processing slightly easier so that we no longer need to look into people's past immigration history, but we have already done that recently in relation to a grant of indefinite leave to remain or settled status under the EU settlement scheme.

James Gray (Conservative): I congratulate the Government on changing the rules last week with regard to Commonwealth soldiers, who will no longer have to pay for their citizenship if they have served for six years. That was a great decision and I thank the Government very much for it. Does the Minister agree that similar flexibility will be needed in the near future with regard to Afghan refugees who are based here? A young family came to see me in my surgery last Saturday. They are now well settled, but they are concerned about how long it will take them to get citizenship. And of course, quite soon, similar questions will be raised with regard to Ukrainians.

Reply from Kevin Foster: A lot of nationality law is in primary legislation, which limits some of the flexibility we have, but we will certainly be happy to consider what we can do to support those who want to take that step to become British citizens.

Holly Lynch (Labour): On 8 August last year, the Home Office sent a family from Halifax back to Afghanistan on a voluntary return flight. That family felt they had no choice but to apply for the voluntary return scheme, having had their claim for asylum refused the year before. Kabul fell to the Taliban just seven days later, on 15 August. The family have three children—the youngest is just five years old. Can the Minister explain how the Home Office could ever have allowed this to happen? Can he confirm whether this has happened to others? Can he put on record that the five-year re-entry ban, which would ordinarily apply to someone who leaves the country via the voluntary return scheme, will not apply in these appalling circumstances?

Reply from Kevin Foster: I am obviously interested to hear of the case that the shadow Minister raises, and I would be interested to meet her to discuss it further, particularly if the family is in Afghanistan, as it may not be appropriate to share the details on the Floor of the House. I would be happy to meet her and have a conversation about the circumstances of that case.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-28/debates/1B3DDC24-36F2-4252-8DE1-60F4902D20AE/CitizenshipLegislativeFramework>

Immigration Policy

Neale Hanvey (Alba): What recent discussions [the Minister] has had with the Scottish Government on immigration policy. (905734)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): We have introduced a new global points-based immigration system that works in the interest of the whole of our United Kingdom, including Scotland. We continue to deliver a comprehensive programme of engagement on the new immigration system, including with each of the devolved Administrations.

Neale Hanvey: ... Given the humanitarian crisis, will the Minister please advise us on what discussions are taking place with the Scottish Government to develop comprehensive, rapid accommodation for Ukrainian refugees ...

Reply from Kevin Foster: I briefly spoke with Neil Gray on Friday, ahead of potentially meeting more formally, about potential options for Afghan nationals currently in bridging hotels and those leaving Ukraine to be both housed and settled in Scotland. If there are individual cases at this stage, please feel free to bring them to my attention, and we will look into them.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour): ... The Opposition support the call of the Welsh and Scottish Governments for the UK Government to offer sanctuary to Ukrainians who are fleeing the horrors of war, but the UK Government's response has, once again, demonstrated the toxic combination of incompetence and indifference that are the hallmarks of this Home Secretary and her ministerial team.

Over the weekend, the Minister, who is responsible for safe and legal migration, tweeted that the Ukrainians who are running for their lives should apply to come to our country on seasonal fruit-picking visas. That tweet was the modern-day equivalent of "Let them eat cake." Thankfully he has deleted it, but will he now come to the Dispatch Box to apologise unconditionally for that tweet? Will he also offer swift, well-managed and safe sanctuary to these victims of Putin's barbarity who require our support?

Reply from Kevin Foster: I am interested in contrasting those comments with what the Ukrainian ambassador said yesterday. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will shortly announce more. As I have already said, it was useful to have a constructive conversation with the Scottish Government on Friday.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): The Minister will have heard loud and clear during his call with Neil Gray on Friday that the Scottish Government fully support replicating the European model and lifting visa requirements for Ukrainian nationals now. The UK Government are now alone among our European allies in asking Ukrainians to jump through visa hoops to reach sanctuary here, and they are even more alone in legislating to criminalise, marginalise and impoverish those who seek asylum through their anti-refugee Bill. Surely basic human decency requires an urgent rethink on both counts.

Reply from Kevin Foster: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will shortly say a bit more on what we are looking to do for Ukrainians. Yes, it was a productive conversation with Neil Gray, but one thing that would certainly help us to support more of those seeking asylum in this country would be if 31 of the 32 local authority areas in Scotland, including the hon. Gentleman's own, were not refusing to be dispersal areas.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-28/debates/671BC36E-F9ED-41BC-A925-A57BCA047A57/ImmigrationPolicy>

Topical Questions: Home Office

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): ... The Government have already announced the first phase of a bespoke humanitarian route for the people of Ukraine. The new route responds directly to the needs and asks of the Ukrainian Government. Every conflict and threat situation is unique and

requires a tailored response. Our new route will continue to keep pace with the developing situation on the ground and has so far already supported hundreds of British nationals and their families resident in Ukraine to leave. UK Visas and Immigration staff continue to work around the clock to assist them. The route has also enabled dependents of British national residents in Ukraine who need a UK visa to apply through the temporary location in Lviv or through the visa application centres in Poland, Moldova, Romania and Hungary. Over recent weeks teams have been surged to these areas and applications have been completed within hours. We are in direct contact with individuals and we have also lowered various requirements and salary thresholds so that people can be supported. Where family members of British nationals do not meet the usual eligibility criteria but pass security checks, UK Visas and Immigration will give them permission to enter the UK outside the rules for 12 months and is prioritising all applications to give British nationals and any person settled in the UK the ability to bring over their immediate Ukrainian family members. I can confirm that through this extension alone an additional 100,000 Ukrainians will be able to seek sanctuary in the UK, with access to work and public services. We are enabling Ukrainian nationals already in the UK to switch free of charge into a points-based immigration route or to the family visa route. We are extending visas for Ukraine temporary workers in some sectors, and they can now stay until at least December 2022, primarily because no one can return to Ukraine. Anyone in Ukraine intending to apply under the family migration route should call the dedicated 24-hour Home Office helpline for assistance before making an application. ...

Over the weekend, I have seen Members of this House calling for full visa waivers for all Ukrainians. Security and biometric checks are a fundamental part of our visa approval process worldwide, and they will continue, as they did for the evacuation of people from Afghanistan. That is vital to keep British citizens safe and to ensure that we are helping those in genuine need, particularly as Russian troops are now infiltrating Ukraine and merging into Ukrainian forces. Intelligence reports also state the presence of extremist groups and organisations who threaten the region, but also our domestic homeland. We know all too well what Putin's Russia is willing to do, even on our soil, as we saw through the Salisbury attack and the nerve agents used on the streets of the UK. The approach we are taking is based on the strongest security advice. ...

Allan Dorans (SNP): Will the Home Secretary listen to the 50 organisations, including Save the Children and Amnesty International, that wrote a joint letter in *The Times* last week calling for the Ukraine crisis to lead to a rethink on the Nationality and Borders Bill, which discriminates against refugees depending on how they reach our shores? (905753)

Reply from Priti Patel: ... we will not be reconsidering the Nationality and Borders Bill. ...

Scott Benton (Conservative): Our failure to stop tens of thousands of illegal immigrants crossing the English channel in the last few years has resulted in them being accommodated in hotels, often in completely inappropriate locations, including a site in Blackpool, at a cost of millions of pounds per week to the UK taxpayer. What steps is the Minister taking to ensure that the Home Office can process the claims of those crossing the channel as soon as possible and reduce the huge cost to the taxpayer? (905754)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): I recognise my hon. Friend's concerns about the use of the property in Blackpool, which he has strongly expressed to me on previous occasions. We are looking to double the number of asylum decision makers and to take forward a programme of simplification and modernisation of processing to increase the number of decisions we make, cut down the backlog and reintroduce a service standard for the time taken for an initial decision.

Yvette Cooper (Labour): The Home Secretary said that she was announcing a bespoke humanitarian route, but it is extremely unclear from what she said what the details actually are or who it will apply to. The Ukrainian people are showing great bravery, but we know that people, particularly mothers and young children and elderly parents, have left to find sanctuary. The UK has always done its bit to help those fleeing war in Europe and it will come as a relief to many people who have been calling for action if the Government are prepared to do more. ...

Reply from Priti Patel: ... When it comes to providing visas and support for Ukrainian nationals in the United Kingdom, our schemes have been put in place for weeks—there is no confusion whatsoever. They have been in place in countries switching routes. They have been well publicised and well documented. We have been working through our visa application centres. ...

Yvette Cooper: The Home Secretary said that the routes have been in place, but she has been trying to get people to use existing visas, which do not work in a time of crisis. That is why her Immigration Minister was suggesting that people come and pick fruit.

