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## Immigration and Asylum

### Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

#### Rural Visa Pilot Scheme

**Evelyn Tweed (SNP)** [S6O-01614] To ask the Scottish Government whether any further engagement is planned with the United Kingdom Government regarding the proposed rural visa pilot scheme.

**Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands (Mairi Gougeon):** I wrote to the Home Secretary on 27 September, after we published our rural visa pilot proposal, which gained cross-party support in the Parliament. Disappointingly, we have received no response, but I continue to strongly urge the UK Government to accept the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendation that it deliver a migration pilot for rural areas, in partnership with the Scottish

Government, local authorities and employers.

While we await a response, ministers have contacted multiple UK Parliament committees and the other devolved Governments to request engagement on the proposal, as we believe that that could help to address challenges that are experienced by remote and rural communities right across the UK.

**Evelyn Tweed:** I have significant concerns about the impact of on-going labour shortages on Scotland's rural economy. Does the cabinet secretary agree that rural Scotland has been failed by all four post-Brexit Tory Prime Ministers? Does she share my concern that Labour's call to end immigration dependency will result in the UK Government continuing to fail Scotland's rural economies?

**Reply from Mairi Gougeon:** I absolutely share those concerns. We warned about the ending of freedom of movement and the limitations of the current immigration system. I draw members' attention to the Highlands and Islands Enterprise business panel survey that was published a few months ago, which reported that 71 per cent of businesses are being impacted by Brexit and that key employers in rural areas are more likely to report risks to their workforce as a result of staffing or skills shortages.

Migration is crucial to addressing those challenges. Lack of labour is one of the key issues that I hear about when I visit businesses across Scotland and on our islands. Migration supports economic growth, the delivery of public services and community sustainability. The negative impact that UK Government immigration policy is having is clear, and we continue to call for those failings to be urgently addressed.

**Beatrice Wishart (Liberal Democrat):** I have previously said that rural visas could be a way to help to reverse depopulation but that they would not be a magic bullet. Powers in this area are held by the UK Government, but the Scottish Government should not use rural visas as cover for inaction on policies in areas in which it has competence that are proven to help to reverse depopulation, such as infrastructure investment in fixed links and broadband.

Will the Scottish Government commit to feasibility studies for tunnels in Shetland to reverse depopulation, as the rural visa pilot scheme aims to do?

**Reply from Mairi Gougeon:** The one element of that on which I agree with Beatrice Wishart is that there is no magic bullet that will solve the situation that we face in relation to labour shortages and depopulation. The rural visa pilot is one element of the work that we would like to take forward. It has the support of local authorities and businesses, and we think that it is a solution that could really work. However, it will not automatically solve the problem.

That is why the national islands plan and the series of pieces of work that we are doing through it are critical. That work is about how we tackle the challenges that have been raised by Beatrice Wishart, whether on transport, infrastructure, fuel poverty or housing.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14023&i=127022#ScotParlOR>

*The proposal referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-rural-visa-pilot-proposal-september-2022/>

*The findings of the survey referred to above can be read at*

[https://www.hie.co.uk/media/12880/hie-business-panel-june\\_july-2022-report.pdf](https://www.hie.co.uk/media/12880/hie-business-panel-june_july-2022-report.pdf)

### **Refugees (Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Support)**

**Maggie Chapman (Green) [S6O-01620]** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its work to provide mental health and suicide prevention support to refugees.

**Reply from the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care (Kevin Stewart):** The Scottish Government works with partners such as Heads of Psychology Scotland and local mental health and psychological therapies services to provide access to mental health and psychological support. Along with a range of practical supports, the best first-line treatment to support refugees is psychological first aid, as not all of those who need support require to be seen by a specialist mental health professional.

If more specialist help is needed, anyone in Scotland—regardless of their nationality, residence status or the length of time that they will be in the country—is already entitled to receive mental health, psychological or emergency treatment, and they can register with a general practitioner to receive general medical services at no charge. Support can also be provided through NHS 24.

Together with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, we recently published our new “Suicide prevention Strategy and Action Plan”, which will address the inequalities that can contribute to suicide and will also ensure that we take every opportunity to prevent suicide by supporting people as early as we can. Specifically, we will explore how to further support people with no recourse to public funds—that includes people seeking asylum and people who are at risk of, or experiencing, destitution—to access the services that they need to support their mental health, including where there is a risk of suicide. ...

**Maggie Chapman:** I thank the minister for that response and for the recognition that mental health in Scotland is our responsibility while the refugee and asylum system belongs with the United Kingdom Home Office.

Is the minister aware of the Asylum Seeker Memorial project by Liberty Investigates, which seeks to name and remember those in the system who have died either by completing suicide in despair or through the actions of others who are also severely traumatised? Does he agree that ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees have equity of access to mental health services, including specialist provision, is absolutely essential to prevent mental health crises in our communities in the future?

**Reply from Kevin Stewart:** I am aware of the Liberty Investigates project. The Scottish Government is very clear that all refugees and people who are seeking asylum and living here can access health services. They are entitled to receive emergency treatment and can register with a GP practice to receive general medical services, including referrals to mental health services and treatment for specific conditions.

Maggie Chapman has taken a keen interest in Baroness Helena Kennedy’s asylum inquiry. One of the recommendations in that inquiry was that £5 million-worth of annual funding should be provided by the Home Office, and I completely agree with Baroness Kennedy on that front. The UK Government needs to recognise the true cost of the asylum system to individuals, our communities and our public services. The Home Office also needs to take its responsibility to safeguard people in its care seriously. It must have systems in place to recognise when someone needs support, and it needs processes in place to enable people to access appropriate services. ...

**Carol Mochan (Labour):** As dispersal areas for asylum seekers expand to all council areas in Scotland, and given that we know the truly terrible impact that hotel accommodation has had on the mental health of asylum seekers, will the minister—in conjunction, I hope, with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government—explore the community sponsorship scheme that is run by Reset UK as a means of assuming greater control over the housing of asylum seekers? The Government could thus support improved mental health and wellbeing, given that we know the link between housing and wellbeing.

**Reply from Kevin Stewart:** The situation that the Home Office has allowed to

develop by putting people into hotel accommodation, which is often very unsuitable, is not right. The member can be assured that there will be co-operation right across the Government as we try to do our level best for these folks. However, the key thing in all this is that we should be in charge of immigration and asylum policy here so that we can get that right for people from the very start.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14023&i=127029#ScotParlOR>

*The Strategy referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-hope-together-scotlands-suicide-prevention-strategy-2022-2032/>

*The Action Plan referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-hope-together-scotlands-suicide-prevention-action-plan-2022-2025/>

*Information about the Memorial Project referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.asylumseekermemorial.co.uk/>

*The inquiry report and recommendations referred to above can be read at*

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62af1289a666c80e00b17253/t/636b9190408f81778746eaa7/1667994032702/AIS+Phase+2+Report+Full.pdf>

## Scottish Parliament Written Answers

### Ukrainian Refugees: Employment

**Miles Briggs (Conservative)** [S6W-12200] To ask the Scottish Government how many Ukrainians living in Scotland under its Super Sponsor Scheme have been supported into employment.

**Reply from Neil Gray:** As gathering and publishing employment data is the responsibility of HMRC, there is currently no data available to the Scottish Government on the number of Ukrainians living in Scotland under the Super Sponsor Scheme who have been supported into employment. HMRC publish counts of employments held by non-UK nationals in Scotland as part of their experimental statistics publication 'payrolled employments in the UK by region, industry and nationality'. HMRC are planning to publish an update to these statistics in 2023. The Scottish Government is taking action to ensure that displaced people seeking work in Scotland are provided with a full range of information, as early as possible, to help inform their employment decisions and settle well in Scotland. Scottish businesses are eager to employ Ukrainians who have arrived, recognising the skills they bring with them. We are working with councils, third and private sectors, Skills Development Scotland and the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure arrivals can seek out and secure employment, including through job fairs.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-12200>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### Asylum: Accommodation

**Paul Sweeney (Labour)** [S6W-11992] To ask the Scottish Government what recent engagement it has had with the UK Government regarding the standard of accommodation at the Alexander Thomson Hotel, in Glasgow, for people seeking asylum.

**Paul Sweeney (Labour)** [S6W-11993] To ask the Scottish Government what action it can take to convey to the UK Government the reported concerns of people seeking asylum regarding their experiences of the standard of living and welfare at the Alexander Thomson Hotel, in Glasgow.

**Reply from Shona Robison:** The Alexander Thomson Hotel is used by Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership (GHSCP) to provide temporary accommodation to people experiencing homelessness, in line with their statutory duties. We are aware that this has at times included asylum seeking families with children, who have not accessed Home Office asylum accommodation, and that concerns have been raised about the suitability of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and the length of time families were accommodated at the hotel.

GHSCP has responded to these concerns and has now secured temporary furnished accommodation for families who had been accommodated in the hotel for an unsuitable period of time. They have also undertaken a review of practice in relation to access to accommodation in circumstances where asylum seeking families with children present to homeless services. The Home Office has a duty to provide accommodation to people who would otherwise be destitute while awaiting a decision on their application, and this duty takes precedence over local authority provision of temporary accommodation.

Asylum is reserved to the UK Parliament and handled by the Home Office. This includes the provision of asylum accommodation. As far as the Scottish Government is aware, the Home Office has not used the Alexander Thomson Hotel to provide asylum accommodation. The Scottish Government has not, therefore, engaged with the Home Office regarding the standard of accommodation at this hotel for people seeking asylum, but has raised significant concerns with the Home Office about its use of hotels to accommodate people seeking asylum and will continue to do so.

GHSCP has committed to ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation in the city overall through the implementation of their Temporary Accommodation Strategy. However, while they continue to use this type of accommodation in emergency situations, they will prioritise dispersed temporary furnished accommodation for families with children and will minimise the time families spend in unsuitable accommodation.

The Scottish Government has also taken action to ensure temporary accommodation in Scotland is high quality, is only used for short periods and meets all the household's needs. In May 2020 we extended the Unsuitable Accommodation Order to all homeless households so that no homeless household should be placed in unsuitable accommodation, such as hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation, for more than seven days. In October 2021 we established the Temporary Accommodation Standards working group to produce a standards framework for temporary accommodation and to consider how this can be regulated and legally enforced. This will ensure that temporary accommodation used by local authorities to fulfil their duty to accommodate homeless households is safe, warm and of good quality, and that there is a consistency in the standard of temporary accommodation across all local authorities in Scotland.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11992>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11993>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

### Manston Update

**The Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick):** ... As the House will know, on the

morning of 19 November an individual who had arrived in the United Kingdom on 12 November, and who had been staying at the Manston processing site, sadly died in hospital. Initial test results for an infectious disease were negative, but a follow-up PCR test was positive. We must now await the post mortem results to determine the cause of death, and our thoughts are with the individual's family.

There has been speculation about the wider health implications across the asylum accommodation system, so I wanted to come to the House to set out the facts, to outline the steps that have already been taken to protect migrants and the general public, and to reassure the public about the additional precautionary measures that we are now taking.

The control and testing of infectious diseases is led by the UK Health Security Agency and the Department for Health and Social Care. The Home Office continues to work closely with both, taking their advice on all these matters and following it. As part of our ongoing dialogue, the Home Secretary and I were updated on the situation over the weekend by Dame Jenny Harries of the UKHSA, who confirmed to us that 50 cases of diphtheria had been reported in asylum accommodation. It is important to emphasise that the UKHSA has made it clear that the risk to the wider UK population from onward transmission of diphtheria is very low, thanks in no small part to our excellent childhood immunisation programme, and also because the infection is typically passed on through close prolonged contact with a case. The UKHSA confirmed that it considers it likely that these cases developed before they entered the UK.

The Home Office has worked closely with the NHS and the UKHSA to identify and isolate anyone with a diphtheria infection. That includes providing diphtheria vaccinations and moving confirmed cases into isolation. While these robust processes and plans for a situation of this type are already in train, it is absolutely right for us now to be vigilant: that is what the public would expect, and that is what we are doing. There are, for instance, robust screening processes on the arrival of individuals at Western Jet Foil in Dover to identify proactively those with symptoms of diphtheria; "round-the-clock" health facilities at Manston, including emergency department consultants and paramedics; guidance in multiple languages on spotting the symptoms of diphtheria; and an enhanced diphtheria vaccination programme, offered to all those arriving at Manston. I can confirm that of those who arrived at the facility this weekend, 100% took up that vaccine offer. There is testing for those presenting with symptoms and for close contacts, and those testing positive are being isolated in a designated place.

