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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Ukrainian Refugees (Visas)

Kaukab Stewart (SNP): When talking about emergency visa waivers at Westminster yesterday, the Ukrainian ambassador to the United Kingdom told the Home Affairs Committee: "At particular times, drastic measures should be taken. I believe something like a drop-in could be considered as well."

In the light of that direct plea from the ambassador of our war-ravaged European neighbours, does the First Minister agree that the UK Government should adopt the position of the Irish Government, which has removed all visa barriers, to allow refugees to be welcomed quickly, safely and securely without delay? Does she agree that post-arrival paperwork and biometric work should be conducted in concert with the Ukrainian consul so that arrivals can securely settle anywhere across the UK's common travel area?

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Yes, I strongly support that position. It is the position that the Republic of Ireland and countries across the European Union have adopted.

Yesterday, I spoke to a Ukrainian who lives in Scotland—a man who lives in Glasgow. His will be one of many stories. He spoke to me about the efforts to get his family members—his sister, in particular—to this country. She had managed to get to Poland after an arduous journey and the wall of bureaucracy that met her when she then tried to get to the UK was mind-boggling and inhumane in the circumstances.

As I said earlier, I welcome the movement that we appear to have had from Priti Patel and the Home Office this morning. When I came to the chamber, I was still trying to absorb all the details but, as I understand it, Ukrainians with a Ukrainian passport will now be able to apply for a visa online—but only through the family route, which is the only route that is open right now—rather than have to go to a visa application centre.

That is movement. I understand that, for such people, the biometric processes will be completed when they come to the UK. However, that approach still requires a visa application process, which is not good enough. We need to waive that process, allow people to get here and do the paperwork after that. That is not only the humanitarian thing to do; it is what other countries are doing.

We hope that, over the next couple of days, we will have confirmation from the UK Government of the opening of the community sponsorship route. That is being overseen by Michael Gove rather than the Home Office. I have had constructive discussions with him about it in the past couple of days. The Scottish Government has put to him and his officials a proposition that would allow us, in partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, to run the scheme in Scotland so that we can ensure that people who come through it get the right support. The vast majority of people in Scotland want to welcome them with open arms, and that is what we are intent on doing if we possibly can and if the UK Government procedures allow us to do so.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13628&i=123703#ScotParlOR>

Ukrainian Seasonal Workers (Support and Assistance)

Mike Ruskell (Green): Today's announcement from the United Kingdom Government on the Ukrainian humanitarian scheme is significant, but I agree with the First Minister that it does not go far enough. Ukrainian seasonal workers across Scotland, many of whom are my constituents in Fife, are still barred from bringing their family members to safety and still subject to the abhorrent no recourse to public funds conditions. What further support and assistance can the Scottish Government provide to Ukrainian seasonal workers who are still at the harsh end of the UK Government's hostile environment?

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We are trying to influence UK Government decisions on the matter every day right now. Currently, the only route open for Ukrainians is the family reunification scheme. It is still too limited, in my view, and it is also, as we have painfully seen in recent days, horrendously bureaucratic. We are asking for that to be streamlined and asking for visa requirements to be waived, but we are also seeking assurances, which I hope will be given, that people coming here, whether they come under that route or the community sponsorship route that I hope will open in the next few days, will be able to work and have access to public funds, and that the Scottish Government will be able to work with our partners to ensure full support for everybody who comes here. We continue to pursue those discussions with the UK Government. No country should have to be shamed into doing right by refugees. It is appalling that that is

the case. As I said the other day, I hope that we get to a position in which we open not only our hearts to people in Ukraine—I think that we have all done that—but our doors, by allowing them to come here and ensuring that they have the support that they need to recover from their trauma and to try to rebuild their lives, while we all hope for peace in their country.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13628&i=123711#ScotParlOR>

Ukrainian Refugees

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Liberal Democrat): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its plans to resettle Ukrainian refugees in Scotland. (S6O-00836)

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government (Shona Robison): Scotland has a proud history of welcoming refugees and people who are seeking asylum. The Scottish Government and Scotland's local authorities have made it clear to the United Kingdom Government that they stand ready to offer refuge and sanctuary, where necessary, for those who may be displaced.

The UK Government's current proposals to support Ukrainian refugees via community sponsorship are insufficient, and the Scottish Government continues to call on the UK Government to act now to develop a comprehensive resettlement programme. The Scottish Government is working with the Home Office, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, local authorities and other partners to provide people with the safety and security that they need to rebuild their lives.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: Since the beginning of the war two weeks ago, the Home Office has issued fewer than 1,000 visas to Ukrainian refugees under the early schemes that it has announced. Desperate families who are fleeing for their lives are meeting cruel barriers that are set by an unwelcoming Government.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that the best way for us in Scotland to convince the UK Government to help those in need of refuge is for Scotland to demonstrate that we already provide everything that people who are fleeing that conflict might need, including homes and education, translation and trauma services?

In particular, will the cabinet secretary describe how those who want to offer the use of second homes and room in their own accommodation can do so? Has the Scottish Government completed necessary readiness assessments with the Scottish Parliament and the UK Government to help to drive forward on the issue?

Reply from Shona Robison: The fact that the UK Government has issued fewer than 1,000 visas is, frankly, embarrassing, given the scale of the response by other countries across Europe, many of which are a lot poorer than our country, in opening their doors and accommodating people. As the First Minister has said, we should allow people in and sort the paperwork later. Despite that, we are working at pace to ensure that we stand ready to receive people, on the assumption that the UK Government's position cannot hold. That work is on-going.

Work is also on-going to try to co-ordinate the response from the community so that there is a single place where people can offer support, because people want to help. Some of that support will be utilised, although, for good reasons, some of it might not be. The Scottish Refugee Council will be a critical agency in that immediate first-place support, and we are working with it to help it to scale up.

Elena Whitham (SNP): The cabinet secretary will recognise the immense outpouring of empathy and willingness from citizens right across Scotland to provide assistance and shelter in response to the humanitarian plight of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion. In my constituency, several efforts are in progress right now to take refugees into people's homes in the area. However, as we do not have control over borders, can the cabinet secretary provide an update on the discussions that are taking place with the United

Kingdom Government to cut the red tape and get folk here?

Reply from Shona Robison: As the member can imagine, we are in regular discussion with the UK Government about the issue. As I said, there is a need for a sizeable Government-led resettlement programme that is up to the scale of the task, and we continue to urge the UK Government to take that action. The First Minister has written to the Prime Minister urging the UK Government to waive all visa requirements for any Ukrainian national seeking refuge in the UK and to offer immediate refuge and sanctuary for all those who may be displaced. We have to stand in solidarity, and we need to be ready. As I said, we stand ready to provide that practical support, aid and sanctuary for those who need it.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13626&i=123659#ScotParlOR>

Ukrainian Refugees (Accommodation)

Mark Griffin (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what work it has undertaken with its partners, and funding it has identified, to accommodate refugees from Ukraine. (S6O-00843)

Reply from the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development (Neil Gray): Scotland has a proud history of welcoming refugees and people seeking sanctuary from war and violence. The Scottish Government and Scotland's local authorities have made it clear to the United Kingdom Government that we stand ready to offer refuge and sanctuary, where necessary, for those who may be displaced. We are therefore working with the Home Office, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, local authorities and other partners to provide people with the safety and security that they need to rebuild their lives.

The UK Government's current proposals to support Ukrainian refugees via community sponsorship routes are insufficient, and we are still waiting for full details of how that will work. We continue to urge the UK Government to develop a comprehensive resettlement programme to ensure that Ukrainian citizens can be provided with the safety and security that they need to rebuild their lives.

Mark Griffin: The glacial response of the UK Government has been absolutely appalling. Yesterday, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government said: "we are working at pace to ensure that we stand ready to receive people".—[[Official Report, 9 March 2022; c 25.](#)]

Given that the Home Office has finally said that it will ease entry requirements—although it is clear that it is not easing them far enough—can the minister confirm that accommodation and homes are being booked, capacity in schools has been identified and funding is ready so that we can welcome Ukrainians into communities here, as it is clear that we cannot wait for the UK Government to develop a resettlement programme?

Reply from Neil Gray: Mark Griffin is absolutely right: the glacial pace at which things have been moving is desperate; it is an international embarrassment. I can confirm that we are working on all the aspects that he raises as potential routes to ensuring that we can provide safe, secure, long-term and sustainable sanctuary to people who are fleeing Putin's war in Ukraine. ...

Elena Whitham (SNP): ...The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has added the voice of Scotland's local authorities to that of the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament in calling on the Home Secretary to step up the United Kingdom's resettlement programme for Ukrainian refugees, citing the expertise of Scotland's strategic migration partnership in supporting refugees and migrants and integrating them into our communities.

Notwithstanding today's announcement about digital visas, will the minister comment on the Home Secretary's claim that the UK is "doing everything possible" to speed up the remarkably slow roll-out of the visa scheme to Ukrainian refugees, especially in light of the

full willingness of COSLA and our councils to play their part in Europe-wide efforts?

Reply from Neil Gray: For “doing everything possible”, read “doing the least that they feel they can get away with”. We continue to call on the UK Government to urgently develop a proper resettlement programme. One reason why the Syrian resettlement programme was successful was that it was a comprehensive one in which partnerships worked to support people in need. I am proud that all 32 Scottish local authorities participated in the programme, welcoming more than 3,300 refugees into their communities. People in families were able to settle and make Scotland their home.

I want to see that again. Therefore, it is vital that rapid, safe and legal routes be established immediately and that the millions fleeing war are given sanctuary through such programmes. Scotland stands ready to offer a warm welcome and a refuge to those who need a home.

Sarah Boyack (Labour): I commend to the minister the discussion that the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee had this morning. Some excellent suggestions were made, particularly about gearing up not only our councils but the voluntary sector to support people who come to Scotland for a raft of reasons.

Will the minister commit to working with our business community and public sector partners to support fundraising for the Disasters Emergency Committee, to enable donations to be made? Will he also commit to developing work visas so that Ukrainian people who have skills and talents can come to work in Scotland?

Reply from Neil Gray: I agree with Sarah Boyack. She has given me the opportunity to, once again, thank the people of Scotland for their incredibly generous support to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal. More than £10 million has been raised in Scotland. That ensures that we are quickly and effectively getting financial aid to where it is needed.

Regarding how we can support people who arrive in Scotland, as I said to Mark Griffin, we are working across all areas of society to ensure that we have a co-ordinated response that will give people a safe and secure place to call home when they arrive in Scotland.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13628&i=123734#ScotParlOR>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Ukraine: Urgent Refugee Applications

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will make a statement on how her Department can speed up the urgent refugee applications coming from those leaving Ukraine.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Kevin Foster): President Putin’s invasion of Ukraine is a barbaric and unprovoked attack and we stand shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainian people. He must fail in Ukraine.