At a time when many people want to stay close to the Ukraine, we know that there are family members or extended family members—people who have connections here in the UK—who want to come and join family and friends. They will still not know what the situation is as a result of the Home Secretary's words today. Let me ask her something very specific about the elderly parents of people who are living here in the UK, who are not covered by her announcement yesterday. Will the elderly parent who tried to join her daughter in the UK, who was turned down and made to go away by UK Border Force at the Gare du Nord, be able to return to the Gare du Nord today and come safely to the UK?

Reply from Priti Patel: Yes. ...

Patricia Gibson (SNP): I listened to the Home Secretary's earlier statement with interest, but clarity is needed. I have constituents who have family members in Ukraine, some of them frail and elderly. Can she assure the House that those Ukrainians who wish to join their families in the UK can do so via a third country without being mired in delays and bureaucracy, and can she further guarantee that those refugees will not be ordered to leave the UK after the nominal 12 months have expired? (905758)

Reply from Priti Patel: There are no delays and bureaucracy, as the hon. Member has already heard me say, and on her last point, yes. ...

Diana Johnson (Labour): In the evidence the Home Secretary gave to the Home Affairs Committee on 2 February, she said that a major obstacle for accepting more people under Operation Warm Welcome for Afghans fleeing the Taliban was the lack of suitable accommodation because of Home Office contracts. The Select Committee has been warning about this for some time. I think that the Home Secretary has announced a bespoke humanitarian policy for those Ukrainians fleeing—[Hon. Members: "No, she hasn't."] Oh, perhaps she has not; I am sorry there is not a statement to clarify that. What I want to know is: what is she going to do about the lack of accommodation that the Home Office provides for asylum seekers and refugees in this country?

Reply from Kevin Foster: We are certainly concerned about the lack of suitable accommodation across the United Kingdom in terms of dispersal areas, which is why we are keen to sign up new areas to become dispersal areas. I am pushing my own council and, as I have already said, there are 31 out of 32 areas in Scotland that could do with signing up as well. ...

To read question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-28/debates/1EC57231-DF69-4D9C-9339-A4AA1ADA9487/TopicalQuestions>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Point of Order

Yvette Cooper (Labour): On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Earlier this afternoon, in response to the Home Secretary's very confusing statement on sanctuary arrangements for Ukraine, I asked her whether the elderly Ukrainian mother of a British resident who was prevented by Border Force from travelling from Paris to the UK to join her daughter would now, as a result of this announcement, be able today to return to Gare du Nord to come to the UK. The Home Secretary said, very simply and clearly, "Yes", which was welcome. However, the Home Office has since clarified that the arrangements apply only to immediate family—that is, spouses, partners, children under 18 and those in need of care—and do not include elderly parents. In this case, the Ukrainian widow is therefore not covered. Indeed, I have spoken to her daughter this afternoon; she is still waiting in Paris and has been told that there is no family visa route that she can apply for. She is attempting still to find other, quite costly, ways to try to rejoin her daughter here, perhaps through tourist visas instead.

This is totally confusing. Either the Home Office website and the information given to journalists this afternoon about the policy are completely wrong, or the Home Secretary gave wrong information to the House. That is not fair on Ukrainians who are trying to find shelter and solidarity and to rejoin family. Given that Home Office Ministers are in the House all evening, Mr Deputy Speaker, could you endeavour to encourage them to get some clarity for the sake of Ukrainian families? Do the arrangements only cover immediate relatives, as defined by the Home Office, or are elderly parents included? Can elderly parents rejoin their sons and daughters who are resident and settled in the UK?

Deputy Speaker (Nigel Evans): ... Clearly, this is an incredibly distressful time for so many people, but the Chair does not audit the accuracy of what hon. Members, including Ministers, say in the Chamber. Having said that, those on the Government Front Bench will have heard the right hon. Member's point of order and, if the record needs to be corrected, I am sure it will be. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-28/debates/6089884C-5036-4308-9F39-5FD79E834062/PointsOfOrder>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Channel Migrants

Undocumented Migrants

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [125015] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the legal implications of escorting illegal migrant ships to their previous country in the event that those ships do not land on UK shores.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: These powers allow Border Force to make wider use of new operational techniques in development, enabling vessels used by illegal migrants to be stopped from heading towards the UK shore.

In addition, if intercepted in UK seas, these new powers will enable a migrant vessel to be stopped in international waters as well and diverted away from UK seas with the intention of encouraging the vessels to return to the country their journey started in. Any action taken by officers in the purported use of these new maritime powers must be in accordance with the provisions of the Human Rights Act. All operational officers receive relevant training before being able to exercise their duties and powers and must in any event exercise those powers in accordance with the Human Rights Act.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125015>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Undocumented Migrants: Housing

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128465] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total cost to the public purse was of providing accommodation for migrants who illegal crossed the English Channel to the UK since 2019.

Undocumented Migrants: Temporary Accommodation

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128468] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of migrants who crossed the English Channel illegally into the UK since 2019 are being housed in (a) hotels and (b) other temporary accommodation.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office does not accommodate illegal migrants, but does have a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 24 February 2022. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in May 2022. The Home Office does not publish a breakdown these statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in specific accommodation. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Costs are subject to change depending on numbers being accommodated within the asylum system. Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential, therefore the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ho-annual-reports-and-accounts>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128465>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128468>

The datasets referred to above can be read at

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

The following two questions both received the same answer

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat) [131281] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 February 2022 to Question 122771, what assumptions her Department has made in concluding that 70 per cent of those crossing the channel in small boats are economic migrants.

Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat) [131282] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 February 2022 to Question 122771, what role her Department's findings that (a) 74 per cent of people arriving in the UK on small boats in 2020 were aged between 18 – 39 and (b) 87 per cent of all small boats arrivals were male had in the formulation of her assessment that 70 per cent of small boat arrivals were economic migrants.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: As set out in the response given to PQ122771 on 25 February 2022, seeking asylum should not involve people asylum shopping country to country, or risking their lives by lining the pockets of criminal gangs to cross the Channel. They should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. European Union Member States including France have fully functioning asylum systems.

Given this, it is entirely reasonable to conclude that individuals arriving in the UK in such a manner may be primarily motivated by economic factors.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131281>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131282>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-10/122771>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

The following three questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [125356] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an impact assessment has been undertaken by her Department on its decision to stop providing Afghan refugees staying in hotels with free access to non-basic toiletries and over-the-counter medication.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [125357] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of Afghan refugees who have been placed in hotels are claiming universal credit.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [125358] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by what date she estimates that all Afghan refugees currently in hotels will have been moved into permanent accommodation.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The UK Government undertook the biggest and fastest emergency evacuation in recent history, helping over 15,000 people to safety from Afghanistan. Due to the scale and pace of the evacuation we were not able to source appropriate accommodation in the normal way, so we have had to use hotels as a temporary measure.

We do not want to keep families or individuals in temporary accommodation any longer than they need to be. It is important that they move into more permanent settled accommodation so that they can begin to rebuild their lives here in the UK. Over 4000 Afghans have already moved, or are in the process of being moved, into their permanent accommodation.

We are grateful to those local authorities who have already stepped forward to offer accommodation and we would like to encourage those local authorities who have not yet pledged support to consider offering to do so.

Afghans still temporarily accommodated in hotels are provided with meals and have access to healthcare, education, as well as support to seek employment opportunities or claim Universal Credit.

Until 11th February 2022 as well as accommodation and meals, additional items such as non-essential toiletries and over-the-counter medication were provided free of charge to guests in hotels as an interim measure before the grant of Universal Credit to them. However, these items are no longer being provided for those guests who are in receipt of Universal Credit. It is expected that the provision of Universal Credit will cover the cost of these items. This is in line with the approach taken to those in the UK population in receipt of Universal Credit. Meals, baby milk and baby food will continue to be provided.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125356>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125357>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125358>

General Practitioners: Refugees

Dawn Butler (Labour) [131112] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to take steps to support general practice to help meet the health needs of Afghan refugees.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: In response to the relocation of individuals and families from Afghanistan, the Government has provided up to £600 per person to support immediate and primary healthcare needs while in temporary bridging hotels. NHS England and NHS Improvement's expectations of local commissioners include permanent general practitioner registration and health assessments to identify and manage immediate health and care requirements. Funding has been provided for additional capacity to mitigate the impact on access to general practice. The initial health assessment should address any trauma and safeguarding concerns, mental health needs, women's and children's health, long-term conditions, vaccinations, areas of public health concern such as tuberculosis screening and ensure pathways to other services as required. Once in long term local authority accommodation, a further £2,600 per person is provided to the National Health Service, which will be administered by clinical commissioning groups.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131112>

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

The following four questions all received the same answer

Visas: Russia

Alan Brown (SNP) [129168] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Russian nationals hold Tier 1 investor visas.

Alan Brown (SNP) [129169] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Russian nationals have been awarded settled status after receiving a Tier 1 Investor visa.

Visas: Investment

Alan Brown (SNP) [129170] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Tier 1 investor visas have been awarded in each year since the start of that scheme.

Alan Brown (SNP) [129171] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have received settled status after being resident in the UK with a Tier 1 (Investor) visa for (a) two years, (b) three years and (c) four years.