Today we are going above and beyond the UKHSA baseline by instituting new guidance on the transportation and accommodation of individuals displaying diphtheria symptoms. From today, no one presenting with symptoms will progress into the asylum accommodation system. They will either remain at Manston, isolating for a short period, or they will travel to a designated isolation centre in secure transport, where they will be treated until deemed medically fit. This is a well-practised protocol from covid times.

We will also continue to ensure that all asylum accommodation providers are given access to the very latest public health advice from the UKHSA, and we will ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities for testing and isolating cases of infectious disease. We will continue working with the UKHSA to ensure that arrangements are of the highest standard and that the UKHSA has everything it needs from the Home Office. We are engaging with French counterparts to assess the state of infectious disease in the camps in northern France.

I fully understand and appreciate the concerns that have been raised, and I assure the House that the Home Office is acutely aware of our responsibility both to those in care and to the British public. For me, the Home Secretary and the Government as a whole, public health is paramount. We will take all steps necessary to ensure that the public are protected. I commend this statement to the House.

**Yvette Cooper (Labour):** ... The Government have failed to stop the proliferation of criminal gangs in the channel, are still refusing to adopt Labour's proposal for a new

National Crime Agency unit to target the gangs, and have failed to sort out the chaos in asylum decision making. They are taking only half as many as they were six years ago, even though they have more staff. Just 2% of last year's small boats cases have been decided, creating a backlog of nearly 100,000 people waiting more than six months for a decision, compared with just 4,000 when they took office. All of this has led to a completely inappropriate use of hotels, at the last minute, with no proper information for local councils or public health officials.

Then, of course, there is the chaotic handling of the situation at Manston. The Minister has just said that there are 50 diphtheria cases. Can he confirm that that compares with just three cases last year? Can he tell us when Ministers were first told of diphtheria cases at Manston? When were they warned? By mid-October, the Home Office admitted publicly that there were cases at Manston, but Home Office officials told the Home Affairs Committee on 26 October that they had sufficient health arrangements in place to address diphtheria. Clearly they did not.

The Government still kept thousands of people in overcrowded conditions, described by one person as "huddled around fan heaters, thousands of people in overcrowded conditions trying to stay warm." These conditions clearly make it easy for infectious diseases to spread. The processes described by the Minister are important, but why on earth were they not put in place many weeks ago? It took until 11 November, after thousands of people had been held there for weeks, for diphtheria screening and vaccinations to be recommended for everyone passing through Manston. What on earth were they doing in the meantime?

Even then, on that same day, the Home Office was moving people who had been in Manston into hotels across the country, without even telling councils or public health officials. In one case, the council was specifically told that people were not transfers from Manston even though they were. In other cases, councils were told nothing at all, and there was no information for public health officials about whether people needed further diphtheria screening and vaccinations; this included leaving people to seek treatment for themselves for diphtheria symptoms at local accident and emergency departments.

The Health Secretary has said that 500 people have now been screened and vaccinated, but what about the other several thousand people who have been in Manston? Wherever they now are in the country, have they been screened or vaccinated for diphtheria as well? If not, why on earth not, because that was the public health recommendation nearly three weeks ago and that was already late? Have all those with possible symptoms now been given precautionary antibiotics? Again, if not, why not? We are told that diphtheria is an easy infection to treat and to vaccinate against, which is why we have a universal vaccination policy in the UK. But that needs proper information for health officials to be able to use and the Home Office to get a grip.

Clearly, the Government have ignored health advice and legal advice. The Business Secretary said publicly that when he was a Home Office Minister he was advised that he had to act as he was breaking the law. The permanent secretary has now said that the Home Secretary was given the same legal advice, so why did she not act, either on the legal advice or on the health advice? ...

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** I am grateful to the right hon. Lady for those questions. She asked how long we have been aware of diphtheria cases. When I addressed the House for the first time, on 1 November, I reported that there had been four cases. I am able now to say that that has increased to 50 cases, and I will continue to update the House as this issue develops.

The right hon. Lady asked whether Ministers have followed the advice of the UK Health Security Agency throughout. To the best of my knowledge, they have. We have always sought and followed the advice of Dame Jenny Harries and her colleagues. In fact, the measures I have announced today go beyond the UKHSA's baseline advice, because we want to take a precautionary approach. For that

reason, we will be ensuring that further individuals who have any symptoms are not transported around the country; they will either remain at Manston or go to specialist accommodation. That accommodation is readily available, because we made good use of it during the height of the covid pandemic and we will be making sure it is brought into use in the coming days.

The right hon. Lady asked about screening arrangements. Those have been in place for some time. All individuals arriving at Western Jet Foil are screened. That is, by necessity, a relatively simple screening, because on occasion thousands of illegal migrants arrive in the course of a single day, but screening is followed up at Manston and we have asked the UKHSA to advise us on whether further measures are required to ensure that that screening is more sophisticated. Dame Jenny and her colleagues will advise on that.

We have had the vaccination programme in operation for a number of weeks. It is a voluntary programme; we do not compel migrants to take it up. It began at a relatively low level of acceptance—about 45%—but that is now increasing; as I said, I am pleased to say that we have reached 100% for those who came over the weekend. We will do everything we can to maintain it at or around that level, because that clearly is a very important line of defence.

For those individuals who have already left Manston and have flowed into asylum accommodation elsewhere in the country, we and the UKHSA are now going to work closely with local directors of public health to ensure that they have the right guidance to protect those individuals. Those local public health directors will work with local NHS partners to ensure that the individuals have treatment under the NHS and that they isolate in their rooms within those hotels or other forms of accommodation. The outsourced partners will ensure that the people have food and laundry brought to the door, so that there is no reason whatsoever that they should leave their room until they are well again and can re-enter broader society. If there are further measures that we need to take, we will do so. Dame Jenny and her colleagues are meeting directors of public health this week, as they have been doing repeatedly in recent months, to hear their concerns and ensure that these procedures are progressively improved as required.

**David Davis (Conservative):** Earlier this year, I informed the Home Office that some 30 Albanian asylum seekers had absconded from the Thwaite Hall facility in my constituency. The then Minister for Immigration, the Minister's predecessor, informed me in his reply that asylum seekers "are not prevented from leaving it, or legally required to stay within its confines."

He might as well have said, "Not my problem, Guv." Considering the reports that there has been an outbreak of a highly contagious and dangerous disease at the Manston processing facility, how can the Minister square this laissez-faire approach to asylum seeker dispersal with any serious concern for public health?

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** It is for those reasons that I took the decision today that no asylum seeker will leave Manston if they are displaying any symptoms whatsoever of diphtheria, or indeed of other serious infectious diseases. They will either remain there or, more likely, be taken to one of our secure isolation hotels—the type of hotel that we used during the covid pandemic. They will remain there and will not leave while they are being treated. Hopefully, they will make a full recovery and then they will be transported to other accommodation elsewhere in the country. I think that is the right approach. It goes beyond the advice that Dame Jenny and her colleagues at the UKHSA have provided to us, because I want to ensure that we are doing absolutely everything we can to take this issue seriously.

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP):** ... The Minister is right that it is important to emphasise that there is a very small risk to the UK population, but the converse is that, to those from nationalities that do not have an extensive vaccination programme, this is a very



dangerous and contagious infection that can be fatal, as we have just seen.

On the rate of the response, the Home Office seems again to be in crisis mode, having waited until we are in a really serious crisis. Were there no indications from colleagues on the continent that there were rising cases of diphtheria there? It was only a matter of time before cases arrived on these shores, so we should have had plans in place much further in advance. I welcome the work to improve the medical facilities at Manston, which we saw when we visited it as the Home Affairs Committee. The Association of Directors of Public Health has accused the Government of putting “asylum seekers and potentially hotel workers at avoidable and preventable risk”.

Its president says that an offer to help Ministers cope was rebuffed, making the situation “far worse than it could have been.”

Does the Minister want to comment on those assertions? He spoke of robust screening but, as far as I can tell, it is still only of people presenting with symptoms. Is there not a case for at least some degree of asymptomatic testing, so that the Home Office has an indication of whether a boat-load would be worth further investigation before onward movement?

Finally, the Minister has spoken about procedures being put in place today, but does that mean that people were moved to new accommodation even though they were known to have diphtheria, or to have been awaiting test results, and how was that managed? What notification was there for health authorities in places of dispersal? Have people with diphtheria been sent to hotels without anyone being told? What protocols are in place to ensure that public health leaders have the information they require, because some have been complaining that there is zero information coming from the Home Office?

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** ... The most important point to stress is that the advice of the UKHSA has been followed throughout. With any emerging health issue, the response has to be dictated by medical advice and the response has to increase along with the issue and the challenge. That is exactly the approach we have taken. When there were a very small number of cases, the approach of the UKHSA was that we screened individuals, that we provided medication and support for those who had symptoms, and that we ensured that the directors of public health in the community knew how to treat those people who responded later on with symptoms. Now that the number of cases is somewhat higher, it is clear that we have to up the response, which is why we are now ensuring that no one with symptoms leaves our care at Manston or at the accompanying secure hotel. It does mean that we need to ensure that the right data flows with the individuals—I think that is the point he was making—so that, if migrants arrive in a particular location, the directors of public health and the local NHS know as much as is possible about their pre-existing medical conditions, given the cohort of people.

Now that we are operating Manston in the way that I would wish, meaning that individuals flow through it within a matter of hours, fewer people will be detected at Manston because they will be there for far shorter periods. It is important that we work with directors of public health to put in place the correct procedures in the community so that they can identify people, get them the treatment they need, vaccinate them where appropriate and ensure they are properly isolated.

Finally, the hon. Gentleman asked a valid question that I too have asked of our advisers: is there a simple test we can apply to all those with diphtheria? It is the advice of Dame Jenny and UKHSA that there is not a lateral flow-style test that could be applied to all individuals while they are at Manston that would provide any degree of accuracy. However, we will be screening people thoroughly and, if there are any symptoms, they will be put into this new procedure. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-28/debates/DE16D6F2-C024-411B-986F-75D99FBF309F/ManstonUpdate>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Rwanda Refugee Policy

### Asylum: Rwanda

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [92177] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many women have been issued with notices of the Government's intention to remove them to Rwanda through the Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership; and how many of these women have disclosed histories of (a) sexual or gender-based violence, (b) human trafficking and (c) modern slavery.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** A breakdown of individuals considered for relocation under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda is not currently available. The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of individuals being managed under inadmissibility rules and can be found online at [How many people do we grant asylum or protection to?](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92177>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Channel Migrants

### Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Darren Henry (Conservative)** [90889] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce the number of small boats crossing the channel.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** We are more determined than ever to end the vile business model of people smugglers and are working with our international partners to stop people putting their lives at risk through dangerous and illegal journeys. The most recent arrangement between the UK and France means UK officers will be embedded with French counterparts, in French-led control rooms and on the ground with counterparts to stop crossings and dismantle the people smuggling gangs

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90889>

### Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Rachel Maclean (Conservative)** [90883] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to introduce provisions in the Bill of Rights to help (a) control the UK's borders and (b) deter people entering the county in breach of immigration laws through Channel crossings.

**Reply from Mike Freer:** The Home Office and Ministry of Justice are working together to deliver the Government's strategy to tackle illegal migration by deterring illegal entry into the UK whilst breaking the business model of people smugglers, and removing more easily those with no right to be in the UK.

The Bill of Rights will support the Government's work on illegal migration. The Bill will empower UK courts to apply human rights in a UK context, affirming the Supreme Court's independence from the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. It will make explicit that the UK Supreme Court is the ultimate judicial arbiter of the meaning and effect of rights in domestic law. The Bill will also affirm that interim measures of the European Court of Human Rights do not have any domestic legal effect, and will prevent UK courts from having any regard to an interim measure indicated by the Strasbourg Court when deciding whether to grant relief.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90883>

### **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Rachel Maclean (Conservative)** [92335] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government plans to take steps to turn back small boats in the English Channel.

**Reply from James Heapey:** On 24 April 2022, the Home Secretary confirmed that the previously extant policy and procedures relating to the turnaround tactic had been withdrawn. Accordingly Border Force will not implement turnaround tactics under Defence primacy. The Royal Navy position remains that they will not implement or assist in the implementation of turnaround tactics under Defence primacy. Defence has no plans to review this policy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92335>

*The Home Secretary's confirmation referred to above is not available online, However, the Prime Minister's announcement of the change of policy can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-action-to-tackle-illegal-migration-14-april-2022>

### **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Rachel Maclean (Conservative)** [90882] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the compatibility of potential plans to turn back small boats in the English Channel with international legal frameworks to which the UK is committed.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The Government considers all safe and legal options to stop unnecessary journeys to the UK including turning small boats around in the English Channel.