This Government have brought forward a generous humanitarian offer to those Ukrainians who want to come to the UK to escape the conflict. Last week, the Home Secretary announced a new Ukraine family scheme for those with family ties to the UK, and we are extending the scheme further to include aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins and in-laws. The scheme went live last Friday and has already seen over 10,000 applications submitted, for which over 500 visas have been issued, with more being issued as we speak. We have also announced that we are setting up a new humanitarian sponsorship visa, and we are working at pace with our colleagues in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to set

that up. We will also work with the devolved Administrations.

We have made significant progress in a short space of time, on top of the first phase of the package that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary set out to the House last week. I also remind the House that a crucial part of the application process is providing biometrics so that we can be sure that applicants are who they say they are. Sadly, we are already seeing people presenting at Calais with false documents claiming to be Ukrainian. With incidents like Salisbury still in our minds, the Government will not take chances with the security of this country and our people. Our friends in the United States, Canada and Australia are rightly taking the same approach as we are.

I would like to update the House on the measures that we are taking to speed up and process the applications and to ensure that we can help applicants as quickly as possible. We have surged staff to key visa application centres across Europe, particularly in Poland, and moved more biometric kit to support them. We have ensured that casework teams are standing by in the UK to process applications to ensure that there are no delays.

We will also establish a larger presence in northern France to help Ukrainians in the region. It is essential that we do not create a choke point at places like Calais, where dangerous people smugglers are present, and ensure the smooth flow of people through the system from across Europe. Alongside that, we are working with our embassies around the world to ensure that we use our diplomatic channels to support our efforts and to provide the latest information.

We have taken decisive action. We are now providing regular public updates on our casework numbers and we will continue to keep the House updated on this progress.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: ... the UK has always been generous in admitting refugees, especially in times of crisis in Europe, dating back to the Huguenots. Concerned constituents have contacted me, so will my hon. Friend tell the House how we can speed up the necessary processing of refugees leaving the truly awful situation in Ukraine? Will he also update the House on what is happening in Calais, so that they can be processed either there or close by with transport provided?

I understand that we require a process to securely check applications that are made not only for security reasons, but so that we can provide support in this country. However, we surely could speed the process up by, for example, rewashing biometric and other data that we already have. We need not only efficiency, but humanity when processing applications of refugees from Ukraine and we should warmly welcome those refugees to this country.

Reply from Kevin Foster: ... He is right that we as a country have stood forward to support Ukraine, not least in supplying it with the weaponry that is being used to defend people's homes and to push back this barbaric and unprovoked attack on their nation.

I appreciate that there are concerns. We are training new caseworkers, who, as of tomorrow, will take more decisions. We are looking to review what we can and to use some of the technology that we have—for example, around what we deployed for the British nationals overseas route and how that could be brought into effect. We are also reviewing some of the requirements on biometrics for under-18s to free up visa appointments in visa application centres.

On my hon. Friend's specific points on northern France, we are looking to establish a presence in Lille and potentially looking at transport options from Calais to Lille. There are issues with providing particular application points at the port, but we are looking at how we can do it, and we expect that to be set up within the next 24 hours. ...

Yvette Cooper (Labour): It is deeply disappointing that the Home Secretary is not here to

respond, given the gravity of the issue—especially after she gave wrong information to the House several times yesterday.

Two million refugees have left Ukraine. Other countries are supporting hundreds of thousands of people; the Home Office is currently issuing about 250 family scheme visas a day. Most people want to stay close to home, but some want to come here to join family or friends, and we should be helping them. Instead, most people are still being held up by Home Office bureaucracy or are being turned away.

Yesterday, the Home Secretary told the House twice that a visa centre en route to Calais had been set up, but it still does not exist. The Foreign Secretary has just said that it might be in Lille, nearly 75 miles from Calais. The Home Office said this morning that no decision had been taken. Which is it? Has it? Where is it? Can people get there yet?

The Home Secretary said yesterday: “It is wrong to say that we are just turning people back”.—[[Official Report, 7 March 2022; Vol. 710, c. 27.](#)]

But there are 600 people in Calais right now who have been turned back and are being told to go to Brussels, where the visa centre is open only three days a week, or to Paris, where people are still being told that the next appointment is on 15 March, a week away. In Warsaw, people are also still being told that the next appointment is on 15 March, a week away. In Rzeszów, the booking system seems to have completely broken down: this morning, they are sending people away.

The Home Office was warned by the chief inspector in November that the geographical spread of visa application centres was a real problem for vulnerable applicants, leading to difficult journeys, yet it did nothing about it, even when it was given weeks of warning by British intelligence that an invasion was coming.

Yesterday, the Home Secretary told me that elderly aunts were covered by the scheme. Two hours later, the Home Office helpline said that they were not. I welcome the inclusion of extended relatives, but the Government should not be continuing to change the system in a chaotic way, rather than opening it properly. Will the Government urgently set up emergency visa centres at all major travel points, do the security checks on the spot and then issue emergency visas for Ukrainians—for all family, but not just family—so that they can come here and the UK can do our historic bit to help refugees fleeing war in Europe, as we have done before?

Reply from Kevin Foster: ... we are training more decision makers as we speak. We are pulling people in from across UK Visas and Immigration to ensure that there is an almost frictionless approach to caseworking, and we will see the number of visas issued ramping up each day.

But this is a complex scenario. As I touched on in my statement, we have seen people presenting themselves at Calais port pretending to be Ukrainian. ... We only have to look back a short period to see the impact in this country of attacks by those pretending that they had come here to look at a cathedral spire.

We will move out to extend this. We recognise the desperate plight that there is; that is why we are working with countries on the ground, providing humanitarian aid and ensuring that we are helping to provide support as people cross borders. We are looking to ensure that we have a wide system that allows people to come here, and abandoning many of our normal requirements for countries. We recognise that it is not a time for the usual immigration process, hence the system that we are setting up. As we have said, we have the confidence that it will expand. We know that the British people will be generous. We know that when we move to open up the sponsorship visa, many people, including many of our constituents, will want to step forward. ...

Roger Gale (Conservative): ... In response to my question yesterday, [the Home Secretary] said: “I have already made it clear, in terms of the visa application centre that has now been set up en route to Calais, that we have staff in Calais”.—[[Official Report, 7 March 2022; Vol. 710, c. 28.](#)]

That was untrue, and under any normal Administration that in itself would be a resignation issue. There is no visa centre at Lille yet, although earlier this morning the Foreign Secretary said that there was.

A week ago, the Home Secretary announced the introduction of a humanitarian sponsorship visa. There is as yet no humanitarian sponsorship visa. It is time that the Home Office granted a visa waiver, and allowed children and all adults with Ukrainian passports to come into the country now.

Reply from Kevin Foster: I understand that the Home Secretary clarified her remarks yesterday, and I have been clear about the position regarding the centre that we are establishing.

I do hear the appeal that has been made, but there is a reason why we believe it is right that key security checks are carried out before people arrive in the United Kingdom. We are, however, reviewing the specific position on the provision of biometrics by those aged under 18. We will act on the basis of risk and advice that we receive, including advice from our security services. We are a country that is in Mr Putin's crosshairs, we are a country that has stood resolutely behind the Ukrainian Government and continues to do so, and we are a country that will welcome literally thousands of people in what is probably one of the biggest moves to provide shelter and refuge for a generation. ...

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): ... it is time to stop messing about with the broken bureaucracy and to scrap it altogether, with no more visas required. That is how we can quickly fulfil our obligations to the people of Ukraine. Our European allies can do it safely and securely, so why cannot the Home Secretary? There are other ways to address our security concerns after the arrival of refugees, such as what we do with non-visa nationals and what we did with evacuated Afghans. The Minister should not quote Salisbury at us, because that has nothing whatever to do with this situation.

How does the Minister justify all the other massive restrictions on who can come here? Why can a cousin not join a cousin? Why do no non-family ties count at all? Crucially, why is it that many thousands of Ukrainians in this country—whether skilled workers, agricultural workers or students—cannot be joined by anyone under the family rules, just because they do not have permanent residence yet? People cannot wait months for possible community sponsorship.

Finally, let me ask this question again: does not the last fortnight illustrate just how ill-conceived the disgraceful Nationality and Borders Bill is? Under the Bill, a Ukrainian fleeing here to join a cousin or friend could be criminalised, offshored, imprisoned—all because there is no visa for them. That is utterly indefensible, is it not?

Reply from Kevin Foster: Having been closely involved in the evacuation from Kabul, along with colleagues in the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, I would remind the hon. Gentleman that we did carry out security checks on people who were leaving what was a very different and very dynamic environment, especially given the obvious threat, so the suggestion that we did not carry out any checks before that evacuation is not correct.

As for the launch of the sponsorship scheme, we do not see that taking months, as the hon. Gentleman suggested. We are already seeing people coming forward with generous offers of homes, jobs and wider support. A hotel in my constituency with a Ukrainian speaker is starting to look at the possibility of offering jobs and accommodation. As the hon. Gentleman knows, last week I had a helpful and productive conversation with the relevant Scottish Government Minister, and, to be fair, I know that the Scottish Government will also step up and do what they can.

The hon. Gentleman said that it was not appropriate to use the Salisbury example, but we do need to remember why we have these checks in place. It is because, as we have already seen at Calais, there are people presenting with false documents,

and there are people making claims that are not true. However, I recognise that the House wants to see us getting on with processing, putting more people on to this work, and ensuring that we can, as quickly as possible, provide for a very large number of people to move into the UK. As I have said, this one of our biggest moves to provide sanctuary for a generation. ...

To continue reading this very lengthy question and answer session see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-08/debates/CD197E60-5E4C-472B-A099-26A88DDCCAB2/UkraineUrgentRefugeeApplications>

Refugees from Ukraine

Yvette Cooper (Labour): To ask the Home Secretary if she will make a statement about refugees from Ukraine.

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): I am grateful for this opportunity to update the House on the Government's humanitarian response to Putin's depraved war on Ukraine. As the House knows, the UK's humanitarian support for Ukraine has been developed following close consultation with its Government and Governments in the region. On 4 March, I launched the Ukraine family scheme, which applies to immediate and extended Ukrainian family members, and everyone eligible is granted three years' leave to enter or remain. Today, I want to set out further changes that I am making to the process to make it quicker and simpler.

I have two overarching obligations: first, to keep the British people safe; secondly, to do all we can to help Ukrainians. No Home Secretary can take these decisions lightly, and I am in daily contact with the intelligence and security agencies, which are providing me with regular threat assessments. What happened in Salisbury showed what Putin is willing to do on our soil. It also demonstrated that a small number of people with evil intentions can wreak havoc on our streets.

This morning, I received assurances that enable me to announce changes to the Ukraine family scheme. Based on the new advice that I have received, I am now in the position to announce that vital security checks will continue on all cases. From Tuesday, Ukrainians with passports will no longer need to go to a visa application centre to give their biometrics before they come to the UK. Instead, once their application has been considered and the appropriate checks completed, they will receive direct notification that they are eligible for the scheme and can come to the UK.