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

Data on the number of applications from Investor visas (previously Tier 1) to Russian nationals, and the decisions on such applications are published in tables 'Vis_D01' and 'Vis_D02' of the [entry clearance detailed datasets](#). Data relating to Grants of Settlement by nationality and visa type are published in table Se_D01 of the [settlement detailed datasets](#).

These data do not say how many years a person has been resident before being granted settlement. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

The latest data includes up to the end of 2021.

Please note the published data relate to Russian nationals, regardless of their residency.

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/2022-02-24/129168>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129169>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129170>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129171>

The following five questions all received the same answer

Visas: Seasonal Workers

Andrew Bridgen (Conservative) [125163] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to make available the additional 10,000 visas under the seasonal worker visa scheme.

Andrew Bridgen (Conservative) [125164] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria need to be met for her Department to bring into effect the additional 10,000 visas in 2022 under the seasonal worker visa scheme.

Andrew Bridgen (Conservative) [125165] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timeframe is for bringing into effect the additional 10,000 visas under the seasonal worker visa scheme following her Department having evidence that those visas are needed.

Andrew Bridgen (Conservative) [125166] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the seasonal worker visa scheme from six to nine months.

Andrew Bridgen (Conservative) [125167] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what analysis her Department has undertaken to support its position that the seasonal worker visa route may no longer be needed past 2024.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Seasonal Worker visa route has been extended until the end of 2024, at which point the position will be reviewed. This does not mean we expect there to be no reliance on overseas labour at this point, but the sector cannot be in the same position as it is now.

The number of visas will begin to taper down from 2023, as the government is encouraging all sectors to adapt and make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, career options, wage increases and to invest in increased automation technology.

To help with these efforts, Defra is working with industry and DWP to raise awareness of career opportunities within the horticulture sector among resident workers.

This year will see up to 30,000 temporary visas available, but this will be kept under review with the potential to increase by 10,000 if there is strong evidence to do so. Releasing additional quota places does not require a legislative change.

There are no plans to extend the grant period for Seasonal Workers to nine months.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125163>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125164>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125165>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125166>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125167>

Windrush Compensation Scheme

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [127567] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department, what steps her Department is taking to help (a) increase the number of eligible individuals receiving compensation from the Windrush Compensation scheme and (b) decrease the time taking to issue compensation.

Reply from Kevin Foster: To the end of December 2021, we have offered or paid more than £41 million in compensation of which £35.3 million has been paid.

Since April 2019 we have attended or hosted approximately 200 outreach and engagement events, reaching over 3000 people.

In 2020, we launched a new national communications campaign, to make sure those most affected around the UK are aware of the support available to them and how to apply for both schemes.

We have designed the compensation scheme to be as clear and simple as possible, so people do not need legal assistance to make a claim.

We have made the evidential threshold as low as possible and the scheme operates fully on the balance of probabilities.

Our intent is that we ask for the minimum evidence necessary to reduce the burden on individuals whilst maximising the offers we can make.

In doing so we are seeking to strike the right balance between ensuring the scheme is comprehensive and covers the broadest range of circumstances and making it easy to navigate.

For those who want or need support to make a claim the Home Office provides free assistance in making applications through our independent claims assistance provider - We Are Digital.

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 additional 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-22/127567>

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

Immigration: EU Nationals

Caroline Lucas (Green) [126611] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many in-time applications for the EU Settlement Scheme were outstanding as at 21 February 2022.

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 concluded to 31 January 2022, can be found in the monthly summary data at: [EU Settlement Scheme statistics, January 2022](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-21/126611>

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

EU Nationals: Immigration

Geoffrey Cox (Conservative) [125033] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure (a) that EU Settled Status applications are efficiently processed and (b) that applicants are able to contact UKVI in an effective and timely manner.

Reply from Kevin Foster: We are committed to ensuring our operational teams have the resources they need to run an efficient and effective system, and we

actively monitor workflows to ensure sufficient resources are in place to meet demand. Our aim is to process all applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) as quickly as possible, yet each individual case is considered on its own facts. Cases may take longer dependent on the circumstances of the case, for example, if the applicant is facing an impending prosecution or has a criminal record.

The following link details the expected processing times for EU Settlement Scheme applications:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-application-processing-times/eu-settlement-scheme-pilot-current-expected-processing-times-for-applications>

Anyone awaiting the outcome of their in-time application to the EUSS can evidence their rights with their Certificate of Application which is issued as soon as possible after a valid application is received. Applicants can contact UKVI by calling our Settlement Resolution Centre (SRC) which is open 7 days a week. Customers can also contact us using an on-line enquiry form.

Further information can also be found at www.gov.uk/help-eu-settlement-scheme
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125033>

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

Children in Care: Migrants

Helen Hayes (Labour) [125338] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of eligible children in the care system who have not yet been granted settled status.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office continues to work closely with Local Authorities to monitor their progress in making and supporting applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) on behalf of eligible looked after children and care leavers.

The latest survey indicates that, as of 30 November 2021, of the 3,895 looked after children and care leavers identified by the survey as potentially eligible to apply, 3,705 applications to the EUSS had been received (95%). 2,840 (77%) of these applications had been decided, of which 2,245 (79%) had resulted in a grant of settled status and 420 (15%) in a grant of pre-settled status. The full survey can be found at:

[EU Settlement Scheme: looked-after children and care leavers survey 2020 to 2021.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-survey-2020-to-2021)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125338>

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

Refugees: Ukraine

Olivia Blake (Labour) [129278] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will review the potential impact of the Nationality and Borders Bill on family reunion rights in the context of the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government has made a number of announcements in relation to the conflict in Ukraine. We are establishing an expansive Ukrainian family scheme which allows an estimated hundred thousand close family members – including parents, grandparents, adult offspring, siblings – of British nationals or people settled in the UK to come to the UK immediately. This provides a safe and legal route for Ukrainian nationals to reunite with families in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129278>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Resettlement

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [127443] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made on delivering the Emergency Resettlement Mechanism; and on what date that programme will open.

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [127444] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department will set annual resettlement targets as part of the Emergency Resettlement Mechanism.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Government will pilot an Emergency Resettlement Mechanism to provide urgent protection in exceptional circumstances to refugees referred by UNHCR as in need of rapid emergency resettlement.

The successful emergency evacuation of approximately 15,000 people from Afghanistan to the UK has significantly increased demand on available local authority housing and support. As a direct result, the commencement of the pilot has been put on hold temporarily.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-22/127443>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-22/127444>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Resettlement

Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru) [129215] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been resettled through the Community Sponsorship Scheme in each year since 2016.

Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru) [129216] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been resettled through the Community Sponsorship Scheme in each year since 2016, broken down by country of origin.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office publishes data on resettlement in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on people who have been resettled through the Community Sponsorship Scheme, by nationality, are published in table Asy_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'.

Resettlements through the Community Sponsorship Scheme have been published as standalone figures since February 2021. Previously these figures were included within the '[Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme \(VPRS\)](#)' and Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) data but weren't separately identifiable.

Figures on the total number of people resettled through community sponsorship scheme prior to this can be found in the '[How many people do we grant asylum or protection to?](#)' chapter of the Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2021 release, (section '1.1 Resettlement'). The data are not available broken down by year or nationality prior to February 2021.

Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to December 2021. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the '[summary tables](#)'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and resettlement.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129215>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129216>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [121813] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

how many new asylum applications were submitted by individuals who had previously been refused asylum in the UK in 2021.

Asylum: Nationality

Anne Mclaughlin (SNP) [121814] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (a) what the five most common nationalities of asylum applicants making fresh claims to the UK in 2021 were and (b) how many fresh asylum applications were received by the UK from nationals of each of those five countries in 2021.

Reply from Kevin Foster: (121813) Our records indicate that a total of 6,760 Further Submissions in support of fresh applications for asylum were lodged in the United Kingdom in 2021.

(121814) The five most common nationalities that lodged Further Submissions in support of fresh applications for asylum in the United Kingdom in 2021 were:

Iraq	1,179
Afghanistan	921
Pakistan	519
Iran	497
China	455

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-09/121813>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-09/121814>

Asylum

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [126647] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individual asylum claims her Department received in each month of the last five years.

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on asylum applications raised are published in table Asy_D01, and data on the outcomes of asylum applications at initial decision are published in table Asy_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the end of December 2021.

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/2022-02-21/126647>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Applications

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [126648] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individual asylum claims her Department has (a) processed and (b) approved in each month of the last five years.