This approach fully complies with both the domestic and international legal frameworks to which the UK is committed. However, there are limited circumstances in which small boats can be turned around safely in the English Channel. In view of this, the policy is currently withdrawn and there are no current plans for the turnaround tactics to be reintroduced under Defence primacy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90882>

### **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Rachel Maclean (Conservative)** [90881] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether legal measures were introduced in the Nationality and Borders Act to enable law enforcement and Border Force to turn back small boats in the English Channel.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 includes legal measures to enable law enforcement agencies and Border Force to turn back small boats in the English Channel. However, the circumstances in which turnaround tactics may be deployed are limited due to the priority to maintain safety of life at sea. Although the turnaround policy and procedures are currently withdrawn, the Government has not made any concessions as to the legality of the policy. There are no current plans for the turnaround tactic to be reintroduced under Defence primacy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90881>

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

### **Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Stephen Kinnock (Labour)** [97627] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 September 2022 to Question 53566 on Refugees: Afghanistan, how he defines suitable accommodation.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** Bridging hotels are procured through crown commercial and contracting partners. They must be fully compliant with all government and local legislation requirements - and proof of compliance must be produced before a contract can be agreed.

The hotels must be safe, secure and individuals must be provided with meals and support. Wherever possible, accommodation should be within, or near to, major conurbations so that appropriate support and services can be more readily provided.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/97627>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-21/53566>

### **Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [90845] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made for when all people who have come to the UK through the (a) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and (b) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and are in hotel accommodation will be provided with residential accommodation.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** 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 is a huge effort underway to support the families into permanent homes as soon as we can so they can settle and rebuild their lives. We remain committed to matching evacuees to suitable settled accommodation and continue to work collaboratively alongside around 350 local authorities, government departments and other partners to meet the demand for housing.

In addition, many families have, in recent months, taken steps to secure their own accommodation through the Find Your Own Accommodation scheme which opened on 29 June and empowers Afghan families to source their own accommodation. We are also looking at ways to make more suitable homes available in the private rented sector and exploring alternatives to hotels for families who may have to remain in bridging accommodation for long periods.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90845>

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

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

*Information about the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at*

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

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [92179] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan refugees were temporarily accommodated in hotels in the latest period for which data are available; and how many of those refugees were (a) men, (b) women and (c) children.

**Caroline Nokes (Conservative)** [92180] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan refugees have been accommodated in permanent homes through the Afghanistan housing portal as of 21 November 2022.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** We have been working as fast as possible to support Afghan families into homes of their own, so that they can settle into their local

communities and rebuild their lives in the UK.

At 4 November 2022, 9,242 individuals are in bridging accommodation and 7,572 individuals have moved in to settled accommodation, with a further 729 individuals matched to a property and waiting to move in.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92179>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92180>

### **Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Alison McGovern (Labour)** [94744] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2022 to Question 61079 on Refugees: Afghanistan, what estimate she has made of the number families making their own accommodation arrangements who have moved into permanent accommodation.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** We have been working as fast as possible to support Afghan families into homes of their own, so that they can settle into their local communities and rebuild their lives in the UK.

A number of evacuated families have taken steps to source their own accommodation, whether it be through the Find Your Own Accommodation scheme or independently.

Until data assurance activity for those evacuated to the UK via Op Pitting has concluded, and the number of people who have sourced accommodation without support from the Home Office is, subsequently, made clear, we will not hold this data in a reportable format.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94744>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-11/61079>

## **UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Ukraine**

### **Refugees: Ukraine**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [97612] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on taking steps to support Ukrainians in the UK who are studying virtually at Ukrainian institutions and are ineligible for (a) student finance and (b) Universal Credit.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** DfE hold responsibility on Student Finance, DWP hold responsibility on Universal Credit.

Information on support for Ukrainian students continuing courses online from the UK can be found here.

[Support for students from Ukraine in UK higher education.](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/97612>

### **Refugees: Ukraine**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [94793] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support is available to Ukrainian refugees who have been giving notice on their accommodation for (a) Homes for Ukraine Scheme and (b) the Family Scheme.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The updated guidance for the Homes for Ukraine guests, hosts and councils setting out all the support options available to them post six months of sponsorship can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk/your-living-arrangements-4-to-6-months-after-moving-to-the-uk>

Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme are given access to work, benefits and public services as laid down in Appendix Ukraine

Scheme to the Immigration Rules, details of which can be found at:  
[Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix Ukraine Scheme](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94793)  
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94793>

### **Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Homelessness**

**Steve McCabe (Labour)** [87736] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the number of refugees housed as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme who are now homeless.

**Reply from Felicity Buchan:** Homelessness management information pertaining to Ukrainian nationals in England is updated on gov.uk every 4 weeks. The most recent update includes data up to 21 October 2022. A total of 2,175 Ukrainian households have been owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty, based on a response rate of 73% of local authorities. Of this figure, 845 households arrived under the Ukraine Family Scheme and 1,170 households via the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme. Further information can be accessed via the following [link](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/87736).  
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/87736>

### **Refugees: Ukraine**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [94795] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to provide additional support to the childcare sector to help Ukrainian parents to work.

**Reply from Claire Coutinho:** The department continues to work across government to ensure we are supporting all Ukrainians in the UK to give them the same access to public services in education and childcare as a UK citizen. Families, including those from Ukraine, can get help towards childcare depending on their circumstances:

- All parents of 3 and 4-year-olds can access 15 free hours of childcare per week across 38 weeks of the year
- Eligible working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds can access an additional 15 hours of childcare, known as the '30 Hours' entitlement
- Disadvantaged 2-year-olds may be eligible to access 15 free hours of childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is available for working parents, including those from Ukraine, of children aged 0 to 11, or up to 16 for some children with disabilities. This has the same eligibility criteria as the '30 Hours' free childcare entitlement. This scheme can save parents up to £2,000 per year, or up to £4,000 for children with disabilities, and can be used alongside 30 Hours free childcare. The eligibility criteria for Tax-Free Childcare can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare?msclkid=5e8b1bedc0aa11ec97e71029c9622d44>

The department has made education and childcare funding available for children who have entered via the Homes for Ukraine visa route. This funding is payable to local authorities in England for the provision of education and childcare for children ages 2 to 18. The funding can be used to provide a place for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds accessing the 2-year-old, universal or 30 hours entitlements. The full grant conditions attached to the funding are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-for-ukraine-education-and-childcare-funding/homes-for-ukraine-education-and-childcare-grant-conditions-of-funding>

Some parents from Ukraine may want to work in the early years sector, and there is a system to recognise their qualifications in this field. Anyone with an early years qualification awarded in Ukraine, or elsewhere, can apply through a dedicated service run by UK ECCTIS in collaboration with the department to have that

qualification 'mapped' against the Level 2 Early Years Practitioner or Level 3 Early Years Educator criteria. Where a qualification meets some, but not all of our criteria, there is the option to either complete a supervised adaptation period, or undertake additional units, to become qualified.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94795>

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

### Visas: Russia

**Daniel Zeichner (Labour)** [97617] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on assisting Russian citizens already in the UK who require a change in their visa status to reflect their present circumstances but cannot return to Russia to complete their application due to the conflict in Ukraine.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** Russian nationals who are in the UK with permission to stay in a non-visit capacity can, before their permission ends, apply from within the UK to extend or vary their permission. Russian nationals who are visiting are expected to leave the UK before the end of their visa.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/97617>

### Undocumented Migrants

**Rachel Maclean (Conservative)** [92332] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to seek a derogation to its legal obligations to help tackle the number of people entering the UK in breach of immigration laws from safe countries.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** This Government is committed to ensuring that the UK has control of its own borders. This means continuing to tackle the people smugglers who put the lives of men, women and children in danger by facilitating their illegal entry into the UK by perilous and potentially fatal means.

As my Rt Hon. friend the Home Secretary has previously set out, in developing any necessary new legislation or other measures to address this issue we will always work within the bounds of international law

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92332>

### Undocumented Migrants: Albania

**Rachel Maclean (Conservative)** [92333] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her migrant return agreement with the Albanian Government on the number of migrants from that country seeking to cross the English Channel in small boats.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** Since the UK-Albania readmission agreement was signed in July 2021 we have seen over 1,000 Albanian foreign national offenders and immigration offenders removed from the UK, including some who crossed the channel illegally to come to the UK.

The UK and Albania pledged to fast track the removal of Albanians with no right to be in the UK wherever possible, and to send senior Albanian law enforcement to the UK to speed up processing and share information with our authorities. In co-operation with the Government of Albania, we are taking every opportunity to intercept the activities of organised criminal gangs and people smugglers, and speed up the removal of Albanians and other nationals with no right to be in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/92333>

### **Refugees: Resettlement**

**Selaine Saxby (Conservative)** [95984] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the UK Resettlement Scheme closed to applicants from the majority of countries; and whether she plans to reopen that scheme to applicants from all countries.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) is a global scheme with a multi-year commitment to resettle the most vulnerable refugees in need of protection. It has not closed. It continues to offer a safe and legal route to the UK for some of the most vulnerable refugees around the world.

The UKRS is not application based. Instead, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) identifies and refers refugees for resettlement to the UK using its established submission categories.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-24/95984>

### **Refugees: Employment**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [90846] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he has made an assessment of the potential merits of creating employment option for refugees, in the context of labour shortages.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** Those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection, including those who are resettled to the UK, have immediate and unrestricted access to the labour market.

Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90846>

### **Refugees: Temporary Accommodation**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [90844] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to identify long-term solutions for the provision of accommodation for refugees, in the context of increasing use of hotel accommodation.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The Government is working with local authorities across the UK to meet the demand for housing.

We have been working as fast as possible to support Afghan families into homes of their own, so that they can settle into their local communities and independent and rebuild their lives in the UK

Local Authorities who support people through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) or the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) will receive £20,520 per person, over 3 years, for resettlement and integration costs. They have the flexibility to use this funding to contribute towards renting accommodation, including deposit, letting fees and necessary furnishings.

Once an asylum seeker has received refugee status, they are eligible to work, receive mainstream benefits and accommodation which should be provided by the local authority.

For other resettlement schemes the first 12 months of a refugee's resettlement costs are funded by central government.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90844>

### **Refugees: Resettlement**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [94798] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential challenges of the Community Sponsorship scheme for refugees.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** Community Sponsorship enables civil society to



directly support refugees resettled to the UK as they start their new lives in safety. We engage closely with sponsorship groups and resettled refugees after a refugee arrives, including through post arrival visits conducted alongside Reset, which supports the growth and promotion of the Community Sponsorship Scheme. These visits provide the opportunity for groups and resettled refugees to raise any concerns they may have, which are then addressed collaboratively.

The Community Sponsorship Scheme is also being evaluated through a programme of quantitative data collection and qualitative research with refugees and key delivery partners, including local authorities and community sponsors. As part of this process we ask community sponsors to provide data on refugees they support in their first year in the UK to understand their early integration outcomes. The data covers key areas of integration such as education, employment, health and English language skills. Findings from evaluation will continue to inform the development of resettlement and integration policy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94798>

*Information about the Community Sponsorship Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship/community-sponsorship-guidance-for-prospective-sponsors>*

### **Asylum: Social Security Benefits**

**Dan Carden (Labour)** [93612] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to raise the level of the asylum support allowance to support people seeking asylum from the impact of the cost of living crisis and rising inflation.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The level of allowance is reviewed annually to ensure it meets the sufficient living needs of asylum seekers. We are undertaking this year's asylum support review and will announce the outcome through amendments to the Asylum Support Regulations 2000.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-22/93612>

### **Education: Asylum**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [94792] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she has taken to ensure that all asylum seekers can access courses in (a) further and (b) higher education.

**Reply from Robert Halfon:** Access to post-16 education for asylum seekers is governed by funding rules in further education (FE) and higher education (HE).

In FE, asylum seekers aged 19 and over who have lived in the UK for six months or longer while awaiting the outcome of their application, and no decision on their claim has been made, are eligible to receive funding through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). For asylum seekers aged 16-19, the department will fund those who have applied for asylum as well, as those who have been granted asylum status by the Home Office.