In short, Ukrainians with passports will be able to get permission to come here fully online from wherever they are and will be able to give their biometrics once they are in Britain. That will mean that visa application centres across Europe can focus their efforts on helping Ukrainians without passports. We have increased the capacity at those centres to over 13,000 appointments a week. That streamlined approach will be operational as of Tuesday 15 March in order to make the relevant technology and IT changes.

I will of course update the House if the security picture changes and if it becomes necessary to make further changes to protect our domestic homeland security. Threat assessments are always changing and we will always keep our approach under review. In the meantime, I once again salute the heroism of the Ukrainian people.

Yvette Cooper: ... A maternity hospital was bombed yesterday in an attack on newborn babies and women giving birth. People are fleeing for their lives and, up to now, the response from the Home Office has been a total disgrace, bringing shame upon our country. A 90-year-old holocaust survivor was left in makeshift accommodation in Poland even though her granddaughter was struggling to get here. Mums with small kids have been told that they cannot get an appointment for weeks and have had to queue for days

to get biometrics in freezing weather in Rzeszów, only to be told that they then have to travel 200 miles to Warsaw to pick up their visas.

It is welcome that the Home Secretary is now introducing the online approach. We know that different ways of doing this were tried for Hong Kong visas, but why has it taken so long when she has had intelligence for weeks, if not months, that she needed to prepare for a Russian invasion of Ukraine? If we still have to wait until Tuesday for this new system to come in, what is to happen for everybody else in the meantime? Why is she not bringing in the armed forces? They have offered to help. We have had 1,000 troops on stand-by to provide humanitarian help for two weeks, so why not use them now to set up the emergency centres and to get people passported through as rapidly as possible and get them into the country?

What about the Ukrainian nurse here on a healthcare visa? Is she finally to be allowed to bring her elderly parents to the country, which we have asked for for so long? Is this still just being restricted to those with family? Are they still going to have to fill in multiple online forms, or will the Home Secretary say that all those who want to come to the UK having fled the fighting in Ukraine can now come here without having to fill in loads of online forms or jump through a whole load of hoops?

This has just been shameful. We are pushing vulnerable people from pillar to post in their hour of need. Week after week we have seen this happen. It is deeply wrong to leave people in this terrible state. Our country is better than this. If she cannot get this sorted out, frankly she should hand the job over to somebody else who can.

Reply from Priti Patel: ... There is no comparison to British national overseas schemes because 90% of Ukrainians do not have chip passports, so they would be excluded from any such scheme and approach.

Visa applications are important in this process. It is important that we are flexible in our response, and we have been. We are seeing that many Ukrainians do not have documentation. This country and all Governments, including probably a Government that the right hon. Lady once served in, will recognise that there was something known as the Windrush scandal and it is important that everyone who arrives in the UK has physical and digital records of their status here in the UK to ensure that they can access schemes ... the process is vital in terms of verification, notification and permission to travel. It is important to give people status when they come to the United Kingdom, so that they have the right to work, the right to access benefits and digital verification of their status. That is absolutely right.

It is really important to remember again that although we have known that this attack has been coming, we have to work with the intelligence and security agencies. No disrespect to the right hon. Lady, but these checks and data—biographical and the warnings index—are important security checks that can be done through the digital process. They have been verified by the intelligence and security services, and we have to work with them in particular.

At a time of war and conflict, it is really important that we work together. I reflect on many of the comments and observations that I have heard directly from members of the Ukrainian community in this country, who I have spent time a great deal of time with this week, not just on their applications and how applications are processed but on how applications can be made both in the UK and outside the United Kingdom. There are not swathes and swathes of forms; there is a clear application process for families who undertake it. ...

Everybody should work together not just in promoting the scheme but in making sure that those who need our help are united in our collective approach to not only how we serve them but how we support them in getting their family members over to the United Kingdom. ...

Brendan O'Hara (SNP): We broadly welcome the Government's U-turn—it is a big step forward — but, as we have heard, it did not have to be this way. This war was foreseen,

and the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from it was widely predicted. As I said yesterday, the Government have lagged behind the public, and I suspect that public pressure in many Conservative MPs' inboxes has brought about this change, welcome as it is.

Yesterday, at the Home Affairs Committee, the Ukrainian ambassador was shocked to learn from my hon. Friend the Member for Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East (Stuart C. McDonald) that the Ukrainians who are currently here without permanent residency, namely students and workers, had absolutely no rights that would allow them to bring relatives to the UK under the bespoke system. The ambassador said that he would raise the issue with the Home Secretary. Did he do so, and is that loophole covered by the measures that she has announced? May I also ask what discussions she has had, and will have, with the devolved Administrations about how to ensure that these measures are successful?

Reply from Priti Patel: ... It is important for us to work together, and the Immigration Minister is in touch with the devolved Administrations. As we have made clear from day one, these are important discussions about the need to work collegiately and collectively on our response. This cannot be done purely through central Government; we have to work across the country to provide the support that is needed. Yesterday I was in Manchester and Derby, meeting members of the Ukrainian diaspora community to hear about their needs and to discuss how we can work not only centrally but with local authorities to give wider support.

The hon. Gentleman asked some important questions about, for example, students. There are many others who have leave to stay in this country and can have their leave extended to 36 months, and we are making that clear across the board. I have also been clear about the agility of our response, and about our approach to enabling family members to come here as well. That work is under way in the Department, and is taking place right now. As I have said, I will come back to update the House. I am also in touch with the Ukrainian ambassador nearly every day, primarily because a range of cases inevitably arise and casework is complicated. Many Members of Parliament have been using caseworking facilities that have been provided for them in Portcullis House. As we identify challenges—not everyone has documentation, not everyone has a passport—we need to find ways in which we can work together to bring people here, which is why everything is under review and why we have that agile response. ...

Diana Johnson (Labour): ... While I welcome the changes for Ukrainian passport holders, many Ukrainians do not have passports, as the Home Secretary has just said. I want to ask her about TLScontact, which has been subcontracted by the Home Office to carry out biometric checks. The chief inspector of borders and immigration told the Home Secretary that TLScontact was so hellbent on making profit that its use posed a risk of “reputational damage” to the UK. With Ukrainians fleeing for their lives and the chaos at the visa application centres with long waits and few appointments, can the Secretary of State tell me why that company is allowed to profit from the suffering and misery of Ukrainians by telling them that if they make additional payments, their cases will be expedited and they will get appointments more quickly? Is that right?

Reply from Priti Patel: Let me just share the information I know about the contracted service with TLScontact. First and foremost, we have surged capacity at visa application centres, as I have said several times in the House. That is a contractual process that we have, alongside working with Home Office staff in country, and further staff have been sent out. The right hon. Lady asked specifically about the contractual arrangements with TLScontact. Our priority has been to surge its staff in country to create more appointments, and we have surged appointments. There have been 6,000 appointments available this week, and as of Tuesday 15 March, there will be 13,000 appointments for people who do not have

documentation and passports. We can prioritise those without documentation and passports. Those with passports can use the digital service that will be set up and go live from Tuesday. I will come back to the Chair of the Select Committee on the contractual details, primarily because these details are organised through the Departments and there is a procurement process that goes on. I will write to her on the specifics. With regard to Ukrainian nationals coming to the United Kingdom to be reunited with their families, this is a free service. There are no charges in place whatsoever. ...

To continue reading this very lengthy question and answer session see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-10/debates/1D34DE0D-A17A-403E-AE7E-7CDA259A3E92/RefugeesFromUkraine>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [131056] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January 2022 to Question 98886, how many and what proportion of ARAP applications received by his Department in (a) January and (b) February 2022 (i) have been processed with a final decision given and (ii) await a decision on eligibility.

Reply from James Heapey: Please see the relevant figures below:

Month	Applications Received (as at 1 March 22)	Eligibility Decisions Made (as at 1 March 22)
January	6,382	2,557
February	3,689	1,203

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131056>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-06/98886>

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

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

Visas: Afghanistan

Stephen Timms (Labour) [132156] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what evidential flexibility applies when caseworkers at UK Visas and Immigration are considering applications submitted from Afghans using the Appendix FM route because of misplaced or destroyed documentation.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Evidential flexibility is a principle which allows the decision maker to decide a case without requiring all the usual evidence or information set out on the application form and guidance. If there is a compelling reason why the evidence cannot be provided, then evidential flexibility will be applied for Afghans applying under Appendix FM routes.

Each case will be considered on its own individual merits in line with the current guidance. If further evidence is required, further enquiries may be made but it remains the responsibility of the applicant to sufficiently evidence their circumstances, or to provide a credible explanation as to why such evidence is not available, such as the current situation in Afghanistan.

We continue to monitor the situation closely and may make further adjustments to requirements where necessary and appropriate to ensure people are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132156>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Derek Thomas (Conservative) [905931] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to (a) identify eligible applicants to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme in Afghanistan who meet the criteria for vulnerable minorities and (b) provide that information to the Home Office.

Reply from James Cleverly: The ACRS will prioritise those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan, and vulnerable people, including those from ethnic and religious minority groups.

In the first year, under the third pathway of the ACRS, the FCDO will refer to the Home Office a number of at-risk British Council and Gardaworld contractors and Chevening alumni for resettlement.

The process for deciding who from within these groups should be referred is being developed. It will have proper regard for risk, including risk resulting from minority status or identity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-08/905931>

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

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [131058] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many individual ARAP primary applicants his Department has relocated to the UK in each month since April 2021.

Reply from James Heapey: We are working at pace to relocate all those who are eligible and helping them to come to the UK continues to be a high priority. So far, we have relocated over 8,000 Afghans.

As at 9 March 2022, the number of ARAP eligible principals relocated by month is shown in the table below:

Apr-21	0
May-21	1
Jun-21	24
Jul-21	188
August 2021 (inc Op PITTING)	981
Sep-21	19
Oct-21	41
Nov-21	81
Dec-21	60
Jan-22	84
Feb-22	82
Total	1,561

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131058>

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

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Ukraine

Asylum: Ukraine

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [129146] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has taken steps to prepare for a potential increase in

applications for asylum from Ukrainian nationals.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.

We are already doubling the number of decision makers in asylum and working to streamline our processes. These will be of benefit if increased numbers of Ukrainians claim asylum within the UK.

The Home Office has also agreed a range of temporary concessions to support Ukrainian nationals currently in the UK who are now unable to return when their existing visa expires. These concessions will assist Ukrainian nationals in extending their stay in the UK without having to leave and re-apply from overseas or enter the asylum system.

Individuals in the UK who are unable to return to Ukraine may be eligible to switch visa routes, even if the visa type typically does not allow this.