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [126649] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average processing time was for an individual's asylum claim in January (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021 and (d) 2022.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office are unable to report how many individual asylum claims have been processed and approved in each month of the last five years as this information is not recorded and held in a reportable format, however we do publish data on the percentage of asylum applications processed within 6 months of the date of claim and can be found at Asy_01 of the Asylum Transparency Data January 2022:

[Immigration and protection data: Q3 2021](#)

The Home Office also publish data on asylum initial decisions outcomes which can be found at Asy_D02 of the Immigration Statistics September 2021:

[Asylum and resettlement datasets:](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-21/126648>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-21/126649>

Asylum: Interviews

Justin Madders (Labour) [125268] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many digital asylum interviews have taken place; and what process is in place to assess the adequacy of the digital interview format.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office are unable to state the number of digital asylum interviews which have taken place as this information it is not held in a reportable format and could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

The Home Office has successfully used video technology to support remote interviewing for more than three years and has appropriate operating procedures which are designed to ensure participants are able to give the best account of their circumstances when it is used.

We are also able to offer in person interviews for those seeking asylum if requested or required where additional needs are presented.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125268>

The following five questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Applications

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128463] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claims have been successfully processed by her Department since 2019.

Asylum: Deportation

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128464] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people whose claim for asylum was unsuccessful have been deported by her Department since 2019.

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128462] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants successfully crossed the English Channel in each year since 2019.

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128466] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the demographic data of migrants who have arrived in the UK via illegal crossing on the English Channel since 2019.

Asylum: Appeals

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128470] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many failed asylum applications have been successfully appealed by the claimant since 2019.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on small boat arrivals in the '[Irregular migration to the UK](#)' release. Data on the number of small boat arrivals is published in the '[Irregular migration summary tables](#)', including breakdowns by nationality, age and sex. The latest data cover the period up to the end of December 2021.

The Home Office publishes data on asylum and returns in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

- Data on asylum applications and initial decisions on asylum applications are published in tables Asy_D01 and Asy_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'.
- Data on appeals and appeal outcomes are published in tables Asy_D06 and Asy_D07 of the detailed datasets (available at the above link). For appeals, please note that most, but not all, appeals will relate to those who have had

their claim refused at initial decision; a small number of appeals relate to cases which received a grant of leave other than asylum.

- Data on asylum-related returns by type of return (including enforced returns, of which 'deportations' are a subset) are published in table Ret_05 in the [returns summary tables](#). The latest data relate to the year ending September 2021.

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns, which are enforced either following a criminal conviction, or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. The published statistics refer to enforced returns which include deportations, as well as cases where a person has breached UK immigration laws and those removed under other administrative and illegal entry powers that have declined to leave voluntarily. Figures on deportations, which are a subset of enforced returns, are not separately available. The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

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

Asylum-related returns relate to cases where there has been an asylum claim at some stage prior to the return. This will include asylum seekers whose asylum claims have been refused, and who have exhausted any rights of appeal, those returned under third country provisions, as well as those granted asylum/protection, but removed for other reasons (such as criminality).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128463>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128464>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128462>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128466>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128470>

Asylum: Children

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [127445] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she will exclude children from transfer to her proposed offshore asylum processing centres.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government has made our position clear on this during committee and report stage for the Nationality and Borders Bill. To be definitive about exemptions from proposed offshore asylum processing at this stage would not only hamper its potential to be effective but also incentivise people smugglers to target the most vulnerable. This policy, alongside a suite of other critical measures, is designed to deter individuals from making dangerous and unnecessary journeys from safe countries, removing demand for organised criminal gangs operating small boats routes and avoid further tragedies in the English Channel.

Every removal will be in line with our domestic and international obligations. People in scope for removal will be able to rely on their rights under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights so as not to be transferred to a country

where they would genuinely be at risk of inhuman and degrading treatment.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-22/127445>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Housing

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [125588] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy or guidance is on the number of bags of belongings that people housed in asylum accommodation may keep with them when being transferred to new accommodation; and if she will publish that guidance.

Asylum: Hotels

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [125589] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the High Court judgment, EWHC 2514 of 4 October 2021 by issuing backdated payments to asylum-seekers accommodated in hotels.

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [125590] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has carried out an equality impact assessment on her Department's policy, as set out in Chapter 14 of the guidance Asylum Support: Policy Bulletins Instruction, to limit the amount of items people in asylum accommodation are allowed to have with them, with particular regard to the potential equalities impacts on children and families.

Reply from Kevin Foster: An overarching Policy Equality Statement was updated in 2020 as part of the establishment of the 'Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation' which can be found on Gov.uk.

Accommodation providers have responsibility for transporting possessions when asylum seekers are moved from one address to another. The policy on 'possessions' belonging to an asylum seeker who is supported by the Home Office is set out in Chapter 14 of the Asylum Support: Policy Bulletins Instruction, which is also on Gov.uk.

Work to ascertain backdated payments following the High Court judgment, EWHC 2514 of 4 October 2021 is currently being undertaken.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125588>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125589>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125590>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989715/asylum-support-policy-bulletins-v9.0-ext.pdf

The Policy statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-accommodation-support-transformation-policy-equality-statement/asylum-accommodation-support-transformation-policy-equality-statement>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2021/2514.html>

Asylum and Migrants: Healthy Start Scheme

Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op) [124971] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the availability and accessibility of Healthy Start vouchers for people within the immigration and asylum systems.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Asylum seekers are provided with accommodation and

support to meet their essential living needs if they would otherwise be destitute. They are given free, furnished accommodation, and a weekly cash allowance (currently £40.85) to cover other essential living needs such as clothing.

In addition to this support, asylum seekers who are pregnant and young children aged between one year and three years each receive an additional £3 per week. Babies under one year receive an additional £5 per week.

Asylum seekers who are pregnant are also eligible to apply for a one-off £300 maternity payment within eight weeks of their due date or if their baby is under six weeks old. These payments are intended to allow supported asylum seekers to purchase healthy food such as fruit and vegetables.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/124971>

Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre

Kate Osborne (Labour) [131337] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many in-person legal visits have taken place at Derwentside immigration removal centre since women were first detained there on 28 December 2021; and which contracted legal aid providers have made in-person visits.

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

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) operates free legal advice surgeries in IRCs in England. Individuals who are detained are entitled to receive up to 30 minutes of advice regardless of financial eligibility or the merits of their case. There is no restriction on the number of surgeries an individual may attend. If an individual who is detained requires substantive advice on a matter which is in scope of legal aid, full legal advice can be provided if the statutory legal aid means and merits criteria are met.

At Derwentside IRC there has been 1 in-person legal visit from 28 December 2021 to 28 February 2022. Legal visits can take place from both legal providers attending under the Legal Aid Detained Duty Advice Scheme and other legal providers visiting their clients who are in detention. In line with Government advice on social distancing, during the pandemic, face to face legal visits were facilitated in exceptional circumstances, and only if other means of contact (Skype, telephone, email) were not feasible or appropriate.

In light of changes to Government guidance, face to face legal visits can now be facilitated. Safe systems of work are in place to ensure the safety of detained individuals, onsite staff and visitors during these visits.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131337>

Migrants: Finance

Peter Dowd (Labour) [125242] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of levels of in-work exploitation or abuse among migrants with no recourse to public funds.

Reply from Rachel Maclean: The hidden nature of modern slavery makes producing an accurate measure of its scale difficult. In March 2020 the Office for National Statistics noted that there is no definitive source of data or suitable method available to accurately quantify the number of potential victims of modern slavery in the UK.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/modernslaveryintheuk/march2020>

Nevertheless, the Government is committed to improving its understanding of the nature and scale of this complex crime. In July 2019, the Government announced a £10 million investment to create a new Policy and Evidence Centre for Modern

Slavery and Human Rights to transform our understanding of modern slavery. The Home Office will continue working with the Centre and other partners to strengthen the evidence base underpinning our policy and operational response to modern slavery.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-18/125242>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Ukraine: Visa Restrictions for Refugees

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will remove all visa restrictions for refugees coming from Ukraine.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I am sure that the thoughts and prayers of your Lordships' House are with all those in Ukraine. This Government stand with Ukraine. However, a visa waiver is not the solution to the challenges faced by Ukrainians. Visas are an important security tool. In addition, there are now no direct travel routes from Ukraine to the UK. The safest route for people to leave Ukraine is via neighbouring countries to the west. We have made changes to the immigration system to support both British nationals and their families in Ukraine, and Ukrainians in the UK. My right honourable friend the Home Secretary has announced additional support measures today.

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: My Lords, that is a very disappointing response to the critical position which so many people face in Ukraine. Last week, the Prime Minister said that this country would do what it has always done and receive those who are in fear of persecution. So far, however, all that has been done is to allow immediate family members or fruit pickers to apply for visas. It has been a shameful response.

I believe that the Refugee Council spoke for the British people when it made a plea for the Government to immediately establish safe routes and to work with the EU and others. Will the Government take in those refugees without their having to apply for asylum?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I think it might be helpful to refer to some of the things that my right honourable friend the Home Secretary announced earlier today. She said: "Ukrainian nationals on an existing points-based system route ... can extend their leave in the UK ... Ukrainian nationals on an existing visitor visa can exceptionally switch into a points-based system immigration route without having to leave the UK ... Ukrainian nationals on an existing visitor visa can apply under the family route for further leave without meeting the immigration status requirement, provided they meet the requirements for leave based on exceptional circumstances ... Ukrainian nationals on an existing seasonal worker visa will have their leave in the UK extended to 31 December 2022."