In HE, eligibility requirements for student support usually means that a student resident in England should have 'settled' status or a recognised connection with the UK, and have been a resident of the UK, Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man for the three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course. However, an exception to the three-year ordinary residence requirement is made for students with refugee status and humanitarian protection. This means that immediate access to HE student support is available once a person has been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection by the Home Office.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94792>

### **Asylum: Temporary Accommodation**

**Paula Barker (Labour)** [94906] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

what asylum accommodation placements were procured from 23 September 2022 to 23 November 2022, broken down by local authority area.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The Home Office and its accommodation providers are working closely with Local Authorities across the UK to secure the additional accommodation required to meet our statutory duties toward asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. Since 13 April 2022, all Local Authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales are expected to participate in a new system of full dispersal accommodation. This Full Dispersal model, announced on 13 April 2022 is supported by £21million of grant funding to ensure eligible [Local Authorities](#) can provide wraparound support locally. Local authorities will also receive £3,500 for each new dispersal accommodation bed space in the 22/23 financial year.

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at Asylum and resettlement datasets - [GOV.UK](#) Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 25 August 2022. The next quarterly figures are due to be released later this month.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94906>

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Asylum: Hotels**

**Gavin Robinson (DUP)** [95852] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much has been spent on hotel accommodation for asylum seekers in each of the last 24-months.

#### **Development Aid: Asylum**

**Gavin Robinson (DUP)** [95853] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding has been allocated from the Foreign Aid Budget for the accommodation of asylum seekers and refugees in each of the last 24 months.

**Gavin Robinson (DUP)** [95854] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have had their accommodation costs paid for through the foreign aid budget for longer than 12 months as of 24 November 2022; and what the total cost of that accommodation was.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The United Kingdom has a statutory obligation to provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation and other support whilst their application for asylum is being considered. Our accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential, therefore the Home Office does not publish this information.

Provisional and final UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend data for 2022 will be published as normal in the Spring and Autumn of 2023 respectively. The latest data available is the final data for 2021 UK ODA spend, which was published November 23rd. The stats for international development are published here: [Statistics on International Development: final UK aid spend 2021](#).

The Home Office has not used any ODA funds to pay for the accommodation costs of any asylum seekers for longer than 12 months. This is as no costs from after 12 months of an asylum seeker arriving in the UK are deemed ODA eligible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-24/95852>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-24/95853>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-24/95854>

#### **Detention Centres: Manston**

**Stephen Kinnock (Labour)** [98826] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department took to act on the findings of the report by the

Chief Inspector of Prisons into conditions at Manston asylum centre published in July 2022 which indicated that the facilities at Manston for managing people with infectious diseases were poor.

**Reply from Robert Jenrick:** The HMIP report on the inspection of the short-term holding facilities at Manston between 25 – 28 July 2022 made no specific mention of concerns about facilities at Manston for managing people with infectious diseases.

The report makes clear (paragraph 4.31) that the paramedic team at Manston was well-staffed, available 24 hours a day and that there were effective arrangements with local hospitals for immediate transfer in a medical emergency.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-29/98826>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/10/Manston-WJF-and-Lydd-web-2022.pdf>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

### Net Migration

**Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench):** To ask His Majesty's Government how they intend to meet their commitment to reduce net migration, given the estimate by the Office for National Statistics, published on 24 November, that net international migration to the United Kingdom was 504,000 for the year ending June 2022.

**Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Murray of Blidworth):** The Government are committed to controlling immigration and ensuring that it works in the UK's best interests. Our immediate priority is continuing to tackle abuse in the system and prevent dangerous and illegal crossings. In the medium to long term, we will continue to strike a balance between reducing overall net migration and ensuring that businesses have access to the skills that they need.

**Lord Green of Deddington:** My Lords, half a million immigrants in one year is truly extraordinary: more than the population of Manchester or Edinburgh. Admittedly, that includes 200,000 refugees from Ukraine, Hong Kong and Afghanistan. Even if you allow for that, it is now clear that the Government's points-based system has opened up nearly half of all full-time jobs to immigrant workers. Will the Government now retighten the requirements for work visas for students and dependants so as to get a grip on the huge wave of immigration that they have so foolishly sparked off and which, rightly, is a very serious concern to many members of the public?

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** As the noble Lord rightly observes, the net migration figures estimated by the ONS this year reflect the very unusual international circumstances in which we find ourselves. Home Office statistics show that we have helped over 144,000 people from Hong Kong, 144,600 people fleeing the war in Ukraine and nearly 23,000 people from Afghanistan to find safety in the UK. This means that the current set of figures is an outlier. The level of immigration for study visas reflects government policy, in that we are encouraging students from other parts of the world to study at British universities, with the great benefit that brings both to Britain and to those people who have the benefit of a British education. ...

**Lord Lilley (Conservative):** My Lords, will my noble friend bear in mind that, over the last decade, total immigration—which ran at half the level of the last 12 months—was equal to the combined populations of Southampton, Portsmouth, Oxford, Nottingham, Middlesbrough, Leicester, Exeter, Derby and Carlisle? We wonder why we have a housing shortage. Has my noble friend the Minister ever heard those who oppose any tightening of

immigration restrictions recognise that they are condemning a whole generation of British-born young people to living at home or in cramped bed-sits until they are middle-aged?

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** It may assist my noble friend if I remind the Chamber that work visas are 82% higher than they were in 2019 and that this is in part driven by an increase in health and care visas, which make up 50% of all skilled worker visas issued. Family-related visas are 31% lower than in 2019. It is clear that there is a need for more people in the health and care sector, and visas are awarded in relation to that. That is the reason for these exceptional figures. Again, I point to the fact that the figures this year reflect the problems of coming out of the pandemic and the international conflict that we have had to deal with.

**Baroness Ludford (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, have I got this right? The Government insist on including students in the immigration statistics. Students form one-third of people coming into the country, thereby artificially inflating the migration numbers. The Government's reaction is to seek to ban students, harming the higher education sector and the economy. Can they really not think of a better way to manage this, starting by excluding students from the immigration statistics?

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** I reassure the noble Baroness that the Government have no plans to ban students. ...

**Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe (Labour):** My Lords, is it not true that one of the great attractions of this country is that people can come in and get employment without any real problem whatsoever, and that the major error that we have had is the abandonment of the policy we had in 2010 to have a form of identity for every individual in the country? ...

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Government do not agree that the answer is identity cards.

**Lord Desai (Non-affiliated):** My Lords, should we not recognise that the people who pay thousands of pounds to people to carry them across the channel actually want to come here? They find coming here beneficial, and the economy finds it beneficial when they come. Why do we not have a system in which we distinguish between refugees and economic migrants and welcome economic migrants as a very good thing?

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** ... We have indeed such a system. The points-based immigration system is designed to entice to the UK those workers who wish to come who are qualified by reason of the scheme. The asylum system exists to assist those who are claiming asylum or other protection.

**Lord Coaker (Labour):** ... would it not be helpful for a Minister of the Crown to stand up at that Dispatch Box and say, "Of course we need rules about migration, but this country benefits enormously from migration, and we should welcome that fact"?

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** I entirely agree with the noble Lord that the country benefits vastly from legal migration. Indeed, that is why we have arrangements to achieve that objective.

**Lord Baker of Dorking (Conservative):** My Lords, the Minister will be aware that there are about a quarter of a million overseas students whom we welcome to this country, but is he also aware that many of those also ask for dependent relatives to be brought in? Surely dependent relatives should not be allowed in. ...

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** ... The position is that the types of students who are now availing themselves of British educational opportunities tend to be older, and there are restrictions around the provision of visas for family members. They are restricted to those on a postgraduate course—broadly, not undergraduate courses—and to a course of nine months or longer, if the course of study is with an accredited institution with a track record of compliance with immigration requirements. It appears to be the case that, of the visas issued to students and dependants, about one in five go to dependants and there is no reason in the Government's view to change that position at this time.

**Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Labour):** My Lords, the Minister has been asked several

times a question that, with great respect, he has not answered: why are international students, who bring significant income to our universities and are an ornament to them in many other ways, included in migration statistics, with or without dependants? They distort those statistics ...

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** ... The ONS prepares these estimates in its own way, and it is utilising on this occasion a new methodology derived from various sources to estimate, effectively, emigration as well as immigration. The choice is taken to include students, for reasons of transparency ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-11-29/debates/BA3F574F-74CE-4A97-B4CC-8EB6CCA6CC6F/NetMigration>

*The ONS report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2022>

### **Manston Update**

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

**Lord Coaker (Labour):** My Lords, we know that the Government's asylum system is in chaos. Just 2% of last year's small boat cases have been decided, creating a backlog of nearly 100,000 people waiting more than six months for a decision. Such is the chaos that we have seen, and are seeing, that we have the completely inappropriate last-minute use of hotels, with no proper information for local councils or public health officials. Then, of course, there is the disgrace that has been and is Manston.

We are all aware of revelation after revelation of overcrowding at Manston, of people being kept long after legal limits were passed and of poor health and hygiene. What is the latest revelation that we have from Manston? It is of 50 diphtheria cases—compared with just three last year. Was the Home Office warned four months ago, as reported in today's media, that measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as diphtheria at Manston were poor and that staff were ill prepared to deal with them? When were Ministers first told that there were diphtheria cases at Manston?

By mid-October, the Home Office had admitted that there were cases at Manston, but its officials told the Home Affairs Committee on 26 October that they had sufficient health measures in place to address diphtheria. Why, when they clearly did not? The Government kept thousands of people in overcrowded conditions at Manston, described by one as thousands of people "huddled around fan heaters" to stay warm. I am no expert but those seem like perfect conditions for infections to spread, so why on earth was it only on 11 November, weeks later, that diphtheria screening and vaccinations were recommended for everyone passing through Manston? How was it possible that, despite this, the Home Office continued to move people from Manston into hotels across the country, even as potential carriers of diphtheria? Why was this done in some cases with local public health councils or local authorities not being told or given proper information?

The Health Secretary tells us that 500 people have now been screened and vaccinated, but what about the thousands of others who have passed through Manston? Wherever they are in this country, have they been screened and vaccinated for diphtheria, or have they just been left? Have all those with possible symptoms been given antibiotics? Given that this was the recommendation of public health officials some three weeks ago, if it has not been done, why not? What liaison is taking place between the health department and the Home Office? What is the plan?

Across the country, residents and migrants from Manston have been dispersed. We were told by the Immigration Minister yesterday that asylum seekers with symptoms of diphtheria are to be isolated for a short period at Manston or in designated isolation hotels.

Can the Minister say any more about the numbers of cases across the country and where they are? What is the current situation?

Of course, the Government, the Minister and the Home Office will now do all they can to protect public health, prevent infection and give healthcare to those who need it—but it should never have come to this, should it? ...

**Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat):** ... On 31 October, the Home Secretary said: “Manston ... has very good medical facilities and all protocols have been followed.”— [[Official Report, Commons, 31/10/22; col. 649.](#)]

On 27 October, Robert Jenrick, the Immigration Minister, said: “The basic needs of arrivals are provided ... including ... medical care.”— [[Official Report, Commons, 27/10/22; col. 401.](#)]

When we had the Statement last Thursday, it felt like the Home Office had emptied Manston and dumped unfunded people, unscreened and unvaccinated, without access to their local NHS in their new venues.

It is good that things are starting to change ...

On Saturday morning we heard that the man who died after staying at Manston had died from diphtheria, which was clarified by a PCR test, despite some earlier negative tests. One of the problems with diphtheria is that the symptoms are not always obvious. On 1 November, I asked the Minister whether people were being routinely screened and tested, but it appears that they are still not, let alone being vaccinated.

The spread of infectious diseases was highlighted by Charlie Taylor, Chief Inspector of Prisons, in his unannounced inspection of Manston and Jet Foil at the end of July. The report was published on 1 November, but I am sure that it is still the convention for Ministers to see a draft beforehand. It says:

“Facilities for the management of detainees with COVID or other infectious diseases were poor. Detainees were placed in a claustrophobic portacabin with no clear responsibility assigned for managing their care. Paramedic staff were unsure of any guidance, policy or procedure for the management of infectious diseases.”

What happened after the draft of this advice was seen by Ministers, prior to assurances given by Ministers, from the end of October onwards, that good healthcare and protocols were being followed?

Diphtheria is a notifiable disease because, in unvaccinated people and untreated cases, it has a fatality rate of 5% to 10%. It spreads in overcrowded communities whose health may be compromised for other reasons, which is absolutely typical for asylum seekers. What data is there for how many of the people held at Manston since the middle of October have now been screened, tested and offered vaccinations? The UNHCR, UNICEF and the American CDC all vaccinate refugees and migrant communities, and it is now compulsory if you come into America through the border with Mexico.