Further information can be found on GOV.UK page: [Support for family members of British nationals in Ukraine, and Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine and the UK](https://supportforfamilymembersofbritishnationalsinukraineandukrainiannationalsinukraineandtheuk)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129146>

Ukraine: Visas

Rebecca Long Bailey (Labour) [129826] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to enable Ukrainian relatives of (a) British nationals living in the Ukraine and (b) Ukrainian nationals living in the UK to apply for urgent visas to the UK for travel, work, study, or to reunite with family.

Reply from James Cleverly: In a statement to the House on 28 February, the Home Secretary announced changes that allow Ukrainians in the UK to have their visas temporarily extended or be able to switch onto different visa routes. The Home Office has also exceptionally introduced some concessions in the Family Migration route to assist immediate family members of British Nationals normally living in Ukraine with their British national family member, who intend to return to or relocate to the UK with their British National family member.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-25/129826>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretarys-topical-statement-on-ukraine>

Refugees: Ukraine

Virendra Sharma (Labour) [134346] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is making funds available to support the care and housing of refugees from Ukraine.

Reply from Simon Clarke: The UK has a proud history of providing protection to the most vulnerable people. To support those fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Home Office has launched the Ukraine Family Scheme to allow thousands of families to be reunited in the UK. The Scheme allows immediate and extended family members of British nationals and people settled in the UK to come to the country. Those joining family through the Scheme will be granted leave for 3 years, giving them certainty and ensuring their future in the country. The Scheme is free, and does not include any salary or language requirements.

In addition, a new sponsored humanitarian visa route will be established to allow communities, private sponsors, or local authorities to sponsor people to come the UK from Ukraine. The Treasury is working closely with departments across government on the design and funding of these new routes.

In addition to these changes to the immigration system, the government has already committed around £400m to support the current crisis in Ukraine. This includes up to £220m in humanitarian aid, making the UK the largest bilateral humanitarian

donor to Ukraine. This much-needed humanitarian assistance will help aid agencies respond to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, saving lives, protecting vulnerable people and creating a lifeline for Ukrainians with access to basic necessities. It also includes a commitment to match-fund the public's first £20m of donations to the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, our largest ever aid-match contribution. UK Government humanitarian experts have also been deployed to the region to bolster the UK's support to countries receiving those fleeing the violence in Ukraine.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-04/134346>

Housing: Refugees

Rachael Maskell (LabourCo-op) [133218] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of permitting (a) Ukrainian and (b) Afghan refugees to settle temporarily in willing family homes until suitable alternative accommodation is found.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: The Government has set up an online portal to allow people to submit offers of housing for people arriving from Afghanistan, and encourage people with available properties to offer these via gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-housing-portal-offers-of-support>.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-02/133218>

Holiday Accommodation and Second Homes: Refugees

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [132304] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to encourage owners of holiday lets and second homes to provide temporary accommodation for refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine who require settlement.

Reply from Eddie Hughes: The Government has set up an online portal to allow people to submit offers of housing for people arriving from Afghanistan, and encourage people with available properties to offer these via gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-housing-portal-offers-of-support>

Further to the [answer](#) given by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, details of the sponsorship scheme for Ukraine will be set out in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132304>

Holiday Accommodation: Refugees

Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat) [135598] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review the requirement of furnished holiday lets to let at a commercial rate for 105 days per annum should they wish to remain a small business, to allow those businesses to offer free accommodation to Ukrainian refugees.

Reply from Lucy Frazer: Furnished Holiday Lets (FHLs) receive special tax treatment including the ability to claim trading Capital Gains Tax reliefs and capital allowances for items such as furniture. In addition, FHLs are not subject to any finance cost relief restriction and profits count as earnings for pension purposes. Landlords can provide their residential properties to refugees for free. When a property does not qualify as a FHL, or stops being a qualifying FHL, the landlord becomes subject to the normal tax rules for residential property rental income. Whilst there are no plans to change this to reflect the situation in Ukraine, the UK Government is clear that we must ensure the humanitarian needs of displaced people are met, both within and beyond Ukraine's borders, and we urge the relevant authorities to consider and plan for such possible outcomes. The UK is now the

largest bilateral humanitarian donor to Ukraine and has pledged around £400 million to help Ukraine.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-07/135598>

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

British Nationality: Children

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [131316] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has undertaken race and disability equality assessments of the fee for children to register as British citizens in the context of the Supreme Court judgment dated 2 February 2022 in R (on the application of The Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens) v Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Following the Court of Appeal's ruling in February last year, the Home Office committed to reviewing the child registration fee in line with its duties under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009. A Supreme Court hearing on a separate ground in this case took place on 23rd and 24th June 2021, with the judgement handed down on 2 February 2022. It has been important to give the Supreme Court the opportunity to give its view on the questions raised by this case before finalising the Section 55 assessment. We are now able to do so and will conclude the assessment, and associated review of the fee, shortly. We will share the results in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131316>

The Court of Appeal ruling referred to above can be read at
<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2021/193.pdf>

The Supreme Court judgement referred to above can be read at
<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2021-0062-judgment.pdf>

The following two questions both received the same answer

British Nationality: Children

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [131211] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 February 2022 to Question 119726, on British Nationality: Children, if she will confirm that the findings of fact made by the courts in R (on the application of The Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens) v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2022] UKSC 3 will be acted upon in assessing children's best interests in respect of the child registration fee.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [131212] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 February 2022 to Question 119726, on British Nationality: Children, when her Department began that assessment of children's best interests in respect of the child registration fee; and when she plans to complete that assessment.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Following the Court of Appeal's ruling in February last year, the Home Office committed to reviewing the child registration fee in line with its duties under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009. The Home Office is undertaking a comprehensive review of the fee, which will be finalised shortly, following the Supreme Court judgement of 2 February 2022. The results will be shared in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131211>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131212>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-07/119726>

The Court of Appeal ruling referred to above can be read at

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

The Supreme Court judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2021-0062-judgment.pdf>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Immigration: Veterans

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [134358] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 February 2022, HCWS624 on Outcome of Public Consultation on Settlement Fees for Non-UK Service Personnel, whether a fee waiver will be introduced and apply to non-UK veterans who are living outside the UK and who have not regularised their immigration status and had served for at least six years or had been discharged due to an illness or injury which was attributable to service.

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [134359] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 February 2022, HCWS624 on Outcome of Public Consultation on Settlement Fees for Non-UK Service Personnel, when his Department plans to implement changes to immigration rules.

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [134360] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 February 2022, HCWS624 on Outcome of Public Consultation on Settlement Fees for Non-UK Service Personnel, whether a fee waiver will be introduced and apply retrospectively to non-UK veterans who are currently living in the UK who have not regularised their immigration status and had served for at least six years or had been discharged due to an illness or injury which was attributable to service.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Government aims to implement the Armed Forces settlement fee waiver through a planned update to the Immigration Fees and Regulations this Spring, with the changes coming into effect on 6 April.

As set out in the Government's response to the consultation, the fee waiver will also apply to undocumented veterans currently living in the UK who served for six years or more, or were discharged due to an illness or injury attributable to their service, regardless of length of service.

Non-UK veterans who have chosen not to remain in the UK after leaving the Armed Forces can apply for settlement for up to two years after their discharge. Applications for Indefinite Leave to Enter made from outside the UK by veterans will also be free of charge where they meet the same criteria.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-04/134358>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-04/134359>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-04/134360>

The Statement referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-02-23/hcws624>

Teachers: English Language

Bridget Phillipson (Labour) [133991] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to take steps to ensure there is sufficient availability of English for Speakers of Other Languages teaching provision to support people who arrive in the UK as refugees and asylum seekers from Ukraine.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Home Office works closely with other Government departments to ensure mainstream English language provision meets the needs of

refugees.

Individuals aged 19 or over with refugee status are immediately eligible for funding through the Department for Education's Adult Education budget and exempt from the three-year residency requirement rule. This includes funding for English For Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.

Asylum seekers are also eligible to receive funding if they have lived in the UK for 6 months or longer while their claim is being considered and no decision has been made, or are receiving local authority support under section 23C or section 23CA of the Children Act 1989 or the Care Act 2014.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-03/133991>

Immigration: Applications

Abena Opong-Asare (Labour) [129269] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2022 to Question 126868 on Immigration: Applications, if she will publish data held by her Department on the number of outstanding applications for (a) leave to remain and (b) indefinite leave to remain as at 24 February 2022.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The most recent published data for outstanding leave to remain and indefinite leave to remain applications can be found here:

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

Under Visas and Citizenship Data, Tab VC_02 includes the number of straightforward applications and non-straightforward applications that remained outstanding at the end of the last reported period.

This data was published on 24 February 2022.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-24/129269>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-21/126868>

Visas: Applications

Justin Madders (Labour) [128288] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people who use the priority service route for visa or settlement applications receive a decision within five working days.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Our aim is to process all applications under the five working day priority service within our service level agreement (SLA). Yet each individual case is considered on its own facts, which means some cases will inevitably take longer than others to conclude. 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.

If an application is deemed complex and expected to take longer than the published SLA, UKVI will write to the customer within the SLA and explain what will happen next.

Data on our performance against the five working day priority service can be found in VC_02 of the published Transparency data: [Visas and Citizenship data: Q3 2021](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128288>

Visas: Families

Dan Carden (To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average processing time is for family visas.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Average processing times do not form part of any current transparency data and are not published.

Information on our immigration routes with service standards and whether they have been processed against these standards is available as part of our transparency data, at: [Migration transparency data](#)

Undocumented Migrants

Jonathan Lord (Conservative) [132246] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support the Home Office to tackle illegal immigration.

Reply from James Heapey: Defence is currently providing the Home Office with parts of the Defence estate to aid with housing and processing cross-channel migrants. This includes Napier Barracks in Kent and, since December 2021, the former Defence Fire Training and Development Centre in Manston. Discussions are underway to determine whether additional land and accommodation from the Defence estate might be made available, together with specialist personnel, to further increase capacity. As has been the case in the past, Defence has a number of vessels and surveillance capabilities available which can be made available if required to augment those of the Border Force in monitoring and intercepting migrants seeking to cross the Channel.

In addition, Defence is planning to take primacy for small boats migration in the English Channel under Operation ISOTROPE which will see the Royal Navy providing enhanced control and coordination of cross-Government assets in order to prevent the arrival of small boats on their own terms in the UK, whilst ensuring safety of life at sea.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132246>

Housing: Refugees

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [132306] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will conduct an audit of vacant public estate and accommodation to assess whether it can be repurposed as accommodation for refugees.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We work on a daily basis with local government to ensure we meet our international and statutory obligations to provide accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees.

Accommodation for refugees is offered by local authorities. Before committing to offering resettlement places a local authority should think about whether they have, or are able to put in place, the accommodation, infrastructure and support networks needed to ensure the appropriate care and integration of people in need of our help. We are in regular dialogue with local authorities to encourage greater participation, and to understand and address reasons for not doing so.