The noble Lord also referred to some of the measures which have been taken with regard to families. I apologise for the long answer, but I will also say that we have surged staff to visa application centres in neighbouring western countries.

Baroness Meyer (Conservative): My Lords, how is it that our Government keep talking about unwavering support for Ukraine, and how it is possible that we pride ourselves on doing more than any other European country? We are doing less to accept those people who are in crisis. Will the Minister do something to help them?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I thank my noble friend for that question. It is important to restate that this Government have done a hell of a lot to support Ukraine. ...

Objectively, they have. I also think it is important to emphasise again that visas are an important security tool. There are, unfortunately, a small number of people who, due to their connection to Russian intelligence services, for example, may represent a threat to UK national security. Security checks related to the visa application

process assist in addressing this threat. I of course accept that there is a humanitarian crisis, but the appropriate route is via the visa application centres in neighbouring countries.

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the noble Baroness, Lady Williams, said at the Dispatch Box in an answer on the first Oral Question that it is about playing our part. Telling people fleeing Putin's bombs to apply for a fruit-picker visa is not playing our part. What has stopped the UK Government acting with the same speed and compassion as the 27 EU countries in granting Ukrainians fleeing war asylum for three years without having to apply for a visa?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I do not think it is fair to talk about fruit-picker visas. I would also point out that, as I have just said, there are no direct travel routes from Ukraine to the UK at the moment. The safest route for people to leave Ukraine is via neighbouring countries to the west. We have, as I say, searched after visa application centres. Dependents of British nationals resident in Ukraine who need a UK visa can apply through new temporary locations in Lviv or through a visa application centre in nearby countries, including Poland, Moldova, Romania and Hungary. We are setting up a new pop-up visa application centre in Rzeszow in Poland next week.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): My Lords, the Bible says that we should be kind to strangers. Would the Minister agree that the policy of the Government in that respect is not in accord with Christian teachings?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I agree that we should be kind to strangers, and I am afraid I do not agree that the Government's policy is not in accord with Christian teachings.

To continue reading this very lengthy question and answer session in full see
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-28/debates/DA94BD01-8346-42A4-9605-3ED33760E48D/UkraineVisaRestrictionsForRefugees>

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Baroness Chakrabarti (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what regular conversations they have with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); and how this relationship informs (1) their policy on the interpretation of the Refugee Convention, (2) day to day operational policy for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, and (3) their legislation.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford): My Lords, the Home Office has regular and routine engagement with UNHCR on a number of matters, including through its quality protection partnership and as a standing member of the asylum strategic engagement group and decision-making subgroup. There are also additional ad hoc meetings to discuss individual policies and issues.

Baroness Chakrabarti: I am grateful to the Minister for that. She will appreciate that due to tragic events in recent days, our defence of the refugee convention is now totally inseparable from our defence of the Ukrainian people. Can the Minister comment on reports over the weekend that relatives of Ukrainians here in the UK have been denied visas? Can she assure us that the widest group with connections to this country will be welcome here and that no one—no one—will be turned back or criminalised on account of their means of escape?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I can absolutely assure the noble Baroness that everything that we do will be aligned with the refugee convention. The Prime Minister and my right honourable friend the Home Secretary have made a number of statements this weekend to that very end: that we will do everything we can to help our friends in Ukraine. ...

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, given that the UNHCR has criticised the

UK's response to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in and around Ukraine, why have the Government not allowed visa-free entry of refugees from Ukraine into the UK?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: As we speak, my right honourable friend the Home Secretary is outlining some of the further things we will be doing to help our colleagues and friends in Ukraine, as has the Prime Minister over the last 24 hours. This Question is about the UNHCR in relation to the refugee convention, and we do not think that anything in what we do breaches the convention.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Crossbench): My Lords, does the Minister not recognise that although it is very welcome that she says that the Government will be sticking by their obligations under the convention, it is not terribly convincing when they are simply marking their own homework? What does she have to say about the extremely detailed and well-argued views put forward by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees about the legislation we will be considering later today? Why should we accept her word rather than the UNHCR's word? Surely, they know about their own convention?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is absolutely for the UNHCR to comment on our interpretation of the refugee convention, but it is for Parliament to determine our interpretation of it.

Lord Hylton (Crossbench): My Lords, is it not surprising that this Government are trying to legislate to enact their own interpretation of the convention without apparently consulting anyone else in the rest of the world?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do consult our partners, including the UNHCR.

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): My Lords, the noble Baroness will have seen the reports over the weekend that maybe as many as 5 million people will become refugees from Ukraine. The UNHCR has estimated that maybe 1 million will go to Poland alone. She will have seen pictures of three-mile long queues of people trying to get out. I thank her for what she said already about the British Government's response. Does she not agree that the Home Secretary should now call on all Interior and Home Office Ministers across the whole continent of Europe to come together to speak to one another about how they will deal with this unfolding crisis, which is adding to the more than 82 million people already displaced in the world today?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I agree with the noble Lord that the crisis that is unfolding is horrifying in the extreme. Poland has been generous to a fault to its neighbours. We will assist with some of the humanitarian assistance in Poland and other places. Of course countries should come together to decide the best way forward for what is yet another humanitarian crisis.

Baroness Ludford (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the EU has said that Ukrainian refugees, who do not need visas to get into the Schengen zone anyway, can stay for three years without having to regularise their situation. I thought that the UK took back control in order to regulate better than the EU. Can the noble Baroness tell me what the UK will do better than the EU for Ukrainian refugees?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is a very peculiar word to use, to do "better". We all need to do our part. I absolutely hear what the noble Baroness said about what the EU is doing. We will of course play our part.

The Lord Bishop of Durham: Can the noble Baroness offer us any other examples of alternative interpretations of the refugee convention worldwide? If not, on what basis does she believe the Government are entitled to do so in reference to Clause 11 of the Bill we will discuss later?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is up to states to interpret the refugee convention for themselves in line with the Vienna convention, which is a crucial part of it. There are examples across the world of states having interpreted in different ways but, as I said, it always has to be in line with the Vienna convention.

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (Green): My Lords, we heard from various Cabinet members over the weekend, including the Prime Minister, about the Government's willingness to help Ukrainian refugees and all that sort of thing, but that is totally not what is happening. How come they can say that, which sounds like a blatant lie, when in fact the Government are doing everything they can to make it harder for refugees, including Ukrainian refugees, to come in?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is not about just willingness to help them; we will help them.

Lord Dholakia (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, is the Minister able to indicate how many visas or entry clearances have been refused to Ukrainian citizens since the crisis started?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The crisis is about 72 hours old, so I cannot say. I really do not know the answer so I will not pretend, but I am sure that, as the hours and days go on, the Government will have in place a system for helping refugees here and, do not forget, back in their home country. ...

Lord Rosser (Labour): What did the Government mean by the assurance that I believe was given to my noble friend Lady Chakrabarti? The assurance given in relation to Ukraine was that, whatever the Government did, it would be aligned with the refugee convention—I think those were the words. Is that aligned with the refugee convention in the same way the Government think the Nationality and Borders Bill is aligned with the refugee convention?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Nationality and Borders Bill is aligned with the refugee convention.

Lord Laming (Crossbench): My Lords, amid all the distressing news about what is happening in Ukraine and the movement of people across Europe, can the Government be particularly sympathetic to any children who get separated from their parents? We have seen some awful photographs of children who are really very disturbed and distressed already. Can the Government make sure that they care for children who are separated from their parents?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I commend so much what the noble Lord has said. At the heart of any Government with a heart will be those children who are displaced.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Labour): My Lords, in an earlier answer the Minister asserted, no doubt rightly, that the Government had consulted with the UNHCR, and by implication with other people, before bringing forward the legislation we are to consider later today. Can she give the House any examples of ways in which the Government's original intentions for this legislation were changed or modified as a result of those consultations?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Obviously, I will not go into the details of individual conversations, but we consulted with the UNHCR, as would be expected. Clearly, we did not come to the same conclusion as the UNHCR.