On Sunday, the Home Office said that infectious migrants will now be told to isolate in hotel rooms but, prior to this, the only advice about those in hotels was given to hotel staff, not local doctors and certainly not directors of public health. It is good that this is beginning to change.

Yesterday morning, the government webpage entitled “Protecting yourself against diphtheria” was updated—and that too is good. It is important to say that the wider public are not at risk; only people coming into contact with someone with diphtheria are at risk. The guidance now says: “Everyone arriving to claim asylum in the UK is currently being offered a dose of a diphtheria containing vaccine and a course of antibiotics ... to reduce the risk of diphtheria and some other infections.”

This should have been normal practice the moment the first case emerged, so why is it only starting to happen now?

The Statement says that an “enhanced diphtheria vaccination programme” will be “offered to all”. So I ask the Minister what the definition is of “those arriving”: does it cover everyone who has been at or through Manston since the numbers bloomed ... Or is it only those

currently at Manston? Or will it now be every asylum seeker in the country ...?

I also ask whether those who come through Manston have also been screened for infectious diseases, including diphtheria and scabies? Who will be managing this; will the Home Office be funding screening and vaccinations? I hope so, because local health services should not have to pick up the tab.

The Statement says that “robust screening processes” on arrival will “identify proactively” those with symptoms. However, we know that diphtheria is asymptomatic. Two are currently hospitalised, one person is dead and there are at least 50 confirmed cases. We have had only about 50 cases in the last 10 years in the UK, but the directors of public health in local areas are still struggling to get access to information and resources, from either the Home Office or the UKHSA. When will that happen? ...

**Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Murray of Blidworth):** ... The Home Secretary and the Minister for Immigration were updated over the weekend by Dame Jenny Harries of the UK Health Security Agency, who confirmed that 50 cases of diphtheria had been reported in asylum accommodation. This had the unfortunate effect of being a consequence of the speed with which Manston had been emptied in response to the earlier concerns about the conditions at Manston. While robust processes and plans have now been put in place, it is right that we remain vigilant. As the noble Baroness observed, “robust screening processes on ... arrival ... at Western Jet Foil ... to identify proactively those with symptoms of diphtheria” are in place, and the “‘round-the-clock’ health facilities at Manston”, which I previously referred to in this House, “including emergency department consultants and paramedics”, remain available to those at Manston and will readily identify conditions that those people may have. Guidance is also available “in multiple languages on spotting the symptoms of diphtheria”, and I am grateful to the noble Baroness for noting that changes have made on the website in an effort to enhance the spread of that message. In addition, “an enhanced diphtheria vaccination programme, offered to all those arriving at Manston” is now in place, and “of those who arrived at the facility this weekend, 100% took up that ... offer”. Further, “testing for those presenting with symptoms and for close contacts” of confirmed cases was also available, “and those testing positive are being isolated in a designated place.”—[[Official Report, Commons, 28/11/22; col. 676.](#)]

As the noble Baroness has observed, certain “isolation hotels” have been set up to provide facilities to make that isolation possible and easier for those who need it. Equally, special transport is provided to ensure that they can travel to their place of isolation until the symptoms of the condition have resolved. ...

... the Home Office’s contracted accommodation providers are contracted to provide a liaison with health services, to provide those residents with health services, and to signpost them to local GPs and other health providers. Local authorities, too, are provided with £3,500 per person to provide their services to those in Home Office accommodation. That, of course, includes public health obligations on local authorities. As the Minister in the other place made clear, the department is going above and beyond the UKHSA baseline by instituting new guidance on the transportation of individuals displaying diphtheria symptoms.

It is clear that this is a very unfortunate consequence of the speed with which Manston was emptied in the run-up to the previous weekend, and steps are now being taken to ensure that all those in accommodation are offered a vaccination for diphtheria. Clearly, there is widespread awareness of the issue now. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-11-29/debates/3CAD3750-4B00-4230-895A-7B85C382FF83/ManstonUpdate>

*A transcript of the Home Affairs Committee session referred to above can be read at*

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/11390/html/>

Baroness Brinton's comment, referred to above, can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-11-01/debates/FDA8A758-F0FD-496A-AF93-AF88FEF59B6E/WesternJetFoilAndManstonAsylumProcessingCentres#contribution-D02AF669-8ED5-4559-8E22-508759369937>

The inspection report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/11/Manston-WJF-and-Lydd-web-2022.pdf>

The Government webpage "Protecting yourself against diphtheria", referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/diphtheria-vaccination-resources/protecting-yourself-against-diphtheria>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Channel Migrants

### Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL3419]** To ask His Majesty's Government what payments have been made to the government of France in each of the last five years in relation to cross-Channel migration; and what is their estimate of such spending for this financial year.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The UK and France maintain a longstanding relationship on tackling illegal migration at the shared border.

In January 2018 both countries signed the Sandhurst Treaty. The UK made a commitment of €50 million (£45.5m) to implement the terms of the Treaty, which adopted a "whole of route approach" to tackling illegal migration.

In 2019 the two countries signed the Joint Action Plan on Combatting Illegal Migration Involving Small Boats under which The UK committed €3.6m (approximately £3.25m). This was supplemented with a further €2.5m (£2.25m) dedicated to the deployment of gendarme reservists and preventive security measures at the French coast.

In 2020 the UK pledged €31.4 million (roughly £28.1 million) to support joint efforts to tackle the rise in small boat crossings. A further bilateral arrangement was reached on 20 July 2021 supported by UK investment of €62.7 million (approximately £54 million).

Most recently, on 14 November the Home Secretary agreed to a new multi-year strategic and operational plan with Minister Darmanin, supported by investment of up to €72.2 million euros (approximately £62.2 million) this financial year.

Joint work with the French has led to over 23,000 small boat crossings being prevented in 2021 and over 30,000 so far this year.

Alongside this we have dismantled 55 organised crime groups (OCGs) and made over 500 arrests supported by the work of the UK-France Joint Intelligence Cell.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/hl3419>

The Sandhurst Treaty, referred to above, can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/674880/2018\\_UK-FR\\_Summit\\_Communique.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674880/2018_UK-FR_Summit_Communique.pdf)

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/773403/UK\\_France\\_declaration\\_24\\_Jan\\_13.00.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/773403/UK_France_declaration_24_Jan_13.00.pdf)

Information about the bilateral arrangement referred to above can be read at



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-france-joint-statement-next-phase-of-tackling-illegal-migration/uk-france-joint-statement-next-phase-of-collaboration-on-tackling-illegal-migration-20-july-2021>

Information about the strategic and operational plan referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/next-phase-in-partnership-to-tackle-illegal-migration-and-small-boat-arrivals/uk-france-joint-statement-enhancing-co-operation-against-illegal-migration>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Lord Blunkett (Labour)** [HL3334] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 9 November (HL2956), whether they will now provide up-to-date figures on the total number of migrants calculated to have reached the UK by boat from France for each of the last three months, broken down by (1) the estimated number of those of Albanian origin, and (2) the number of those of Albanian origin who are single men.

**Lord Blunkett (Labour)** [HL3335] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 9 November (HL2956), at what speed the process of identifying country of origin for individuals who have reached the UK by boat from France is being completed.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office have previously answered a very similar question in UIN HL2956 on 9 November 2022.

Data on small boat arrivals up to the end of September 2022 will be published on 24th November at Gov.UK in the 'Irregular migration to the UK statistics' quarterly report.

Further information on small boat crossings, with a focus on Albanian nationals, is available in a recently published one-off factsheet at Gov.UK, titled 'Small boat crossings since July 2022.'

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/hl3334>  
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/hl3335>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-27/hl2956>

*The statistics referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-year-ending-september-2022/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-year-ending-september-2022>

*The factsheet referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/factsheet-small-boat-crossings-since-july-2022/factsheet-small-boat-crossings-since-july-2022>

#### **Asylum: Offshoring**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL3552] To ask His Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the results of existing initiatives to deter irregular Channel crossings; and in any such assessment, what consideration they have given to alternative approaches whereby potential asylum seekers have their asylum applications considered before arrival in the UK.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** 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. Our work to deter and stop irregular Channel crossings is dependent on a range of interventions, and the cumulative impact of these. There is no single silver bullet and seeing impact overall will take time. We carefully monitor impact, including

through regularly published migration statistics

Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, we are not bound to consider asylum claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come here. The UK provides safe and legal routes through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Mandate Resettlement Scheme, Community Sponsorship and the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme. Following the Ukraine crisis, we also introduced the Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS), and the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) Scheme. We also have additional safe and legal routes for people to come to the UK should they wish to join family members here, work or study. This commitment, alongside a fair and firm asylum system, will ensure we continue to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for those in need of protection. Our focus will remain on helping individuals directly from regions of conflict and instability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/hl3552>

### **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL3463]** To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Public and Commercial Services Union and Care4Calais Safe passage for refugees: humane alternative to the Rwanda policy, published on 16 November; and in particular their proposal for a visa system designed to prevent crossings in small boats across the English channel.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** 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. However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge, as proposed in the report by the Public and Commercial Services Union and Care4Calais.

The UK provides safe and legal routes through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Mandate Resettlement Scheme, Community Sponsorship and the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme. Following the Ukraine crisis, we also introduced the Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS), and the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) Scheme. We also have additional safe and legal routes for people to come to the UK should they wish to join family members here, work or study. This commitment, alongside a fair and firm asylum system, will ensure we continue to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for those in need of protection. Our focus will remain on helping individuals directly from regions of conflict and instability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/hl3463>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://care4calais.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Safe-Passage-Policy-Paper.pdf>

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

### **Visas: English Language**

**Lord Johnson of Marylebone (Conservative) [HL3358]** To ask His Majesty's Government what discretion higher education institutions have to accept evidence of English language ability other than by reference to the result of an approved Secure English Language Test, for the purpose of Student Route visa applications.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** An application for entry clearance to the UK or permission to stay as a student must show the student meets the English language requirement as specified in Appendix English Language of the

Immigration Rules.

There is a degree of flexibility for sponsors that are Higher Education Providers (HEP) with a track record of compliance to self-assess the English proficiency of their students studying at degree level or above. The HEP choose their own method to assess the English ability of such students. Where they do so, they must state on the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) the method which they have used, including, where relevant, the applicant's English language test scores in all four components (reading, writing, speaking and listening).

Additional discretion is available to such sponsors via their ability to waive the English language requirement if the student is studying at degree level and the sponsor considers the student to be gifted. This must only be done if English language proficiency is not integral to the course of study and a pre-sessional course would be inappropriate. If a sponsor wants to waive the English language requirement for a gifted student, their academic registrar, or the institution's equivalent, must approve this waiver. The CAS must state that the student is gifted, as well as including an explanation of why this is the case and the name and contact details of the academic registrar or equivalent.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/hl3358>

*The Immigration Rules referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-english-language>

### **Asylum: Applications**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark** [HL3526] To ask His Majesty's Government, following the publication of figures by the Refugee Council on 14 October, how many applications for asylum have not had an initial decision reached for more than five years; and what factors have led to delays of that length.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office is unable to state how many applications for asylum have not had an initial decision reached for more than five years because the Home Office does not publish this information.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. This data can be found at Asy\_04 of the published Immigration Statistics: List of Tables

The Home Office also publish data on the percentage of asylum applications processed within 6 months of the date of claim. Data showing the number of asylum claims received from 2014 – 2022 that were processed within 6 months can be found at Asy\_01 of the Asylum Transparency Data: Migration transparency data.

The asylum system has been under mounting pressure for several years. Increased and sustained intake and a growing number of people awaiting a decision has led to significant delays in concluding asylum claims.

However, there are many factors that can delay and contribute to the length of time to process asylum claims; some applications have complex needs, safeguarding issues, are extremely vulnerable or where they have had a modern slavery claim attached to their claim. We therefore take full consideration of these facts when prioritising and progressing outstanding asylum claims and that can lead to longer waiting times for some.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-17/hl3526>

*The Refugee Council figures referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/new-figures-reveal-scale-of-asylum-backlog-crisis/>

*The data referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1118222/asylum-summary-sep-2022-tables.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1118222/asylum-summary-sep-2022-tables.ods)

## Asylum

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL3526]** To ask His Majesty's Government what training is given to Asylum Decision Makers.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** Asylum Operations remain committed to the training and upskilling of our staff. It can take up to 12 months for a decision maker to become fully proficient in all areas of their work. We have a comprehensive training programme and mentoring framework in place to support this delivered by a dedicated team of senior grade trainers and higher-grade technical experts. This helps with maintaining case-working expertise and improving decision-maker capability as part of our plan for a highly skilled workforce.