For those seeking accommodation under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), DLUHC have created a new Housing Portal to make it easier for councils to assess the suitability of properties prior to contacting landlords. Offers of property are triaged by DLUHC and sent directly to councils. We are also looking at ways to make more suitable homes available in the private rental sector by engaging with landlords, letting agencies and industry bodies to promote the housing portal and encourage participation in the resettlement programme. We are also working with the estate agent, Rightmove, to identify potential properties available in the private rental sector.

The Home Secretary recently announced a humanitarian sponsorship pathway, which will provide those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine with a route to the UK. Under the scheme, sponsor groups will provide housing and integration support to those eligible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132306>

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

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

Second Homes: Refugees

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [133219] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to encourage (a) landlords and owners of (i) holiday let and (ii) second home owners to make their properties available to incoming refugees.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Accommodation for refugees is offered by Local Authorities. Before committing to offering resettlement places a local authority should think about whether they have, or are able to put in place, the accommodation, infrastructure and support networks needed to ensure the appropriate care and integration of people in need of our help.

We work on a daily basis with local government to ensure we meet our international and statutory obligations to provide accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees, encourage greater participation, and to understand and address reasons for not doing so.

The current global pandemic, an increased influx of small boat arrivals and the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has presented us with significant challenges when it comes to the provision of asylum accommodation. During these unprecedented times, the Home Office acted quickly to source contingency accommodation, including several hotels and former MoD sites, to create additional capacity to ensure our obligations can continue to be met in full. The accommodation at Napier was set up in response to these enormous pressures placed on our asylum system. These pressures remain, and we will continue our use of Napier Barracks as contingency asylum accommodation until March 2025.

The New Plan for Immigration includes proposals to introduce new asylum accommodation centres to provide accommodation and support while processing the claims of asylum seekers. Accommodation Centres will ensure that asylum seekers can be provided with basic, safe and secure accommodation while their claims are processed.

The Home Secretary recently announced a humanitarian sponsorship pathway, which will provide those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine with a route to the UK. Under the scheme, sponsor groups – which may include those who have capacity to accommodate people in their properties - will provide housing and integration support to those eligible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-02/133219>

Asylum and Undocumented Migrants

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [121672] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there were earned regularisation processing of distinct groups of undocumented people in each of the last five years; and what assessment her Department has made of the trends in the numbers of asylum applications in following years.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The Immigration Rules provide routes for someone who does not have leave in the United Kingdom to apply for leave to remain and regularise their stay.

Under the Family and Human Rights route a person and their dependents if appropriate can apply to remain on the basis their Article 8 Human Rights would be breached if they were required to leave the UK.

The statistics for people applying to stay in the UK permanently can be found at [Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#), please note that these statistics are taken from a live database and are subject to change. The statistics for the numbers claiming asylum can be found at [asylum detailed datasets](#)

Asylum

Scott Benton (Conservative) [128469] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people since 2019 whose application for asylum was rejected have been uncontactable by her Department but are believed to still be in the UK.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Information regarding the number of failed asylum seekers still living in the UK can be found on tables ASY03 and RCM02 of the most recently published immigration and protection transparency data:

[Immigration and protection data: Q4 2021](#)

When individuals fail to remain in contact with the Home Office, we have dedicated resources to bring them into contact. We will work with the police, other government agencies and commercial companies to track these people down.

We are currently refreshing our approach to contact management.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128469>

Asylum: Housing

Justin Madders (Labour) [128293] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding has been provided to each local authority to rehouse asylum seekers in each month since April 2019.

Reply from Kevin Foster: Local Authorities do not currently receive central government funding for participating in the asylum dispersal process to accommodate asylum seekers, so no local authorities will have received any funding for this purpose since April 2019.

The Home Office is though working on an agreed change plan in partnership with Local Authority Chief Executives through the Home Office Local Government Chief Executive Group. We have established working groups with Local Authorities to determine best practice, one of which relates to defining potential additional funding requirements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128293>

Asylum: Housing

Justin Madders (Labour) [128292] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which areas have been allocated responsibility for finding accommodation for asylum seekers dispersed from Napier Barracks.

Reply from Kevin Foster: The procurement of housing for supported asylum seekers who are destitute is carried out by private providers, through the private housing market, under the Asylum and Accommodation and Support Contracts.

Asylum seekers from Napier or any other contingency accommodation site are therefore not allocated to Local Authorities to source housing.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128292>

Asylum: Mental Health Services

Anne McLaughlin (SNP) [128316] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2022 to Question 117802 on Asylum: Mental Illness, what the (a) role and (b) membership of the National Asylum Seeker Health Steering Group is; and what steps she is taking to help ensure that the mental health needs of asylum seekers are met.

Reply from Kevin Foster: On 25 June the Home Office and the Department for Health and Social Care established an officials-led National Asylum Seeker Steering Group (NASHSG). The group brings together experts from across the health and immigration sectors, including NGOs and devolved administrations, to consider the specific health and wellbeing needs, barriers and solutions for people

seeking asylum status in the UK, with the aim of implementing the recommendations of the Safeguarding Adults National Network, 'The Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Needs of Individuals Seeking Asylum' report.

In addition, to address asylum seeker mental health needs, in September 2021 we allocated just over £1 million in grant funding to four projects running from the beginning of October 2021 until the end of March 2022. This was open to bids from local authorities, civil society organisations and strategic migration partnerships and the following four bidders were successful:

Groundwork London, Solace, Barnardo's, and Refugee Council

This work covers virtual and in-person support, direct trauma counselling, trauma informed and culturally responsive training for both front line staff and those delivering mental health services. Additionally, we have ensured a champion's model that organisations can deploy to enhance access to appropriate therapeutic services for asylum seekers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/128316>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-03/117802>

Asylum: Mental Health

Lyn Brown (Labour)[132223] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of being held in immigration detention centres on the mental health of asylum seekers who have experienced (a) rape, (b) torture and (c) war.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: There is no exemption from immigration detention for any particular group. However, we fully accept that some groups of individuals can be at particular risk of harm in immigration detention. This is the basis of the Adults at Risk in immigration detention (AAR) policy, which strengthens the presumption against detention for vulnerable individuals.

The policy covers a wide range of vulnerabilities and includes people who suffer from a mental health condition. It enables Home Office staff to promptly identify whether a person is vulnerable and consequently whether they should be detained. Under the policy, vulnerable people will be detained only when the evidence of vulnerability in their particular case is outweighed by the immigration considerations, including immigration compliance, criminality factors and expected date of removal. The published Detention Services Order on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) supplements the statutory AAR policy, setting out operational guidance for all Home Office, centre supplier and healthcare staff working in the immigration removal estate on the care and management of adults in detention who are identified as being at risk. Additional safeguards are also in place for those in detention displaying such vulnerabilities, including regular reviews of detention and reporting mechanisms, such as Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001 and Rule 32 of the Short-Term Holding Facility Rules 2018, to ensure that particularly vulnerable individuals are brought to the attention of those with direct responsibility for authorising, maintaining and reviewing detention.

All immigration removal centres (IRC) have dedicated health facilities run by doctors and nurses which are managed by the NHS or appropriate providers and deliver trauma informed mental health service, where appropriate. In addition to published guidance, staff at all centres are also given training and support to proactively identify and act upon indicators of vulnerability at the earliest opportunity. Welfare teams are onsite at every IRC to assist detained individuals in accessing support specific to their needs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132223>

Deportation: Zimbabwe

Patrick Grady (SNP) [132291] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of suspending the deportation flight to Zimbabwe scheduled for 2 March 2022 in the context of violence against political opposition supporters in that country in recent days.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We make no apology for seeking to remove those with no right to remain in the UK and foreign criminals. That is why we regularly operate charter flights to different countries - to remove foreign criminals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes here, and those who have no right to be in a country, but refuse to leave voluntarily.

Individuals are only returned to their country of origin where claims have been unsuccessful, and the Home Office and, where applicable, the Courts deem it is safe to do so, with a safe route of return. By definition, those persons do not need protection and are not at risk on return.

We are monitoring the situation there, working with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Our general assessment of risk for political opponents to the government remains set out in our published [country policy and information note of September 2021](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-01/132291>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Global Refugee Forum

Lord Hylton (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they made of the outcomes of the first Global Refugee Forum, held in Geneva in December 2019.

Reply from the Minister of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park): My Lords, at the first Global Refugee Forum the international community demonstrated its commitment to responding to the plight of refugees and host communities, announcing pledges and sharing examples of good practice. ...

Lord Hylton: ... the brutal invasion of Ukraine has caused a whole new crisis. Does the noble Lord agree that the Global Refugee Forum calls for continuous co-operation between Governments and their officials? Can he give the House some good news of progress, especially in relation to eastern Europe and the Mediterranean?

Reply from Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: ... We provided more than £714 million in funding across bilateral and multilateral channels between 2016 and 2020, and the same is true in relation to other refugee and migration-related organisations. We provided the International Organization for Migration with around £89 million in 2020, making us the third-largest donor. We were the second-largest donor to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the second-largest donor to the International Committee of the Red Cross ...

Lord Dubs (Labour): My Lords, does it show leadership by this country when we take a handful of Ukrainian refugees, and when we send those who arrive in Calais to Paris or Brussels to get their papers sorted out? Is that not a miserable response compared with Ireland, which has so far taken nearly 700, has committed to taking 2% of all the refugees and is talking about a figure of 100,000 to avoid another Calais? Should we not be ashamed of ourselves?

Reply from Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The figure that has been quoted and to which I think the noble Lord is referring—that the UK has so far accepted 50 people—is, in reality, growing very significantly. ...

Baroness Boycott (Crossbench): My Lords, we have all been ashamed, I think, to see the people in the railway stations in places such as Berlin holding up placards saying that they can host one person or two people. Many people in this country would do the same thing. Why are the Government not making this system available so that good people in this country can help people in Ukraine?

Reply from Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We are creating exactly that system. We are creating a humanitarian sponsorship pathway which will open up a route to the UK for Ukrainians who may not have family ties with the UK but who can match with individuals, charities, businesses and community groups of the sort the noble Baroness just mentioned. Those under this scheme would be granted leave for an initial 12 months. There is no limit to the number of people who could be eligible for this scheme: we will welcome as many Ukrainians as wish to come, if they have matched sponsors.

Baroness Fraser of Craidmaddie (Conservative): My Lords, this weekend one of the problems seemed to be that there are very few appointments available in the visa application centres in Poland and other surrounding countries. The website through which refugees are trying to access these visa schemes could not cope with the capacity. ...

Reply from Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The noble Baroness is right that there have been serious capacity issues. We have just sent a group of UK experts to bolster the UK's support to countries surrounding Ukraine, to receive and support the increasing flow of refugees fleeing that country. ...

Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat): I referred a case to the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, of a very frail lady in her 90s who has been brought to my attention by World Jewish Relief. She is in Warsaw and, as I say, she is very frail. Will the Minister please return to his department and make sure that her case is expedited? Her granddaughter is a UK citizen. She clearly qualifies to come to the United Kingdom. She is very frail, and she is an example of many others in that situation. Can we make sure that, in this case, the Home Office is not proving to be the kind of block that it has been over Afghan refugees?