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the evidence of the horror unfolding in Ukraine on our TV screens over the last several days must surely put to bed once and for all the Government's grotesque assertion that it is pull factors that attract refugees to seek asylum in Britain or anywhere else. Surely the Minister sees that the Government must do the decent thing and pull the abominable Clause 11 from the Nationality and Borders Bill, because they will be defeated when it comes to a vote in this House.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I think we should separate out pull factors from those in war-torn countries who need our humanitarian protection. I do not think we should conflate the two things. These people desperately need our help, and they shall get it.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-28/debates/4C20D37D-C2C1-40DC-BA1A-E1DB822E0F0B/RefugeesAndAsylumSeekers>

Press Releases

First Minister: Waive visas for Ukrainians

<https://www.gov.scot/news/first-minister-waive-visas-for-ukrainians/>

Home Secretary statement on humanitarian support for Ukrainians

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretary-statement-on-humanitarian-support-for-ukrainians>

Further support for Ukrainians fleeing Russia invasion

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-support-for-ukrainians-fleeing-russia-invasion>

Home Secretary supports first Ukrainians through new Family Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-supports-first-ukrainians-through-new-family-scheme>

Convicted people-smugglers ordered to pay over £30,000 in confiscation orders

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/convicted-people-smugglers-ordered-pay-over-ps30000-confiscation-orders>

New Publications

UK visa support for Ukrainian nationals

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine-and-ukrainian-nationals-in-ukraine-and-the-uk>

Guidance: Apply for a Ukraine Family Scheme visa

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Ukraine: UK immigration concessions

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9473/CBP-9473.pdf>

News: Ukraine

Don't limit Ukraine refugee numbers – Sturgeon

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-60588593>

Nicola Sturgeon calls on Home Office to lift Ukraine visa rules 'immediately'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/nicola-sturgeon-ukraine-home-office-first-minister-scotland-b2024553.html>

The British people want Ukraine's refugees treated fairly, not cruelly repelled

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/28/british-people-ukraine-refugees-prime-minister>

Ukraine war: UK grants 50 Ukrainian refugee visas so far

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60640460>

Ukraine refugees can stay in UK for three years, Priti Patel announces

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-60623462>

Ukrainian refugees with family in the UK can now stay for three years

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/04/ukrainian-refugees-family-uk-can-now-stay-three-years/>

Priti Patel extends UK visas for Ukrainian refugees to three years

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/priti-patel-extends-uk-visas-for-ukrainian-refugees-to-three-years-676t72bqb>

Priti Patel extends Ukrainian family scheme after continued pressure to waive visas

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19970701.priti-patel-extends-ukrainian-family-scheme-continued-pressure-waive-visas/>

Priti Patel says 100,000 more Ukrainian refugees can come to UK

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/02/28/priti-patel-rules-mass-visa-waivers-ukrainian-refugees/>

Britain doubles visas for Ukrainian refugees to 200,000 after outcry

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/british-visas-for-ukrainian-refugees-doubled-to-200-000-after-outcry-33c5v6xdv>

Britain to allow more than 200,000 Ukrainian refugees to come to the UK

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/03/01/britain-allow-200000-ukrainian-refugees-come-uk/>

Ukraine conflict: UK relaxes visa rules for refugees

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-60569292>

Ukraine conflict: British nationals can bring Ukrainian relatives to UK

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60550238>

Ukraine refugees can travel visa free to Britain if they have family here, PM says

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/02/27/britain-give-40m-humanitarian-aid-ukraine/>

Priti Patel announces 100,000 Ukrainian refugees may come to Britain under family visas

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2022/mar/01/priti-patel-announces-100000-ukrainians-refugees-may-come-to-britain-under-family-visas-video>

Ukraine conflict: Relax visas for refugees, Welsh MP says

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-60552623>

Ukraine crisis: Is the UK doing enough to help refugees?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/60555166>

Home Office plans to help Ukrainians don't go far enough

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/home-office-plans-to-help-ukrainians-dont-go-far-enough/>

Ukrainian hopes visa changes will help family flee to UK

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-60558572>

Supporting Ukrainians to come to the UK

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2022/03/03/supporting-ukrainians-to-come-to-the-uk-updated-at-1pm-on-3-march-2022/>

Helpline for Ukraine refugees manned by advisers who 'know nothing' about new scheme
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-helpline-home-office-refugees-visas-uk-b2026695.html>

'Significant questions' remain over UK offer to Ukrainian refugees
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visas-home-office-priti-patel-uk-b2026074.html>

Ukraine refugees may struggle to find places in English schools, councils say
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/05/ukraine-refugees-may-struggle-to-find-places-in-english-schools-councils-say>

Ukrainian refugee crisis isn't as simple as waiving visas and it being sorted
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/ukrainian-refugee-crisis-isnt-as-simple-as-waiving-visas-and-it-being-sorted-3593826>

Ukraine Crisis: a message for the Home Office: Joint Statement from Sabir Zazai, Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council, and SallyAnn Kelly, Chief Executive of Aberlour
<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/ukraine-crisis-a-message-for-the-home-office/>

Where in Scotland can I help people fleeing Ukraine?
<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/where-in-scotland-donations-ukraine/>

Open your homes to Ukrainian refugees, rabbi urges British families
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/03/rabbi-founds-uk-scheme-host-refugees-un-reveals-1mn-have-fled/>

The Ukraine Crisis - and hosting of refugees
<https://www.paih.org/the-ukraine-crisis-and-hosting-of-refugees/>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Ministers defeated over asylum seeker and citizenship plans
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-60568943>

UK faith leaders urge government to rethink 'discriminatory' borders bill
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-refugees-borders-bill-russia-b2023967.html>

Faith leaders urge the UK Government to reconsider the Nationality and Borders Bill
<http://www.sfar.org.uk/faith-leaders-urge-the-uk-government-to-reconsider-the-nationality-and-borders-bill/>

Don't 'close the door' on asylum seekers, faith leaders urge Boris Johnson
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/02/28/dont-close-door-asylum-seekers-faith-leaders-urge-boris-johnson/>

Windrush generation: Ministers waiting for claimants to die - Diane Abbott
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-60606469>

Channel crossings continue as more migrants arrive in Kent
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/dover-english-france-b2027694.html>

Migrants brought ashore by RNLI and Border Force after crossing Channel

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rnli-channel-border-force-dover-english-channel-b2028735.html>

Asylum seekers being “short-changed” by Home Office

<https://www.paih.org/asylum-seekers-being-short-changed-by-home-office/>

Asylum seekers are waiting months for cash owed to them

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/asylum-seekers-are-waiting-months-for-cash-owed-to-them-j89dxmrsf>

Borders Bill will mean refugees in detention centres outside UK face sexual abuse, torture survivor warns

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/borders-bill-offshore-centres-sexual-child-abuse-b2027885.html>

Why are Chinese students so keen on the UK?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-60587499>

TOP

Community Relations

News

Identity: What does it mean to be Welsh?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-60590685>

Council alters race training for teachers to say toddlers are 'racially unaware' not 'innocent'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/05/council-alters-race-training-teachers-say-toddlers-racially/>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Ethnic Inequalities in Healthcare

Valerie Vaz (Labour): What assessment [the Minister] has made of the implications for his policies of the NHS Race and Health Observatory’s February 2022 report on “Ethnic Inequalities in Healthcare”. (905775)

Reply from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid):

Addressing the disparities discussed in that report is one of my key priorities. We are already making progress in crucial areas such as increasing covid-19 vaccine take-up among ethnic minority groups. To go further, we also plan to publish a health disparities White Paper later this year that will set out impactful measures designed to address disparities and their causes, including those linked to ethnicity.

Valerie Vaz: ... I hope he will ensure that he implements all the conclusions of that report. He is aware of the McLean review into the senior leadership of the Royal Wolverhampton

NHS Trust, who have now annexed the Walsall Manor Hospital. Can he say what he will do to ensure that all those working in the NHS and using the NHS are treated with equality and transparency, starting with the Manor?

Reply from Sajid Javid: The right hon. Lady is absolutely right to raise this issue. This is one of the most important issues and one of the biggest longer-term challenges to face the NHS. I welcome the report and I will be taking it very seriously. She will know that I have commenced action on ethnic disparities in healthcare. For example, I have asked for an investigation, headed by Dame Margaret Whitehead, into potential bias in medical devices. The right hon. Lady is also right to raise the importance of inequality of treatment, and I will shortly have more to say on that.

Feryal Clark (Labour): This report is damning. The evidence shows that, over a decade of Conservative Government, we have not seen any significant change. Ethnic minority patients continue to receive poorer care because of their race at every stage of their life. The Tories have had 12 years to act. Why have they failed to do so?

Reply from Sajid Javid: The reason this report exists is that the Government want to see this kind of work being done by an independent organisation so that we can address these types of disparities and issues. There have been ethnic disparities in our health service for decades, sadly, under successive Governments, and it is this Government who are doing something about it. I have already referred to the medical devices review. Earlier this week, the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Maria Caulfield), set out the maternity disparities taskforce, and we will have a lot more to say on this when we publish our forthcoming White Paper.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-01/debates/DCC36F53-1A2E-4037-A720-8C8D71DBB0B1/EthnicInequalitiesInHealthcare>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://www.nhsrho.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RHO-Rapid-Review-Final-Report_v.7.pdf

The NHS England review referred to above is not currently available online.

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op) [129063] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of the covid-19 outbreak on the pay gap for ethnic minority groups.

Reply from Paul Scully: The economic impacts of Covid-19 are still playing out and it is difficult to draw firm conclusions as to whether any groups have been disproportionately impacted.