During the first 9 weeks of a decision-maker being in post, there is a mixture of classroom based and on the job coaching that is a foundation for ongoing learning and coaching.

Once the decision maker fully moves into the live operational environment and throughout their development period, they work within a mentoring framework and receive the support of Team Leaders, Technical Specialists and consolidators (experienced decision makers who are assigned to support new starters) as they grow their skills and to ensure quality is maintained.

Alongside the foundation training programme, a range of other bespoke and more specialist technical training is available to decision makers.

Recently a comprehensive Training Plan on the provisions introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 was developed. A one-day training package was rolled out to all Decision Makers from Legacy, Flow, and Children and Secondary Casework units.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-17/hl3516>

## Asylum: Translation Services

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL3517]** To ask His Majesty's Government what translation facilities are available at asylum interviews.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office will provide an interpreter at public expense whenever necessary. Interpreters are required to interpret to a high standard on a range of protection based and human rights topics including, though not limited to, religious conversion, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexuality-and gender-based claims, all types and forms of persecution, medical (physical and mental health) and political activity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-17/hl3517>

## Asylum: Children

**Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat) [HL3370]** To ask His Majesty's Government how initial safeguarding judgments are used by (1) Home Office staff, and (2) contractors, when deciding on the treatment of asylum-seekers, in particular of unaccompanied children.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The Home Office and its accommodation providers have robust processes in place to ensure that where someone is at risk they are referred to the appropriate statutory agencies of police, NHS and social services to promote appropriate safeguarding interventions.

All contingency sites have security staff and providers liaise closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents. However, the statutory agencies retain responsibility for all decisions on intervention activity.

We have safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in emergency interim hotels are as safe and supported as possible whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are

supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of social workers and nurses.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-14/hl3370>

### **Asylum: Children**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL3420] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the practice of placing unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in hotels, with little or no supervision.

**Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth:** The UK is experiencing an unprecedented increase in the number of people making life-threatening journeys to cross the Channel. These boats are often carrying unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). Out of necessity and with the children's best interests in mind, we have arranged for them to be accommodated on an emergency and temporary basis in hotels whilst placements with local authorities are being vigorously pursued. These emergency interim hotels only accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

We have robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children accommodated temporarily in these hotels are as safe and supported as possible whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported with wrap-around care by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of social workers and nurses.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-15/hl3420>

## **UK Parliament, Human Rights (Joint Committee)**

**Evidence session: Human Rights of Asylum Seekers in the UK, and Human Rights of Asylum Seekers in the UK**

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/11932/html/>

## **Press Release**

**Hosts for displaced people from Ukraine**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/hosts-for-displaced-people-from-ukraine/>

## **New Publications**

**Note Verbale on assurances in paragraphs 8 and 10 of the MoU between the United Kingdom and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership arrangement**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migration-and-economic-development-partnership-reception-and-accommodation/note-verbale-on-assurances-in-paragraphs-8-and-10-of-the-mou-between-the-united-kingdom-and-rwanda-for-the-provision-of-an-asylum-partnership-arrangem>

**Note Verbale on assurances in paragraph 9 of the MoU between the United Kingdom and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership arrangement**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migration-and-economic-development-partnership-asylum-process/note-verbale-on-assurances-in-paragraph-9-of-the-mou-between-the-united-kingdom-and-rwanda-for-the-provision-of-an-asylum-partnership-arrangement-acc>

## **UK immigration routes for Afghan nationals**

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9307/CBP-9307.pdf>

## **Refugees and asylum-seekers: UK policy**

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/refugees-and-asylum-seekers-uk-policy/>

## **Weekly number of migrants detected in small boats - 21 November to 27 November 2022**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats-weekly-data/weekly-number-of-migrants-detected-in-small-boats-21-november-to-27-november-2022>

## **Updated: Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-family-scheme-application-data/ukraine-family-scheme-and-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-homes-for-ukraine-visa-data--2>

## **Ukraine homelessness management information: 24 February to 18 November 2022**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1120984/Ukraine\\_Homelessness\\_Pressures\\_29112022.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1120984/Ukraine_Homelessness_Pressures_29112022.ods)

## **Ukrainians in Scotland: short videos from the Scottish Refugee Council**

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/ukrainians-in-scotland/>

## **News**

### **Home Office centres turn away asylum seekers summoned for interviews**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/01/home-office-manston-asylum-seekers-phantom-interviews>

### **Suella Braverman wants 'safe country list to fast-track asylum seekers' removal'**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suella-braverman-asylum-seekers-albania-b2235027.html>

### **Albanians should be barred from claiming asylum in the UK, says Robert Jenrick**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/12/03/albanians-should-barred-claiming-asylum-uk-says-robert-jenrick/>

### **Rishi Sunak and Albanian PM pledge to close loopholes to fast-track deportation of migrants**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/12/01/rishi-sunak-albanian-pm-pledge-close-loopholes-fast-track-deportation/>

### **Suella Braverman wants Albanian migrants who cross Channel in small boats on fast track to deportation**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-wants-albanian-migrants-who-cross-channel-in-small-boats-on-fast-track-to-deportation-zk5frx7s5>

### **Suella Braverman's migrants speech like Rivers of Blood, says senior Met officer**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/11/29/suella-bravermans-migrants-speech-like-rivers-blood-says-senior/>

**Former head of UK counter-terror policing calls Suella Braverman's comments on migrants 'inexplicable'**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suella-braverman-migrants-invasion-basu-b2236397.html>

**Minister threatens fresh asylum crackdown and lashes out at international students**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/immigration-asylum-seekers-students-jenrick-b2238343.html>

**Send home illegal migrants who claim to be slavery victims, MPs tell Rishi Sunak**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/11/28/send-illegal-migrants-who-claim-slavery-victims-home-mps-tell/>

**Send back all asylum seekers who are modern slavery 'victims', Tory MPs tell Rishi Sunak**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/tories-asylum-seekers-modern-slavery-b2234644.html>

**Albanians should be barred from claiming asylum in UK, says minister**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/albania-asylum-seekers-banned-braverman-jenrick-b2238494.html>

**Minister admits to safety fears over 'pushback' tactics against migrant boats**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/small-boats-pushback-home-office-b2236401.html>

**Channel crossings: Dozens of Albanian child migrants go missing**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-63845680>

**Almost fifth of lone Albanian child refugees in Kent missing, says council**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/03/almost-fifth-of-lone-albanian-child-refugees-in-kent-missing-says-council>

**Two-tier asylum system to clear migrant backlog**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/two-tier-asylum-system-to-clear-migrant-backlog-wj2b5q220>

**Health chiefs acted to stop diphtheria outbreak at asylum centre, minister insists**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/diphtheria-asylum-manston-hotels-barclay-b2234391.html>

**UK asylum seekers with diphtheria symptoms to be held in 'isolation hotels'**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/28/uk-asylum-seekers-with-diphtheria-symptoms-to-be-held-in-isolation-hotels>

**Ukrainian refugee cruise ship deal extended**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-63845498>

**Homes for Ukraine host asks refugees minister at launch of recruitment event for more people to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing war**

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/war-in-ukraine-homes-for-ukraine-host-asks-refugees-minister-at-launch-of-recruitment-event-for-more-people-to-open-their-homes-to-ukrainians-fleeing-war-3934482>

### **Ukrainian refugees and hosts petition UK government for housing support**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/29/ukrainian-refugees-and-hosts-petition-uk-government-for-housing-support>

### **Ukrainian refugee's journey from Poland to Scotland**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-63827124>

### **Channel migrants: Man arrested in UK over 27 dinghy deaths**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63798798>

### **Gang leader tried to bribe Channel crossing victims' relatives, court hears**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/30/gang-leader-tried-to-bribe-failed-channel-crossing-victims-relatives-court-hears>

### **'I'm ashamed': working in UK leaves fruit pickers from Indonesia in debt**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/02/im-ashamed-working-in-uk-leaves-fruit-pickers-from-indonesia-in-debt>

### **Conditions at Manston asylum centre prompt torture monitor visit**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/30/manston-asylum-centre-torture-monitor-visit>

### **A better dream**

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/a-better-dream/>

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## **Community Relations**

### **News**

#### **'Diversity is a beautiful thing': the view from Leicester and Birmingham**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/29/leicester-birmingham-first-super-diverse-uk-cities-census>

#### **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow promotes understanding between people of different faiths and none**

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/st-mungo-museum-of-religious-life-and-art-in-glasgow-promotes-understanding-between-people-of-different-faiths-and-none-professor-rina-arya-3933709>

#### **Why Nigel Farage is wrong about London being 'minority white'**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/63806518>

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## **Equality**

### **UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers**

#### **Lammy Review**

**The Bishop of Gloucester:** To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have



made towards implementing the Lammy Review, published on 8 September 2017.

**Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice (Lord Bellamy):** My Lords, the Lammy Review, which the Government warmly welcomed, made 35 recommendations and the Government undertook actions in respect of 33 of them; only two others relating to the judiciary were left on one side. We have now completed 29 out of the 33, and outstanding actions continue in respect of the remaining four. Since the Lammy Review in 2017, our work has evolved considerably and the Government's Inclusive Britain strategy, published in March this year, is central to this work.

**The Lord Bishop of Gloucester:** ... Despite it being pledged in the Conservative manifesto, we have heard no more about the royal commission on the criminal justice system. Might the Minister be able to say, first, when we will hear more and, secondly, whether racial disparities will be prioritised by that commission?

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** My Lords, I am not in a position to help the right reverend Prelate on the question of the royal commission on the criminal justice system. However, I can say that we are making considerable progress in matters relating to racial discrimination, which is the subject of this Question.

**Lord Marks of Henley-on-Thames:** My Lords, a key recommendation of the Lammy Review was to set a clear national target to achieve a representative judiciary by 2025. The review identified low recommendation rates for black and ethnic minority candidates as a challenge to judicial diversity, suggesting a skewed appointments system. We are now five years through the eight-year target period. The 2022 statistics, published in July, show slow progress for Asian candidates, but none at all for black and other ethnic minority candidates since 2014. Recommendation rates for black and ethnic minority candidates across the board remained far lower than for white candidates. What do the Government plan to do to address this striking lack of progress in a vital area?

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** ... The judicial diversity and inclusion strategy for 2020 to 2025 aims to increase the pool of candidates and attract the best talent. Actions for 2022 include continued MoJ funding for the pre-application judicial educational—PAJE—programme to support lawyers from underrepresented groups to prepare themselves for the judicial application process. There is also a Judicial Appointments Commission—JAC—outreach programme to encourage and prepare applicants for more senior appointments, and a “becoming a judge” scheme especially for ethnic minority solicitors interested in the judiciary. A joint judicial and MoJ programme is in train to improve diversity among magistrates, with an applicant-tracking system to identify ethnic minority candidates. Other professional bodies are also pursuing complementary strategies. In that connection, I pay particular tribute to the Law Society, whose past president, Stephanie Boyce, and present president, Lubna Shuja, are both from ethnic minorities.

**Baroness Gohir (Crossbench):** My Lords, the Prison Reform Trust also conducted research on black and Asian women and found that, although they faced similar experiences to white women in the criminal justice system, they are more likely to receive custodial sentences and more severe sentences for comparable crimes. The research also found that their offending is rooted in domestic abuse. What action are the Government taking to address the specific biases experienced by ethnic minority women; for example, are judges provided with bias and domestic abuse training, is it sufficient, and do they receive refresher courses?

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** My Lords, certainly, judges are provided with domestic abuse training. The Equal Treatment Bench Book places particular emphasis on avoiding bias in sentencing and related outcomes. The judiciary, whose task it is to ensure absolute absence of bias, is well appraised of this problem and working on it.

**Baroness Berridge (Conservative):** My Lords, I am currently serving on the Joint Committee scrutinising the draft Mental Health Bill. The Lammy Review made it clear that black and minority ethnic prisoners are more likely to have undiagnosed mental health issues, learning disabilities or autism. Will my noble friend the Minister confirm that the scheme of court liaison mental health practitioners being in all courts when people appear in front of them for the first time is going to be rolled out? Will priority be given to youth courts, as it is quite common for young offenders under 21 to have a patchy record in school, which is obviously one of the main places they would be diagnosed as having a learning disability or being autistic?