Reply from Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: My Lords, I am not familiar with the case the noble Baroness describes, but I assure her that I will convey her message back to both the Foreign Office and the Home Office. ...

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour): My Lords, the Government were prepared to disclose the figure of 50 refugees received from Ukraine. What is the current figure?

Reply from Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: ... I do not know the current figure, but I do know that there is no limit to the number of people this country is willing and able to absorb ...

To read this lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-07/debates/89CBBC52-52FD-4A6E-92E4-DEA507F83171/GlobalRefugeeForum>

Ukraine: Refugees

Lord Harries of Pentregarth (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow a greater number of Ukrainians who do not have family in the United Kingdom to come to this country; and what assessment they have made of the number of UK citizens willing to offer rent-free accommodation to refugees from Ukraine.

Reply from the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford): My Lords, the Government have announced that the UK will establish a humanitarian sponsorship pathway, which will open up a route to the UK for Ukrainians who may not have family ties with the UK but who are able to match with individuals, charities, businesses and community groups. There will be no numerical limit on this scheme; we will welcome as many Ukrainians as wish to come and have matched sponsors.

Lord Harries of Pentregarth: ... Rabbi Jonathan Romain in Maidenhead advertised locally for people willing to offer rooms to Ukrainian refugees and, within days, he had 240 offers. I believe that that could be replicated all over the country, so I am very glad that the Government have given that Answer. Will people with a named host and named accommodation who wish to come here be able to undertake the process in this country rather than having to go through a long and very unsatisfactory visa process via Paris or Brussels? Poland and Germany have shown very open hearts; I believe that the British people will do the same.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I totally agree with the noble and right reverend Lord that the British people will be very generous. In fact, just before we started Questions, the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Durham told me about a Church-based organisation that had already had 891 pledges. These are fantastic figures; the noble and right reverend Lord is absolutely right: we need to have them in the country first, and we need to expedite that process as quickly as possible. I am very keen to capture that enthusiasm and help, and offer support as soon as we can.

Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, in light of that answer, can the Minister say whether there will be an opportunity for people to apply for visas in this country rather than being kept at Calais? Secondly, the Secretary of State for Defence was unable to answer a question on the radio this morning on whether the ACRS scheme for Afghan refugees has actually opened, saying that this is a matter for the Home Office which is rather busy with Ukraine. Can the Home Office not manage to deal with Afghan and Ukrainian refugees simultaneously?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I think it is fair to say that the Home Office is dealing with both Afghan and Ukrainian refugees simultaneously. Up to 9 o'clock this morning, 4,278 appointments had been made at VACs; that is across the world, but it is a lot of VAC appointments. I checked for myself where the main bulk of those appointments were being made and the vast majority—that is, half of the appointments—were, of course, unsurprisingly, made in Poland. We have two VACs in Poland. For people fleeing Ukraine to be able to go straight to a VAC in Poland is clearly the best and easiest thing for them to do, to avoid problems along the way, shall we say. ...

To continue reading this lengthy question and answer session see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-08/debates/9D16370F-6F5D-42A8-AFDD-63B070949F86/UkraineRefugees>

Ukraine: Urgent Refugee Applications

[The answer given by the Minister in the House of Commons](#) was repeated in the House of Lords.

Lord Rosser (Labour): The Home Office has not stepped up to the mark in processing urgent Ukrainian refugee applications—no doubt in part because the Home Office culture, as shown by the Nationality and Borders Bill, is geared towards keeping refugees out rather than welcoming them in.

On Monday, the Home Secretary claimed that a visa application centre had been set up en route to Calais and was staffed. Yesterday, however, the Commons Minister said that “we are looking to establish a presence in Lille ... and we expect that to be set up within the next 24 hours.”—[[Official Report, Commons, 8/3/22; col. 198.](#)]

Has the Lille centre now been set up, opened and staffed, and how many visas can it process per day?

A week ago, the Home Secretary announced the introduction of a humanitarian sponsorship visa. Yesterday, the Government said in this House: “The sponsorship scheme ... should be up and running very shortly.”—[[Official Report, 8/3/22; col. 1265.](#)]

When exactly is the sponsorship scheme going to be “up and running”? Why does the

Home Office still not know? What is needed now is an emergency visa scheme for those fleeing Ukraine. Are the Government going to do that?

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

I thank the noble Lord for his questions. As of 9.30 am this morning, 17,700 applications had been made, and there were 1,000 grants of visas. We are expecting a further 1,000 grants of visas by the end of the day. I think that noble Lords will agree that that is a positive trajectory.

The Lille VAC will indeed be set up.

In total, we had almost 1,000 offers for the humanitarian sponsorship pathway, which I counted up from across this House, given the details I received from the right reverend Prelate and another noble Lord yesterday. I want to take back to the Home Office—as I said yesterday that I would—the offers of support which are not just from within your Lordships' House but are coming in thick and fast from all over the country. They will be very helpful when those families and people arrive in the UK.

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, Ukrainian refugees arriving in Bucharest and applying to join families in the UK today are being given appointments on 28 March to have their biometrics taken. What are they supposed to do for two weeks in a foreign city where they know no one, have few belongings and little or no money, when they could be here in the UK with their families?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: ... As I said yesterday to the House, I know that we are training people as we speak, and surging the capacity and capability of our VAC teams from that region.

Lord Cormack (Conservative): My Lords, what are we doing to liaise with the Polish authorities, who have received so many of these refugees from Ukraine? Surely, if they have been accepted into Poland, we can arrange quick transfers to the UK for those who wish to come here—many of whom have family members here.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My noble friend will have seen footage of my right honourable friend the Home Secretary there over the weekend. We are in very regular contact with Poland. I just turned to my noble friend to clarify the contact we are having with the UNHCR: it sounds regular and very thorough in enabling refugees to come to this country as quickly as possible. If someone is in Poland, and has had their visa issued in Poland, they are absolutely ready to come to this country. That is the very positive benefit of having VACs in Poland.

The Lord Bishop of Leeds: My Lords, I heard yesterday that one of the refugee application centres in Poland has no available appointments until the end of April—the end of next month. This seems to be a bureaucratic answer to a humanitarian question. I received an email last night asking, “Is the UK Government ill prepared, incompetent or unwilling?”—and I do not know how to answer it.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: Well, I hope I can help the right reverend Prelate in saying that we are surging capacity and capability in the VACs. It is not acceptable if people are being told that they have to wait until the end of April. I certainly hope that, when I next return to this House with an update, it will be a far more positive picture.

Lord Harris of Haringey (Labour): My Lords, the whole House recognises that the noble Baroness the Minister is a very empathetic person, and she is quite clear about her sincerity in trying to help refugees from Ukraine. However, the Minister for Justice in Ireland today met Ukrainian refugees arriving in that country and ushered them to a separate room, where they were given national insurance numbers or the equivalent and told how to get help with medical and housing requirements. Why is it that we, a similar nation, are requiring that people apply—very bureaucratically—hundreds of miles away and fill in numerous forms, rather than simply directly accepting people from Ukraine and dealing with them here?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: There is one area where I will depart from the noble Lord, which is on the need to make sure that people are who they say they are. If someone says they are Ukrainian and in fact are not—particularly if they are someone who we might not wish to have in this country because of their behaviour—it is really important that that place is not taken by someone who has no genuine right to be here. So I do not make an apology for that, but I otherwise completely concur with the noble Lord. We are country that welcomes people and tries to provide as much support as we can—and, as I said, my right honourable friend the Home Secretary was in Poland at the weekend. ...

To read this lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-09/debates/5E461060-5352-46DF-93F2-BFC1C2D58B89/UkraineUrgentRefugeeApplications>

Home Office Visas for Ukrainians

The answer given by the Minister in the House of Commons was repeated in the House of Lords.

Lord Coaker (Labour): My Lords, I thank the Minister for that, but the Home Office's response so far to Ukrainians fleeing Russian bombardment has been shambolic. The Home Secretary seems to be making it up as she goes along. Desperate people—families with young children—have travelled hundreds of miles because the Home Office cannot get a grip on where its own visa centre is. Why are the changes announced today not being made for another five days? What do people do today, tomorrow or the next day? There are Army troops on standby to help: why have they not been brought in to staff emergency centres?

The Minister mentioned people with passports: what happens to those without passports or who fled bombs without grabbing their documents because they were being bombed? What about, for example, the Ukrainian nurse working in our hospitals? Can the Minister guarantee that her family would be welcome here? There are so many gaps and so many holes in it, notwithstanding the announcements that have been made today to deal with the human suffering that we see in Ukraine. The Government have to get a grip and get a grip now.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, as to why the changes will not come in until Tuesday, it will be necessary to get the IT systems up and running, and it will take until Tuesday to get that done. What that will do, however, is free up the system generally for those without passports to be helped at VACs, and the whole system will be speeded up that much more quickly. It might assist the noble Lord—and I have given updated figures every day that I have taken Questions this week—to know that, as I understand it, as of this morning, we have now granted 1,305 visas.

Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, those seeking sanctuary in the UK crossing the channel in small boats, many of whom do not have passports, undergo biometrics and security checks in the UK. Why can Ukrainians, without family in the UK or passports, and nationals of other countries fleeing Putin's war, not do the same? In particular, women, children and the elderly are unlikely to present security threats to the UK, so what is stopping the Government lifting visa requirements, as EU states have done?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: As I said to the noble Lord, Lord Coaker, yesterday, one thing that we will not do is dispense with security checks. But there will be a lot more capacity at VACs for those without passports, because those with passports can now come here and have their biometrics taken here.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff: Will the Minister please clarify whether the new opening-up of the scheme for those with visas applies to those who do not have family here, but are coming under a sponsorship scheme? Will she say how sponsors are being collated; whether it is correct that it is the Department for Levelling Up that is responsible for all of

this, and how it is working with the Home Office; and whether the Government have recruited recently retired Border Force staff, who are expert at spotting problems, to come in and help man, so that we can bring in the thousands of people who otherwise risk dying of cold, apart from anything else?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: As I said to the House yesterday, the humanitarian sponsorship pathway is going to be a DLUHC operation. Obviously, I will be working in close contact with DLUHC. In fact, I was speaking to Richard Harrington this morning, and we will be working closely together to ensure that this sponsorship pathway operates smoothly. On whether the biometrics will be dispensed with for those on that scheme, I cannot answer the noble Baroness, because I am not sure that that has even been decided yet, but I will certainly update her on that.

Lord Porter of Spalding: My Lords, the changes are welcome, but they are far too late. We were arguing the case for people to be able to come in without visas last week. As the Minister has already mentioned Salisbury, I am not sure, but I seem to think that I saw pictures of the people who were allegedly guilty of those offences, and they did have passports and visas. The visas were, therefore, not the security system that we would have hoped they would be, so I do not see why we are still faffing about around the edges. It is too serious to have every move that we are making being dragged out too slowly. We need to get our finger out and get on with it.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I understand my noble friend's points, but we will continue to carry out security checks on anyone who comes in. The point is that Ukrainians with passports will be able to come straight here and have their biometrics taken. That will free up the system much more quickly. ...