The ONS publish official data on ethnicity pay and the first set of data covering the pandemic will be published in due course. Data for 2019 is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2019>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129063>

Civil Servants: Ethnic Groups

Imran Hussain (Labour) [126693] To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants employed at Grade 7, or equivalent, and above in each Department identify as BAME.

Reply from Heather Wheeler: The Declaration on Government Reform commits the Government to drawing on talent from all backgrounds. There are a number of

initiatives aimed at supporting colleagues to reach the Senior Civil Service from a diverse range of backgrounds including the Future Leaders Scheme for our Grade 6/7s and Senior Leaders Scheme which is targeted on our SCS Pay Band 1.

The latest data on the Civil Service workforce is published in [Civil Service Statistics 2021](#) This publication includes a breakdown by grade and department. The proportion of ethnic minority civil servants has risen from 9.2% in 2011 to 14.3% in 2021 (up from 13.2% in 2020). This exceeds 13.6%, the proportion of the UK's economically active population who are from an ethnic minority.

The positive increase in representation has been a steady incremental change over the last four years, underpinned by a programme of work including:

- a bespoke career progression offer for the G6/7 talent pipeline, including SCS application support, mentoring and sponsorship,
- greater promotion of internal talent schemes such as the Future Leaders Scheme and Senior Leaders Scheme, supporting events organised by participants, and
- accelerating work on the external SCS talent pool - by creating a Task and Finish group to oversee development of the pool and improve representation of disabled and ethnic minority senior leaders.

Representation is increasing and, whilst this trend is positive, we remain committed to improving representation across the broadest range of diversity, as outlined in the Declaration on Government Reform across our workforce and, in particular, at our most senior grades. To build on the progress made over recent years and target where improvement is still needed, the Government will take a holistic approach to SCS recruitment to identify and remove barriers to underrepresented groups entering and progressing in the SCS.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-21/126693>

The Declaration on Government Reform, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993902/FINAL_Declaration_on_Government_Reform.pdf

Mental Health: Ethnic Groups

Rosena Allin-Khan (Labour) [98373] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the equity of (a) the risk of mental health problems, (b) access to mental health services and (c) patient outcomes for Black Britons.

Reply from Gillian Keegan: No specific assessment has been made. However, the reforms to the Mental Health Act 1983 aim to address the disparity in detention rates. NHS England and NHS Improvement launched the Advancing Mental Health Equalities Strategy in October 2020 to reduce mental health inequalities in access, experience and outcomes within mental health services.

The Strategy also aims to improve the quality of data collected and to establish metrics of equality across mental health, such as variation by ethnicity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-05/98373>

The Strategy referred to above can be read at

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/00159-advancing-mental-health-equalities-strategy.pdf>

Maternal Mortality: Ethnic Groups

Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op) [128175] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports that Black and Asian women are more likely to die in (a) pregnancy and (b) childbirth than white women in the UK.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: The latest MBRRACE-UK report on maternal deaths

occurring in 2017 to 2019 identified a small decrease in the maternal mortality rate for women from black, Asian and mixed ethnic groups. However, there was no substantive change in the disparity in mortality rates between women from black ethnic groups or women from Asian and white ethnic groups.

On 23 February 2022, we announced plans to establish a Maternity Disparities Taskforce to tackle disparities and reduce maternal and neonatal deaths by improving access to effective pre-conception and maternity care for women from ethnic minorities and those living in the most deprived areas. The Taskforce will bring together experts from across the health system, Government departments and the voluntary sector.

On 6 September 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance for Local Maternity Systems, which focuses on actions to reduce disparities in health outcomes for women and babies from black, Asian and mixed ethnic groups and those living in the most deprived areas. This includes an investment of £6.8 million to support the implementation of local action plans.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128175>

The report referred to above can be read at

[https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/assets/downloads/mbrace-uk/reports/maternal-report-2021/MBRRACE-UK Maternal Report 2021 - FINAL - WEB VERSION.pdf](https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/assets/downloads/mbrace-uk/reports/maternal-report-2021/MBRRACE-UK%20Maternal%20Report%202021%20-%20FINAL%20-%20WEB%20VERSION.pdf)

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/C0734-equity-and-equality-guidance-for-local-maternity-systems.pdf>

Students: Muslims

Valerie Vaz (Labour) [128252] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to provide an alternative student finance product for Muslim students who are unable to access student loans owing to their beliefs on interest.

Reply of Michelle Donelan: The government's priority, in our response to the report of the Independent Panel of the Review of Post 18 Education and Funding, is to put the student finance system on a sustainable footing for the long term.

As part of our response, we are introducing the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE). We are considering if and how Alternative Student Finance (ASF) could be delivered as part of the LLE.

We believe it is sensible to align future delivery of an ASF product with these major reforms to ensure fair treatment for all students.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128252>

The report referred to above can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review of post 18 education and funding.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review_of_post_18_education_and_funding.pdf)

Press Release

Joint statement on Human Rights Act reform

<https://www.gov.scot/news/joint-statement-on-human-rights-act-reform/>

News

The EHRC is here to support the rights of all – whatever anyone says to the contrary

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/20/ehrc-is-here-to-support-the-rights-of-women-trans-people-everyone>

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Hate Crime: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

Mary Kelly foy (Labour): What steps [the Minister] is taking to tackle hate crime against the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. (905740)

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Rachel Maclean): The Government take all forms of hate crime seriously and we will shortly publish a new strategy setting out how we intend to tackle those abhorrent crimes. I assure the hon. Lady that we have sought views from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Mary Kelly Foy: Following Ministers' welcome criticism of Jimmy Carr's abhorrent joke celebrating the genocide of Roma and Sinti people, the Traveller Movement said that if the Government were serious about reducing discrimination against GRT communities, they would scrap the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. Does the Minister accept that it is hypocritical for Ministers to condemn racism from others while pushing through a Bill that the Government's own impact assessment confirms will discriminate against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people?

Reply from Rachel Maclean: I am afraid the hon. Lady is completely wrong about the Bill. It is a vital Bill to keep the public safe and protect them from sex offenders, violent rapists and other criminals. The comments she refers to were horrible, and it is clearly unacceptable to mock victims of genocide. We are clear that all forms of hate speech are unacceptable.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-28/debates/18617C6F-0402-4F3C-9A06-82595A31B572/HateCrimeGypsyRomaAndTravellerCommunities>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime

Wera Hobhouse (Liberal Democrat) [129212] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hate crime (a) allegations and (b) arrests were made in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018, (iv) 2019, (v) 2020 and (vi) 2021.

Reply from Kit Malthouse: The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales. Information is not held on the number of hate crime allegations or arrests.

Information on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police can be found in the Home Office statistical bulletin '[Hate crime, England and Wales, 2020 to 2021](#)'

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129212>

Holocaust: Education

Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op) [128172] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is he taking to help ensure that the genocide of Roma and Sinti peoples during the Holocaust is taught as part of the national curriculum.

Reply from Robin Walker: The department is fully committed to Holocaust education. In recognition of its importance, the Holocaust is the only historic event which is compulsory within the national curriculum for history at key stage 3. The curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom to decide how to teach the subject and what resources to use to support an understanding of the Holocaust, and the experiences of non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

The department supports school pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust by providing funding for several programmes. This includes £500,000 in the 2021/22 financial year for University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education, which is match funded by the Pears Foundation, and £2.1 million in the 2021/22 financial year for the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project.

As part of Holocaust education, a wide range of resources are available to help teachers explain the Nazi persecution of different groups of people. The Lessons from Auschwitz project and the knowledge and training provided by the Centre for Holocaust Education both include information and resources to support an understanding of the Holocaust, including Nazi persecution of non-Jewish groups.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128172>

Press Releases

Football fan sentenced for online racial abuse of Rio Ferdinand

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/thames-and-chiltern/news/football-fan-sentenced-online-racial-abuse-rio-ferdinand>

White supremacist jailed over antisemitic COVID claims

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/white-supremacist-jailed-over-antisemitic-covid-claims>

New Publication

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 5 (revised) on preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-5-revised-on-preventing-and-comb/1680a59e53>

Council of Europe Conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6406-2022-REV-1/en/pdf>

News

We will have failed if future generations still experience prejudice – Sarwar

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/labour-party-muslim-adam-silence-scottish-government-b2028830.html>

England and Wales police bosses will not admit to institutional racism in their forces

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/28/england-and-wales-police-bosses-will-not-admit-to-institutional-racism-in-their-forces>

NHS accused of racism as black nurses report being put in Covid areas

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/nhs-racism-nurses-covid-b2028860.html>

Anti-Semitism row: Royal Court Theatre apologises 'unreservedly'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-60575719>

Royal Court Theatre apologises to Jewish community over character's name

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2022/mar/01/royal-court-theatre-apologises-to-jewish-community-over-characters-name>

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) issues a new General Policy Recommendation to Council of Europe member states on preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination

<https://tinyurl.com/23yjtjhj>

Council of the European Union adopts conclusions on combating racism and antisemitism

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/04/council-adopts-conclusions-on-combating-racism-and-antisemitism/>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Children in Care: Travellers

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [127550] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure children from Gypsy, Travelling and Roma communities are placed with families from their own communities if they are taken into care.