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** I can give my noble friend the assurance that she seeks. Through the community sentence treatment requirements programme we are working with health agencies to improve access to mental health services for those who need them. In particular, liaison and diversion services are funded by the NHS and should now be present in all police custody suites and magistrates' courts to provide early intervention for vulnerable people, acting as a point of referral and providing a prompt response to concerns raised by police, probation or youth offending teams. I hope that has addressed the question asked.

**Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour):** My Lords, in answer to the right reverend Prelate, the Minister said that there had been progress regarding disproportionality. He went on to give the noble Lord, Lord Marks, an example of trying to get a better balance of judges and magistrates. I might characterise those as inputs, but what about the outputs? What about disproportionality in stop and search, in charging, and in ethnic minorities in prison places? What progress has been made on that front?

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** My Lords, stop and search is a matter primarily for the Home Office and the police, but I know that there is special training for police services in relation to this, including better use of body-worn cameras and other action taken to ensure that stop and search is less of a problem than it has been hitherto. In relation to charging, the Lammy report found no discrimination by the CPS in charging decisions, but there is ongoing academic work to establish exactly what the position is as far as the CPS is concerned.

As far as other matters are concerned, this is very much a matter of trust in the system between the ethnic minority and those who are dealing with that person. One of the things in train in the police station is a trial of an opt-in system when legal advice is available. As noble Lords know, free legal advice is available to everyone in the police station. The take-up by ethnic minorities is not very great, because it has to be asked for, but if it is given automatically and the person has to opt out of it, that could make quite a difference in building trust. That is an important initiative currently in train that I hope will bear fruit in due course.

**Baroness Chakrabarti (Labour):** My Lords, returning to the sensitive but vital subject of judicial diversity, it has long been understood that, in order to do its job, our highest court must have at least one senior justice from Northern Ireland and one from Scotland. Yet, to my understanding, not once have we ever had a black or brown senior justice as a Law Lord or, latterly, in our Supreme Court, notwithstanding the Privy Council, Commonwealth and Empire heritage. Is that really acceptable? Is it not time to experiment with time-limited affirmative action?

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** That is a matter for the Judicial Appointments Commission. I cannot challenge the facts that the noble Baroness presents. This is certainly an area on which continued work is necessary.

**Baroness Prashar (Crossbench):** My Lords, one of the Lammy report's recommendations was the development of performance indicators for the Prison Service. Have these been developed? If so, can they be made public so that we can see whether progress has been made against those indicators?

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** Performance indicators in the Prison Service are one

of the recommendations that it has not been possible to take forward yet. It is quite difficult to do as it is difficult to devise these indicators. What I can say about the Prison Service is that we are making a strenuous effort to recruit more ethnic minority staff, who, in due course, will work their way up through the system and become more senior. On the latest figures, we are up to about 16%, which is a significant improvement on where we were.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-11-28/debates/F6F45C98-2E8D-4EF5-A122-60EF51E1B8AD/LammyReview>

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

*The Prison Reform Trust research referred to above can be read at*

[https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/old\\_files/Documents/Counted%20Out.pdf](https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/old_files/Documents/Counted%20Out.pdf)

*Equal Treatment Bench Book, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Equal-Treatment-Bench-Book-July-2022-revision-2.pdf>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

### Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

**Apsana Begum (Labour)** [93682] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the level of public sector pay on the ethnicity pay gap in the next three years.

**Reply from John Glen:** The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our economy, and in delivering our world-class public services.

Pay for most frontline workforces – including nurses, teachers, armed forces, and police officers – is set through an independent Pay Review Body process. The Pay Review Bodies consider a range of standard evidence and other special considerations when forming their recommendations.

The Government has accepted the pay recommendations of the independent Pay Review Bodies for the NHS, teachers, police, and the armed forces for 2022/23. These are the highest uplifts in nearly twenty years, reflecting the vital contributions public sector workers make to our country and the cost-of-living pressures facing households. For 23/24 the government has decided to let the process run as normal and will be seeking recommendations from PRB's. The government will carefully consider these recommendations and in due course public sector workers will see fair and affordable pay rises across the next financial year (2023-24).

Pay awards strike a careful balance between recognising the vital importance of public sector workers, whilst delivering value for the taxpayer and not increasing the country's debt further. The government will continue to ensure all pay awards are fair and non-discriminatory.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-22/93682>

### Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

**Apsana Begum (Labour)** [94886] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of trends in the level of the ethnicity pay gap since 2017.

**Reply from Kevin Hollinrake:** This Government remains committed to tackling all areas of disparities in this country, including in employment. It is crucial that

everyone is treated fairly in the workplace, so that they can thrive and reach their full potential and we want to ensure that everyone has access to the same employment opportunities.

In March 2022 we published the Inclusive Britain action plan which includes over 70 actions to improve outcomes across education, health, employment and criminal justice for ethnic minority groups.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94886>

*The action plan referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-britain-action-plan-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/inclusive-britain-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>

### **Mortgages: Islam**

**Sam Tarry (Labour)** [95971] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will conduct a review of the availability of mortgages which comply with Islamic law.

**Reply from Andrew Griffith:** There are a broad range of mortgage products available on the market, including products that comply with Islamic law. Those wishing to take out a Sharia-compliant mortgage may wish to shop around and speak to a specialist mortgage broker in order to find the best possible product for them.

It is also worth noting that the UK is the leading western hub for Islamic finance, with more institutions offering Islamic financial services in the UK than anywhere in Europe or North America, including four fully licenced Sharia-compliant banks.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-24/95971>

### **Students: Finance**

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [902446] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to launch Alternative Student Finance for Muslim students.

**Reply from Robert Halfon:** The department understands the concerns held by some Muslim students and their families about student finance. We want all learners with the potential to benefit from higher education to be able to do so. The department remains committed to delivering an alternative student finance (ASF) product for Muslim students.

Going forward, the department is introducing a Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) that will significantly change the ways students can access learning and financial support.

The department's consultation on the detail and scope of the LLE closed in May 2022. In this consultation, the department sought views on what barriers learners with protected characteristics might face in accessing or drawing on their LLE, noting that answers to this question could include consideration of an ASF product for students whose faith has resulted in concerns about traditional loans. We are currently considering if and how ASF can be delivered as part of the LLE.

We will provide a further update on ASF as part of the government response to the LLE consultation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/902446>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Technology: Ethnic Groups**

**Chi Onwurah (Labour)** [90802] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the British Computer Society report The experiences of black women in the information technology industry, published in October 2022, what recent steps her Department has taken to encourage individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds to pursue careers in the tech industry.

**Chi Onwurah (Labour) [90803]** To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the British Computer Society report The experiences of black women in the information technology industry, published in October 2022, what recent steps her Department has taken to encourage black women to pursue careers in the tech industry.

**Reply from Paul Scully:** We recognise that the Tech Sector, including the Information Technology industry, can only reach its true potential if it is fully representative of society. This Government is committed to this mission, which is why we have supported the Tech Talent Charter since 2016. They are leading the movement by gathering data and reporting on diversity statistics from 741 organisations across all sectors, fostering collaboration and innovation to create a more inclusive and diverse tech workforce. TTC's annual diversity in tech report is a key resource that encourages businesses to hire diverse talent, as well as sharing the best D&I practices across the sector.

We recognise that digital skills are fundamental to ensuring everyone can make the most of a digital future. As the department that leads on digital skills, we are focusing on broadening and deepening the pool of talent. The Digital Skills Council convenes stakeholders from across the sector to deliver industry led action on driving the growth of the digital workforce, including widening the skills pipelines, and ensuring Tech roles are accessible for all. One of the council's objectives is to promote mechanisms to provide increasingly diverse access to digital roles and digitally enabled roles.

The Office for AI has also set up the AI and Data Science Conversion Course programmes to provide a Masters degree in AI and Data Science. The first scholarships were announced in 2019, and earlier this year, the government announced a further 2,000 scholarships. These will support underrepresented groups from non-STEM backgrounds to develop new digital and AI skills, and secure employment in the UK's cutting-edge sectors. To date, 57% of these scholarships have been awarded to those from an ethnic minority background, and 38% of these scholarships have been awarded to Black students. Emerging findings also indicate that the scholarships are driving increased diversity in the cohort on these conversion courses compared to traditional Masters' provision in the sector. 76% of the scholarships were awarded to women, leading to a 32% increase of women on the courses, against comparable benchmarks.

DCMS also launched Cyber Explorers, which supports 11-14 year-olds, and looks to boost their understanding and interest in a cyber career. The programme has prioritised representation on the platform, including characters from a range of diverse backgrounds and careers. This has focused on amplifying reach in population areas with high ethnic minority densities and areas with multiple indices of deprivation. This is alongside our work to support the CyberFirst Girls Competition, which opened its latest intake last month.

With DCMS funding, Tech Nation developed its Libra growth programme in 2021. The programme offers targeted support to minority ethnic tech founders in their scaling journey. Tech Nation has also developed a publicly available Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit, which supports scaling companies in implementing diversity and inclusion strategies in order to make the tech sector as a whole more accessible for those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90802>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90803>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.bcs.org/media/9808/cbf-report-2022.pdf>

Information about the Tech Talent Charter, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.techtalentcharter.co.uk/home>

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

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** 95928] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, to date, how many recommendations of the Lammy Review have been implemented in full and without qualification.

**Reply from Mike Freer:** The Government published its response to the Lammy Review in 2017. Of the 35 recommendations in the Lammy Review, 33 recommendations were accepted, with only the two that related to the independent judiciary which were rejected. Our commitment was to undertake actions against each of these accepted recommendations.

Of those actions we committed to in 2017, almost all have been completed, with work done against each of the accepted 33 recommendations. The remaining 4 actions are underway, for example, long-term recruitment targets to develop a more representative workforce within HM Prisons and Probation Service.

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/2022-11-24/95928>

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

The Government response to the Lammy Review, referred to above, can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/669206/Response\\_to\\_David\\_Lammy\\_Review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669206/Response_to_David_Lammy_Review.pdf)

The updates on progress referred to above can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/747335/tackling-racial-disparity-criminal-justice-system-2018-update-web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/747335/tackling-racial-disparity-criminal-justice-system-2018-update-web.pdf)

and

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/881317/tackling-racial-disparity-cjs-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881317/tackling-racial-disparity-cjs-2020.pdf)

## **UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers**

### **Prisoners: Ethnic Groups**

**Lord Bradley (Labour)** [HL3456] To ask His Majesty's Government how many people are currently in prison aged (1) 18 to 24, and (2) 25 to 29, broken down by ethnicity.

**Reply from Lord Bellamy:** Relevant data are provided in the statistical publication *Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System*. The most recent publication includes a snapshot of data for 30 June 2020. The relevant figures can be found in Table 6.01, which is reproduced in the attachment.

Data for 30 June 2021 and 30 June 2022 will be included in the next publication, which is scheduled for November 2023.

[Table](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-16/hl3456>

The publication referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ethnicity-and-the-criminal-justice-system-statistics-2020/ethnicity-and-the-criminal-justice-system-2020>

## New Publication

### Trends in egg, sperm and embryo donation 2020

<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/about-us/publications/research-and-data/trends-in-egg-sperm-and-embryo-donation-2020/>

## News

### Lack of ethnic diversity among egg and sperm donors

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-63796862>

### Prominent black and Asian Britons warn against BBC local radio cuts plan

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/dec/01/prominent-black-and-asian-britons-warn-against-bbc-local-radio-cuts>

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## Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

### UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Independent Cultural Review of London Fire Brigade

**Dawn Butler (Labour):** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will make a statement on Nazir Afzal OBE's independent cultural review of London Fire Brigade.

**Reply from the Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp):** ... The report written by Nazir Afzal OBE makes for deeply troubling reading. The behaviour uncovered is totally unacceptable. ...

I wish to assure the House that the Government have taken, and continue to drive, action in this area. Through the introduction of the independent inspection of fire and rescue services, we have highlighted issues with the culture in the fire service, and it is clear that these are not confined to the London Fire Brigade. ...

Furthermore, the Government have funded a number of important change programmes in the fire sector. We have supported the creation of a new code of ethics for fire and rescue services, setting out clear national expectations for standards of behaviour. The fire standards board, which the Home Office funds, has produced a fire standards code to support the code of ethics, as well as a specific safeguarding standard, supported by guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council. It will shortly publish new fire standards on leadership, addressing issues such as those raised by this deeply disturbing report.