To read this lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-10/debates/F6FD07AB-E3AC-43EF-B0A0-9150FC42E22F/HomeOfficeVisasForUkrainians>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Asylum: Afghanistan

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat): To ask Her Majesty's Government how many adults and children have arrived in the UK seeking asylum from Afghanistan since August 2021; and of these, (1) how many are still waiting to be housed, and (2) how many children are still waiting to be enrolled at a school.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: 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. There are currently over 12,000 individuals from Afghanistan in bridging hotels. This cohort is made up of British and Afghan Nationals who may be eligible for Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Over 4000 Afghans have already moved, or are in the process of being moved, into their permanent accommodation and we are working at pace with our Local Authority partners to secure permanent accommodation for those still in temporary accommodation.

We are providing £12 million to help councils across the country to provide education services for children arriving from Afghanistan living in temporary accommodation.

Working with local councils and other networks, all of the school age children who arrived as part of Operation Pitting have been offered a school place. However, this

remains a moving picture as some new bridging hotels have been opened in new areas, both as a result of hotel moves and to accommodate more recent Afghan arrivals via Pakistan.

The Department for Education (DfE) continues to monitor the position in these local authorities, all are progressing well with the process of placing children in schools and none report problems with doing so, however they are at different stages in the process depending on the date of new arrivals.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/hl6398>

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

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

UK Parliament, House of Commons Home Affairs Committee

Evidence session: Home Office policy on Ukrainian refugees

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/9850/html/>

Press Releases

Scottish Government call for immediate action to resettle Ukraine refugees

<https://www.gov.scot/news/call-for-immediate-action-to-resettle-ukraine-refugees/>

Ukraine refugee sponsorship

<https://www.gov.scot/news/ukraine-refugee-sponsorship/>

Minister for Refugees from Ukraine appointed

<https://www.gov.scot/news/minister-for-refugees-from-ukraine-appointed/>

New measures to support Ukrainians

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-support-ukrainians>

Home Secretary update on support for Ukrainians

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

New Publications

EU Settlement Scheme monthly summary statistics, February 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics-february-2022/eu-settlement-scheme-monthly-summary-statistics-february-2022>

Ukrainian refugee support: joint letter from the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukrainian-refugee-support-joint-letter-from-the-first-ministers-of-scotland-and-wales/>

Ukraine refugee resettlement: letter to Prime Minister

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-refugee-resettlement-letter-to-prime-minister/>

Guidance: Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-sponsorship-scheme-for-ukraine>

Updated Guidance: Apply for a Ukraine Family Scheme visa

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

Ukraine Family Scheme: application data 7 March 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-family-scheme-application-data/ukraine-family-scheme-application-data-7-march-2022>

Immigration information for Ukrainians in the UK, British nationals and their family members

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-information-for-ukrainians-in-the-uk-british-nationals-and-their-family-members/immigration-information-for-ukrainians-in-the-uk-british-nationals-and-their-family-members>

Letter from Baroness Williams of Trafford to Lord Bishop of Durham regarding accommodation centres, as discussed during the Report stage (first day) of the Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2022-0227/Letter from Baroness Williams to Lord Bishop of Durham.pdf>

News: Ukraine

Scotland and Wales bid to be refugee super sponsors

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-60722616>

Ukraine-Russia: Nicola Sturgeon wants Scotland to become 'super sponsor' for refugees

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-wants-scotland-to-become-super-sponsor-for-refugees-3608899>

Ukraine: Nicola Sturgeon appoints refugees minister amid appeal to oversee sponsorship scheme

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19986863.ukraine-nicola-sturgeon-appoints-refugees-minister-amid-appeal-oversee-sponsorship-scheme/>

Nicola Sturgeon: Scotland will welcome 3,000 Ukrainian refugees

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nicola-sturgeon-scotland-will-welcome-3-000-ukrainian-refugees-vqgwnjd0h>

Ukraine war: UK households offered £350 a month for hosting refugees

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60724111>

Sponsor scheme will ask Britons to take in Ukrainian refugees for six months

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sponsor-scheme-will-ask-britonsto-take-in-ukrainian-refugees-for-six-months-nl9h9qvkg>

Ukrainians with passports can apply for UK visas online

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-60686254>

All Ukrainian refugees with passports able to apply online in streamlined UK visa scheme
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/03/10/ukrainian-refugees-passports-able-apply-online-streamlined-uk/>

Refugee children to receive translated lessons in Ukrainian and Russian, says Nadhim Zahawi
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/11/refugee-children-receive-translated-lessons-ukrainian-russian/>

'Pop-up' UK visa site for Ukrainian refugees to be set up in Lille
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/08/new-pop-up-uk-visa-site-ukrainian-refugees-established-lille/>

Ukraine refugees in Calais must travel 70 miles further for a visa
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/defence-officials-to-help-embattled-home-office-process-visas-of-ukrainian-refugees-6ghvn09nj>

Ukrainian refugees told they must take four-hour journey to complete visa application
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukrainian-refugees-visa-warsaw-rzeszow-uk-b2032259.html>

Ukraine War: Priti Patel forced into U-turn over visa appointments for refugees
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19983100.ukraine-war-priti-patel-forced-u-turn-visa-appointments-refugees/>

UK to ease entry requirements for Ukrainian refugees, says Priti Patel
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/mar/10/uk-to-ease-entry-requirements-for-ukrainian-refugees-says-priti-patel>

Home Office U-turns on visa requirements for Ukrainian refugees
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-passport-uk-visa-russia-b2032786.html>

Ukraine war: People can welcome refugees into own homes - PM
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60701941>

Ukrainians with passports can apply for UK visas online
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60686254>

Just 300 Ukrainian refugees granted visas to come to the UK
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/07/ukrainians-hampered-by-bureaucracy-from-reaching-safety-in-uk>

UK will be generous to Ukrainian refugees, says Johnson
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ben-wallace-kevin-foster-boris-johnson-prime-minister-vladimir-putin-b2031063.html>

Ukraine war: Boris Johnson defends refugee response after visa criticism
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60645711>

Ukrainian visa processing to rise 'rapidly', Home Office insists
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19974694.ukrainian-visa-processing-rise-rapidly-home-office-insists/>

Ukraine war: UK grants 50 Ukrainian refugee visas so far

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

'About 50' visas issued so far for Ukrainian refugees by Home Office

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/03/06/50-visas-issued-far-ukrainian-refugees-home-office/>

Patel defends Ukraine visa scheme as just 'around 50' applications approved

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19973140.patel-defends-ukraine-visa-scheme-just-around-50-applications-approved/>

Religious leaders urge PM to extend Ukrainian visa scheme

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/boris-johnson-people-refugees-leadership-london-b2032461.html>

Ukrainian refugees face 'chaos' trying to apply to UK family visa scheme

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugee-visa-priti-patel-home-office-uk-b2030499.html>

Home Office staff direct Ukrainian refugees trying to get to Britain to a visa centre that no longer exists

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/03/09/home-office-staff-direct-ukrainian-refugees-trying-get-britain/>

Ukraine war: UK can and will do more for refugees - minister

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60655788>

Ukrainians on way to UK hit paperwork dead-end in Calais

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60652914>

Ukraine war: French interior minister warns that refugees could be 'pushed to take small boats' by UK visa delays

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-france-uk-channel-boats-b2030309.html>

'Time to cut the red tape' as UK grants visas to less than one per cent of Ukrainian refugees

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/07/time-cut-red-tape-uk-grants-visas-less-one-per-cent-ukrainian/>

Ukrainian refugees, meet Britain's 'hostile environment'. We should be ashamed

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/07/ukrainian-refugees-britain-hostile-environment-europe>

UK firms open doors to refugees fleeing Ukraine

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/uk-firms-open-doors-to-refugees-fleeing-ukraine-fgjgbk9fb>

Primus calls for swifter action to help Ukraine refugees reach UK

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/primus-calls-for-swifter-action-to-help-ukraine-refugees-reach-uk/>

Rabbi in UK wants a 'Ukrainetransport' for families fleeing the Russian invasion
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/06/rabbi-in-uk-wants-a-ukrainetransport-for-families-fleeing-the-russian-invasion>

Ukraine refugee crisis: Rabbi plans modern-day kinder rescue
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ukraine-refugee-crisis-rabbi-plans-modern-day-kinder-rescue-2k2s7jn6j>

Scottish Refugee Council response to UK Gov's changes to visa application process for Ukrainians
<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/our-response-to-uk-govs-changes-to-visa-application-process-for-ukrainians/>

Ukraine war: Visas a shambles, Brits with Ukrainian family say
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60673933>

Ukrainian doctor in Coventry urges more visa help for family
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-60648758>

Emotions run high as Ukrainian refugees arrive at holiday home
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-60721398>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

The art of storytelling
<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/the-art-of-storytelling/>

'Fundamental questions remain' over plan to draft Navy in to tackle Channel crossings
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/channel-crossings-mod-home-office-defence-committee-uk-b2033140.html>

Home Office to pay UK resident £5,750 for 10-hour Calais detention
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/mar/06/uk-resident-slovakian-calais-detention-home-office-misspelled-name-slugs>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Treatment of, and Outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System Independent Review

Steve Reed (Labour) [131206] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many recommendations from The Lammy Review of the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System have been (a) been accepted by his Department and (b) implemented by his Department to date.

Reply from Victoria Atkins: The Government published its response to the Lammy Review in 2017. Of the 35 recommendations in the Lammy Review, 33 recommendations were accepted; the two that were not taken forward by Government were related to the independent judiciary (Recommendations 14,16).

Actions have been taken against each of the accepted 33 recommendations. Few actions remain incomplete, with those left centred on long-term recruitment targets and developing a more representative workforce within HMPPPS (recommendations 28 and 29). They will need to remain open for some time as they involve long term targets. A detailed update on progress against all the recommendations of the Lammy Review was published in 2018, and again in 2020.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-28/131206>

The Lammy Review, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf

Medical Records: Ethnic Groups

Feryal Clark (Labour) [127573] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Data saves lives White Paper on improving data collection by ethnicity.

Reply from Gillian Keegan: An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for Data saves lives, the data strategy for health and social care. The strategy sets the vision for better use of data across the health and care system and that includes the better collection and linkage of data to identify, measure and act on health disparities where they occur, including those relating to ethnicity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-22/127573>

The White Paper referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-saves-lives-reshaping-health-and-social-care-with-data-draft/data-saves-lives-reshaping-health-and-social-care-with-data-draft>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Equality: Education

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL6402] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of results of a recent YouGov survey which found that only 12 per cent of teachers feel empowered to teach diversity issues; and what steps they are taking to increase this number.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the department expects schools to cover in each subject and is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to go beyond these specifications. The national curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. The department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach.