Reply from Will Quince: A child's background is an important consideration when placing a looked after child. This is evidenced in the law. When making a decision with respect to a looked after child (or one that they are proposing to look after), a local authority must (under s.22 (5) of the Children Act 1989) give due consideration to the child's religious persuasion, as well as their racial origin, cultural and linguistic background.

When it comes to placing a looked after child, the local authority must give preference to a placement with family or friends as foster carer. Where this is not possible, the local authority must place the child in the most appropriate available placement.

As part of this decision, the local authority must comply with several factors. These include enabling the child to live near their home and not disrupting their education unless this is not reasonably practicable. Whilst a child's background is important, local authorities have additional factors to consider to ensure the child's needs and best interests are met.

In relation to foster placements, regardless of whether a child is placed with a foster carer from their own religious, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background, the Care Standards Act 2000 includes the National Minimum Standards for Fostering. These standards outline the necessity for care providers to ensure children are cared for in a way that ensures a positive self-view, emotional resilience, and knowledge and understanding of their background. This is also covered by reg 17 of The Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

The department has invested in behavioural insights research on fostering recruitment. This is done to test the ways we can support fostering service providers to attract carers able to meet the needs of looked after children locally. This includes increasing numbers of diverse foster parents, notably Black, Asian,

and Minority Ethnic carers. This will be published in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-22/127550>

Press Releases

Ukraine: what you can do to help

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukraine-what-you-can-do-to-help>

Statement on Ukraine crisis and its implications for charities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-on-ukraine-crisis-and-its-implications-for-charities>

[TOP](#)

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 Government Press Release

Spring rollout of boosters begins

<https://www.gov.scot/news/spring-rollout-of-boosters-begins/>

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/>

UK Government Publication

The R value and growth rate

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

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Scotland's Census

Scotland's Census 2022

<https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/taking-part-in-the-2022-census/scotland-s-census-2022/>

Complete Scotland's Census now

<https://www.census.gov.scot/>

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. Getting the right things out, starts with filling it in

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC2plmy827c>

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. What am I filling in and why does it matter?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8AjE_2z2Kg

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. What exactly is Census Day?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypmk4F3rLhs>

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. What do I need to know about filling it in?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8e_Kza2XpM

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. Am I legally required to fill it in?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZm1By8Al2g>

Video: Scotland's Census 2022. Can I get help filling it in?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsF1UZBeXgY>

Video: How to complete your census online
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TQA9yKSpfA>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Census

Clare Adamson (SNP) [S6W-07008] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on when Scotland's next census will be held.

Reply from Angus Robertson: Scotland's next census will be held on Sunday 20 March 2022, with letters arriving in households across Scotland from today (28 February), providing instructions on how to take part.

Scotland's census is the official count of every person and household in the country and the only questionnaire of its kind to ask everyone the same questions at the same time.

It is the responsibility of National Records of Scotland (NRS) to put in place a census that enables everyone across Scotland to participate so that information collected can be used to produce high quality outputs and deliver the benefits required by the people of Scotland. For the first time, Scotland's Census 2022 will ask a question about previous service in the UK Armed Forces and voluntary questions on trans status or history and sexual orientation, for those over 16.

Scotland's Census provides people, businesses and organisations with high quality data and analysis which is used to inform key decisions in relation to policy making, investment decisions and the planning and delivery of key services. The census also helps paint a rich picture of the of the population, helping us to better understand the similarities and differences in the population's characteristics locally and nationally, now and over time. The census also becomes part of our history. In the future our descendants will be able to find out about us and how we lived.

This will be the first census to take place since the Scottish Government pledged to make public services "digital first", recognising that this is now a favoured channel for many. This approach will also deliver a number of benefits in terms of ease of completion and accessibility for respondents. It is important however that all households are able to complete their census return, with paper questionnaires available upon request. Help and support will also be available for those who need it via a dedicated contact centre and the Scotland's Census website.

I urge members to help ensure a successful census by encouraging maximum participation amongst all communities across Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-07008>

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Other News

Ukraine – safe methods of giving support

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/ukraine-safe-methods-of-giving-support/>

Ghusl Mayyit: Why young Muslims are learning the traditional funeral art

<https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-60618027>

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Bills in Progress

** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

**** Scottish Local Government Elections (Candidacy Rights of Foreign Nationals) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/scottish-local-government-elections-candidacy-rights-of-foreign-nationals-bill>

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdneq.azureedge.net/published/2022/2/28/aca28d8f-0308-45bf-b057-5f1dbbc7db0b/SB%2022-09.pdf>

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>

Report Stage, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-28/debates/DB808D67-CC61-45F1-8D46-B14B42CBB2E9/NationalityAndBordersBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-02-28/debates/9E3FFDBD-1AE6-4A6B-8944-78F833B01C71/NationalityAndBordersBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-02/debates/BF355885-5180-4040-B7CD-6C36B060C6FB/NationalityAndBordersBill>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-02/debates/FBBC7E35-9F0F-4E60-8ED5-A3046EC4109A/NationalityAndBordersBill>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/45534/documents/1540>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

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

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

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

(closing date 7 March 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/2hgz9wu9>

How to measure the inclusion of migrants in Wales (closing date 25 March 2022)

<https://gov.wales/consultation-how-measure-inclusion-migrants-wales-html>

COVID 19: The Impact on Children & Young People (closing date not stated)

<https://engage.parliament.scot/group/12474>

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!**

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>

**** Three mottos to guide our approach to equality, diversity & inclusion**

7 April 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30)

Interfaith Scotland course considering diversity in its widest sense, considering three

models which provide insight on our experience of difference. We consider: the role of the dominant identity and the idea of 'human neutral', why some people ignore or deny the disadvantages that others experience; and how to respond to misunderstandings or offence. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3u7pba3b> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

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>

Supporting Refugee Integration

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>

**** Debiasing our systems, debiasing ourselves – an introduction to tackling unconscious bias**

3 May 2022 (online, 10.00–1.00)

Interfaith Scotland course exploring the evidence of unconscious bias and methods for reducing its impact on our decisions, behaviour and processes. The session will also describe the steps that we can take to become more aware of potential bias and how to reduce its impact on our interactions with colleagues, service users and others. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y67cy5x8> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** Working with People from Diverse Religious Backgrounds**

9 June 2022 (online, 1.00–4.30)

Interfaith Scotland course on improving our confidence in discussing and responding to the religion and belief of those we work with. We learn about the core beliefs and cultural practices of the main faiths, and the individual needs that may arise from a person's faith or belief identity. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/ye2ntnpv> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** Advantage is invisible – understanding unintentional discrimination**

6 July 2022 (online, 1.30–3.30)

Interfaith Scotland course exploring why discrimination is common even when our intentions are to work fairly with all staff and service users. The role of the dominant identity in shaping our working culture and practices will be discussed, and we will consider the persistent pattern that advantage tends to be hidden from those that have it. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2d5zwje9> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** Interpreting culture – improving cross-cultural communication**

11 August 2022 (online, 11.00–1.00)

Interfaith Scotland course on cultural diversity. Our cultural background has a profound influence on each of us. It shapes our behaviour, values and beliefs. It even affects our thought processes and how we perceive the world. In this course we explore how culture forms a lens through which we interpret each other's behaviour and learn how to improve our inter-cultural communication. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yckbt9hs> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** Our lives are ruled by the stories we tell ourselves – how interpretation shapes interaction**

13 September 2022 (online, 10.00–12.00)

Interfaith Scotland course exploring the impact of our inner narratives - our meaning-making - on our interactions and relationships. We will consider ways we can become more aware of our readings as they form, and more cautious about their accuracy. We will also discuss tools for more authentic conversations. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/m63kxvrm> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** Introduction to Working with Religious Diversity**

26 October 2022 (online, 10.30–12.30)

Interfaith Scotland short course where delegates will improve their confidence in discussing and responding to the religion and belief of those they work with. We explore guiding principles behind working with religion and belief diversity. Then we take a closer look at the core beliefs and cultural practices of Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p88vnps> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

**** Intention versus impact – exploring challenges around group labels and unintended offence**

6 December 2022 (online, 1.30–3.30)

Interfaith Scotland short course exploring the language used to describe groups of people, particularly in relation to Protected Characteristics like race, disability, religion and belief. We also consider how we can respond to unintended interpretations, confusion or offence by exploring the difference between the speaker's intention and the impact on the listener. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/k9hz52pk> or contact Jamie Spurway jamie@interfaithscotland.org

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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/>



gov.scot

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

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