The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces cultural diversity. As part of the broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain. Diversity issues are covered in several subjects within the curriculum, including but not limited to history, English, citizenship and religious studies. Furthermore, there is a model curriculum being developed for history, which will offer high quality support for knowledge-rich teaching on diversity in this subject.

In autumn 2021, the department launched the National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) to support teachers and leaders who want to develop their knowledge and skills in specialist areas of teaching practice. The Leading Behaviour and Culture

NPQ supports teachers to set clear expectations and communicate shared values that improve classroom and school culture. It encourages teachers to create environments where all pupils and colleagues feel welcome, safe, and able to learn from their mistakes, empowering teachers to explore a range of topics, such as diversity, and support others to do the same. More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/hl6402>

News

Positive discrimination needed to increase black and Asian police officers, report says

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-black-racism-asian-discrimination-b2030950.html>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Hate Crime Strategy

Anas Sarwar (Labour) [S6W-06438] To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S6W-03293 by Shona Robison on 11 October 2021, what the current status is of its new hate crime strategy, and what further steps it will take to tackle Islamophobia in Scotland, in light of the recommendations in the *Report of the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia*.

Reply from Shona Robison: On 23 December 2021 we published a [report on implementation](#) of the actions set out in the Tackling Prejudice and Building Connected Communities Action Plan (2017). The report shows encouraging progress has been made towards tackling hate crime in Scotland, with successful delivery of the vast majority of actions in the 2017 Action Plan.

Publication of this report allows the Scottish Government and partners to take stock of and refresh approaches to tackling hate crime. As such, and building on progress in this area, we will work with key delivery partners to develop a new hate crime strategy, for publication later this year. The new strategy will help guide how we tackle hatred and prejudice – including Islamophobia – in Scotland and will also support implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021.

We are in the process of convening a strategic partnership group to provide a robust, multi-agency approach to development of the new hate crime strategy. Consideration is also being given to other necessary engagements that will allow for a range of voices to shape the strategy as it develops. We would therefore like to reiterate our previous commitment to working collaboratively on Islamophobia, including on the range of issues highlighted within the report of the public inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-06438>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-03293>

The report of the Cross Party Group, referred to above, can be read at <https://anassarwar.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Islamophobia-public-inquiry-report-1.pdf>

Definition of Islamophobia

Anas Sarwar (Labour) [S6W-06439] To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S6W-03292 by Shona Robison on 8 October 2021, what the current status is of its work on adopting a formal definition of Islamophobia; whether it will commit to adopting the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia, and, if so, within what timeframe.

Reply from Shona Robison: On 23 December 2021 we published a [report on implementation](#) of the actions set out in the Tackling Prejudice and Building Connected Communities Action Plan (2017). The report shows encouraging progress made in a number of key areas including raising awareness of hate crime and encouraging reporting.

Building on this progress we will publish a new hate crime strategy later this year. Development of a strategy of this nature will engender consideration of and engagement on a number of relevant initiatives to tackle hate crime and prejudice – including Islamophobia – in Scotland. It will therefore also naturally allow for further consideration of the need for the Scottish Government to adopt a formal definition of Islamophobia, such as the definition advanced by the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-06439>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-03292>

The report of the All Party Group, referred to above, can be read at

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Islamophobia

Afzal Khan (Labour): What recent discussions he has had with the anti-Muslim hatred working group on the rise in Islamophobic attitudes. (905904)

Reply from the Minister for Levelling Up Communities (Kemi Badenoch): The anti-Muslim hatred working group has played a valuable role as the Government's forum for discussing and advising on anti-Muslim hatred and the challenges faced by Britain's Muslim communities. While the group was paused during the pandemic they continued their important work through a series of webinars, including an event addressing the fears and myths about the covid-19 vaccination programme. The Secretary of State and I will be meeting the leadership of the group in the next few weeks to discuss the current issues facing Muslim communities and the best way for us to support the group's work.

Afzal Khan: Islamophobia remains in all elements of our society, and that includes our major political parties. The difference is that while the Labour party has taken decisive and swift action, the Government have not delivered on any of their promises. The anti-Muslim hatred working group's own Qari Asim has been critical of the Government's failure to take tangible action. Will the Minister now follow in the footsteps of the Labour party and take steps to tackle Islamophobia in the UK, starting with a truly independent investigation into the Conservative party? Will she outline when the UK last submitted a report to the UN's

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as required of all signatories to the convention?

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: The Government do remain committed to stamping out anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of religious prejudice. I have had conversations with the hon. Gentleman and I am due to meet the all-party parliamentary group on British Muslims very shortly. We will outline our next steps in due course but we are actively working on this.

Imran Hussain (Labour): I have listened to the Minister, but the tragic reality is that Islamophobia is on the rise and is rife in our society today. If anyone is in any doubt, they should speak to the Muslim communities up and down this country who have to face this evil on a daily basis. How can my constituents have any confidence in a Government who cannot even tackle Islamophobia in their own ranks?

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: I completely reject the accusation made by the hon. Gentleman—it is completely untrue. We are doing everything we can to tackle not just anti-Muslim hatred but all forms of prejudice in our society. On this issue, we have supported Tell MAMA with just over £4 million between 2016 and 2022 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred. Over the past five years of the places of worship grant scheme we have awarded 241 grants worth approximately £5 million to places of worship. In November 2020 we awarded £1.8 million through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's faith, race and hate crime grant scheme.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-07/debates/61686F01-0F8B-4D98-BBC0-761078F481BF/Islamophobia>

Topical Questions: Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Christian Wakeford (Labour): Reported cases of antisemitism continue to rise, with the Community Security Trust recording a record 2,255 cases in 2021. The Government have funded the security at Jewish locations, including synagogues and schools, and this, unfortunately, is vital to ensuring the safety of the Jewish community. Will the Secretary of State commit to the continuation of this funding next year, as well as ensuring that it is adjusted for the increased cost associated with inflation?

Reply from Michael Gove: The hon. Gentleman makes an important point. As the Minister who, as Secretary of State for Education, initiated that scheme, I will do everything I can to ensure it continues. But I would make one additional point: one of the things we can all do across this House in order to tackle the evil of antisemitism is stand against the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign, and that is why when we bring forward legislation to outlaw BDS at local government level I hope we can count on the hon. Gentleman's formidable voice pressing on those on his Front Bench the importance of supporting that legislation and not, as they did in the past, abstaining.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-03-07/debates/82251EA5-B04F-4290-AC04-343B184D27D5/TopicalQuestions#contribution-DA59E812-85BE-4CF9-8681-9BBA23B32F90>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

History: Education

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL6403] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history in the school curriculum to combat bullying in schools.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The history curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom to use specific examples to teach pupils about the history of Britain and the wider world.

Gypsy, Roma and Travellers' history can already be taught as part of schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Resources are available from experts in the communities themselves and bodies such as the Historical Association.

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 is providing over £1.1 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2022, to five anti-bullying organisations, to support schools to tackle bullying. We are working with all five organisations to ensure any training and resources produced as part of these projects are in line with our requirements.

Our preventing and tackling bullying guidance sets out that schools should develop a consistent approach to monitoring bullying incidents and evaluating the effectiveness of their approaches.

Alongside guidance, the department's Educate Against Hate website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with advice and trusted resources to safeguard young people from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism and promote shared values. We have also published the Respectful School Communities: Self-review and Signposting Tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline. This can help education settings combat bullying, harassment, and prejudice of any kind, including hate-based bullying.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-23/hl6403>

The website referred to above can be read at

<https://educateagainsthate.com/>

The Tool referred to above is not currently available online.

Antisemitism

Christian Wakeford (Labour) [905911] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of anti-Semitism in the last 12 months.

Reply from Kemi Badenoch: The most recent official Hate Crime statistics, for the year ending March 2021, show that 22% of religious hate crime was targeted at Jewish people, or those perceived to be Jewish. This represents an increase to 1288 reported incidents from 1205 the previous year.

Research published by the Community Security Trust also indicates a significant rise in incidents reported to them in 2021. Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we condemn it and are taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-07/905911>

New Publication

State of Hate 2022: On The March Again

<https://hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EMBARGOED-09.03.22-STATE-OF-HATE.pdf>

News

Sarwar insists 'zero tolerance' on hatred after Orange Order candidate selection

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/19972751.sarwar-insists-zero-tolerance-hatred-orange-order-candidate-selection/>

Anas Sarwar says 'zero tolerance of hate' in Scottish Labour as former Orange Order member stands as party candidate

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/people/zero-tolerance-of-hate-says-labour-leader-after-orange-order-row-3598690>

Just one in five think PM kept promise during BLM protests to address racism

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/boris-johnson-blm-protest-promise-b2031425.html>

In their place: the heavy burden of being Black in a white space

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/07/being-black-in-white-spaces-racism>

TUC: BME women twice as likely to be on zero-hours contracts as white men

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-bme-women-twice-likely-be-zero-hours-contracts-white-men>

Black and Asian women 'twice as likely to be on zero-hours contracts as white men'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/black-asian-woman-zero-hour-contract-b2031339.html>

Azeem Rafiq fears he is unemployable in cricket after speaking out about racism

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cricket/azeem-rafiq-racism-yorkshire-county-b2031134.html>

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 Parliament Written Answer

Covid-19 Inquiry: Asylum seekers

Pam Duncan-Glancy (Labour) [S6W-08918] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will consider the experience of asylum seekers in Glasgow hotels as being within the scope of the inquiry into the handling of COVID-19.

Reply from John Swinney: The terms of reference for the Scottish Covid-19 Public Inquiry task it with considering the strategic elements relating to 12 distinct areas of investigation. They do not name specific groups affected by the pandemic, ensuring that no groups' experiences are excluded from the Inquiry's remit, provided the experiences relate directly to the impact of devolved areas within the Inquiry's scope.

It is a matter for the Chair of the Inquiry to decide how to investigate specific issues.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-06918>

Scottish Government Press Release

Those with COVID-19 symptoms to contact their GP

<https://www.gov.scot/news/those-with-covid-19-symptoms-to-contact-their-gp/>

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 Publications

The R value and growth rate

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

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Scotland's Census

** new or updated this week

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/>

** MEMO+ Scotland's Census 2022

https://www.scojec.org/memo+/2022/22iii_scotlands_census_2022.pdf

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>

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Other News

Ukraine: What should charities do in response to the war?

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/ukraine-what-should-charities-do-in-response-to-the-war/>

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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>

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/2022-03-08/debates/20397778-861E-4D27-B358-53B067DE72A3/NationalityAndBordersBill>

Bill as amended on Report

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/45625/documents/1568>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/45667/documents/1578>

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

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 25 March 2022)

<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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**** this week!**

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 bilingual 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/>

SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

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



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

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