I welcome the fact that the London fire commissioner has committed to addressing and implementing all 23 recommendations in full and note that the National Fire Chiefs Council has also committed to considering the report carefully. Through the White Paper and otherwise, the Government will continue to press to eliminate the appalling behaviour that this shocking report uncovered.

**Dawn Butler:** Nazir Afzal has found institutional misogyny, racism and discrimination in the fire service. His report is based on the testimony of 2,000 members and contains 23 recommendations, including the introduction of body-worn video by firefighters, an historic review of complaints about racism, misogyny and bullying, and secure facilities for all women. ...

... the report comes after the death of Jaden Francois-Espirit, a trainee at Wembley fire

station ... Two years ago, Jaden took his own life, aged just 21. ... Jaden was teased about every little thing, even the Caribbean food he brought in for lunch, and he made 16 requests to be transferred to another station. Nazir Afzal's report said: "Jaden's position was not unique. We have spoken to others that are equally isolated and harbouring suicidal thoughts."

I know some Government Members will accuse the report of being too woke or promoting wokery, but let me highlight some of the incidents. Female firefighters were found to have been groped and beaten, and had their helmets filled with urine and their clothes violated with semen. Some male firefighters who visited women's homes for safety visits would go through drawers looking for underwear and sex toys. A black firefighter had a noose put on his locker, and a Muslim firefighter had bacon and sausages stuffed in his pockets and a terrorist hotline sign posted on his locker. If being more woke will stop this behaviour, then I think we are not woke enough.

As the chair of London Labour MPs, I spoke to London fire commissioner Andy Roe, and he is determined to sack every single firefighter who is misogynistic, racist or homophobic at work, and that sends a strong message. I need to know what strong message the Government will send. ...

**Reply from Chris Philp:** I completely agree with the hon. Lady that the behaviour and the incidents that she just enumerated that were uncovered by the report are completely unacceptable. They have no place in any modern public service, whether that is the fire service or anywhere else. ...

I spoke to London fire commissioner Andy Roe on Friday to set out my strong feelings that this behaviour is totally unacceptable and needs to completely end. As the hon. Lady said, he has committed to implementing all 23 of the report's recommendations, including, importantly, outsourcing the complaints service, so that complaints are dealt with externally to the London Fire Brigade, and going back and looking again at all the complaints made over the last five years, to make sure they have been properly investigated—clearly, in many cases they have not been. He committed to ensuring that anyone found guilty of the sort of behaviour that she outlined from the report will be removed from their position. ...

**Maria Miller (Conservative):** I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement and agree that there is absolutely no place for racism or bullying in our society or any of our public services. Will he outline what he might also be doing to ensure that disciplinary measures are dealt with in a timely manner? ...

**Reply from Chris Philp:** My right hon. Friend is right about timeliness; that is one of the reasons why the London Fire Brigade Commissioner has said that he will be outsourcing the handling of complaints: to make sure that they are dealt with faster. ...

**Sarah Jones (Labour):** ... The report is grim: firefighters huddled around a screen watching porn; putting bacon in the sandwich of a Muslim colleague; and hanging a noose around the locker of a black co-worker—a pack mentality and systematic failure to stamp it out ... The Government have been put on notice time and again about cultural failings in our fire service. In 2015, an independent review in Essex found dangerous and pervasive bullying; in 2018, the inspectorate found failings in culture, values and the grievance process; in 2019 the inspectorate warned of an unchecked, toxic culture in many services; and in 2021, it found that change was urgently needed.

What was the Government's response? It was a haemorrhaging of the budget on training, ignoring the warnings from the inspectorate and playing politics with our fire service. ...

**Reply from Chris Philp:** I assure the hon. Lady that there is not any complacency. ...

As I said in my opening comments, the Fire Standards Board is in the process of publishing a number of standards that will be publicly available and that we will expect fire services to abide by. ...



**Diana Johnson (Labour):** This report is a catalogue of shameful and appalling behaviour. In April 2020, the National Fire Chiefs Council committed to publishing an annual report on equality, diversity and inclusion. When the Home Affairs Committee questioned the chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council earlier this year, he told us that he did not know whether the report had been published. When we questioned the chair again earlier this month, the annual report still had not been published. The NFCC does not plan to publish it until April 2023, and it is not sure whether it will publish another. Does the Minister agree that this as yet unfulfilled commitment and the equivocal statement relating to its work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion are concerning? The leadership and commitment from the top of organisations such as the National Fire Chiefs Council is critical to rooting out the sexism and racism evidenced in this review.

**Reply from Chris Philp:** I agree with the Select Committee Chair that this is a vitally important issue. We expect leadership from the entire fire system, including the chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council. She mentioned the question of report publication, and I think she said it intended to publish in April 2023. I am happy to take that away and raise it with the NFCC. I am sure she probably expressed a view in the Committee that it should be published sooner. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-28/debates/0068301B-D125-45BF-804D-276D01C6000C/IndependentCulturalReviewOfLondonFireBrigade>

*The Independent Review referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/7211/independent-culture-review-of-lfb-report953f61809024e20c7505a869af1f416c56530867cb99fb946ac81475cfd8cb38.pdf>

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

### Islamophobia

**Apsana Begum (Labour) [94891]** To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department has taken to mark Islamophobia Awareness Month 2022.

**Apsana Begum (Labour) [94892]** To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he is taking steps to adopt a definition of Islamophobia.

**Apsana Begum (Labour) [94893]** To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of Islamophobic hate crime; and if he will make a statement.

**Reply from Dehenna Davison:** We recognise the huge contribution British Muslims make to public life and we are committed to celebrating and promoting this, but we are not complacent. This Government takes tackling hatred towards Muslims very seriously and will not tolerate Anti-Muslim hatred in any form. We have supported Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with just over £4 million between 2016 and 2022 to support Muslim victims. We will outline our further steps in due course. Hate Crime Statistics in England and Wales are published annually, and the latest data are available [here](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94891>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94892>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-23/94893>

### Football: Antisemitism

**Fabian Hamilton (Labour) [90756]** To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture,

Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Premier League on reports of antisemitic chanting and acts at football matches.

**Reply from Stuart Andrew:** The Government has always been clear that racism, including any form of anti semitism, has no place in football, sport, or society at large. This is why the government and its arm's length bodies, Sport England and UK Sport, have worked closely with football authorities and the sector to ensure there is continued action to tackle all forms of racism at football matches.

This includes actions targeted at and around football grounds, such as improving reporting systems, providing better training and support for referees and stewards, and improving the quality of CCTV around stadia.

I will continue to meet with the Premier League and other football authorities to ensure that tackling all forms of racism remains a priority.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-18/90756>

## UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

### Independent Cultural Review of London Fire Brigade

*The answer previously given by the Minister in the House of Commons* was read in *the House of Lords*.

**Lord Coaker (Labour):** My Lords, female firefighters groped and beaten, a black firefighter having a noose put on his locker, and a Muslim firefighter having sausage and bacon sandwiches stuffed in his pocket—these are all awful examples, among many more, from the appalling report on the culture of the London Fire Brigade published yesterday. The report says that such abuse was shockingly often dismissed as being just banter. Do the Government agree that this has to be a watershed moment? How are the Government going to work with the London Fire Brigade commissioner, Andy Roe, to deliver the much-needed cultural change quickly? What evidence is there that this is a much wider problem than just London, and what are the Government going to do about that? Being shocked is one thing, but what is needed is action.

**Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom):** I agree with the noble Lord; the report written by Nazir Afzal makes for deeply troubling reading indeed. The London fire commissioner, Andy Roe, commissioned this review due to his significant concerns about the culture in his own service. The review also followed the tragic suicide of Jaden Matthew Francois-Espirit, a trainee firefighter ...

The London fire commissioner has accepted all 23 recommendations in the report, also stating that he will be fully accountable for improving culture. We will take a very close interest in how he intends to implement this.

**Baroness Pinnock (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, this is indeed a deeply troubling report. A life-saving emergency public service is being laid low by corrosively damaging behaviour by a minority of firefighters, despite the obvious dedication of the majority. ... will the Minister commit to providing a review of these recommendations within 12 months so that progress can be made and be seen to be made? Secondly, the report exposed the failure of the model of governance. Good governance would have exposed the failings and demanded action well before this horrific bullying, harassment, misogyny, homophobia and racial discrimination was brought to light. What action will the Government take—maybe the Minister can tell us—to remedy this absolute system failure of governance?

**Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** ... I think it is useful to remind the House that the report confirmed that the disadvantage and discrimination that affects brigade staff does not translate into its operations and does not impact on the way the brigade prevents and responds to incidents. ...

As for the Government's response, we should bear in mind that responsibility for

London Fire Brigade rests with the Mayor of London, but the Government published a fire reform White Paper in May. That set out proposals to reform the way the fire service supports and values its people. At its heart are plans to improve culture and professionalism and to put ethics at the heart of the service. ...

**Baroness Chakrabarti (Labour):** ... But what is happening in our country? What is happening to the culture of kindness, decency and mutual respect among our fellow citizens and, it seems, I am sorry to say, particularly some men in our country? We now have these allegations—more than allegations; we have case after case in the Metropolitan Police, these new revelations about our much-needed and respected fire service and allegations of bullying in the Palace of Westminster, even at senior Cabinet level. The Deputy Prime Minister is now being investigated for bullying. Will we hear from the Minister for Equalities or from the Prime Minister—the first non-white Prime Minister—who has small daughters for whom he no doubt cares and is concerned? Will we hear some leadership on the culture of dignity and decency in our country?

**Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** I cannot speculate about what the Prime Minister might say so I shall speak for myself. I agree with the noble Baroness: I am disturbed by many of these reports that I have to stand here and talk about. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-11-29/debates/0A50C09E-3125-43D6-A42E-B18685F4F217/IndependentCulturalReviewOfLondonFireBrigade>

*The Independent Review referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/7211/independent-culture-review-of-lfb-report953f61809024e20c7505a869af1f416c56530867cb99fb946ac81475cfd8cb38.pdf>

*The White Paper referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service/consultation-document-accessible>

## New Publications

**Racially Motivated Bullying: Policies and Recording in Scotland's Schools**

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/615c1bee105b4f55a98326d0/t/638601471d0e3c4bebfc3f8b/1669726556305/CRER+Racially+Motivated+Bullying+e-use.pdf>

**Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation**

[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/2022-11-28/OHCHR\\_ERT\\_Protecting\\_Minority%20Rights\\_Practical\\_Guide\\_web.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/2022-11-28/OHCHR_ERT_Protecting_Minority%20Rights_Practical_Guide_web.pdf)

## News

**Lady Susan Hussey quits over remarks to charity boss Ngozi Fulani**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63810468>

**Palace race incident was abuse, says charity boss**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63819482>

**Rishi Sunak: We've made progress on racism but job not done**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-63828919>

**Rishi Sunak says 'racism must be confronted' after royal family row**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-racism-royal-family-b2237229.html>

**Rishi Sunak says racism must be 'confronted' amid Lady Susan Hussey row**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2022/12/01/rishi-sunak-says-racism-must-confronted-amid-lady-susan-hussey/>

**Palace row raises awkward questions about race**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63808613>

**What is it like to be repeatedly asked where you are from?**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63822940>

**Royal race scandal: Charity boss says her authentic African pride led to 'attack' from palace aide**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/royal-race-row-ngozi-fulani-b2236890.html>

**Met Police officers 'mocked Holocaust victims' in WhatsApp group**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/met-police-officers-mocked-holocaust-victims-in-whatsapp-group-l2vwfgwwb>

**Scotland has 'dark undercurrent of everyday racism', says black presenter Afua Hagan**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/scotland-has-dark-undercurrent-of-everyday-racism-says-black-presenter-afua-hagan-v9nxqzm3q>

**James McAvoy's Cyrano de Bergerac co-stars 'racially abused' in Glasgow**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-63807748>

**James McAvoy 'saddened' by racial abuse towards female co-stars in Glasgow**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/11/30/james-mcavoy-saddened-racial-abuse-towards-female-co-stars-glasgow/>

**Racist abuse of James McAvoy cast 'brings shame on Glasgow'**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/james-mcavoy-saddened-by-racial-abuse-cyrano-cast-suffered-in-glasgow-rbhfqgbdc>

**To defeat racism, choose your targets with care**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/to-defeat-racism-choose-your-targets-with-care-s6s7p8pfp>

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## Other Scottish Parliament and Government

### Press Releases

**First Minister's St Andrew's Day Message (video)**

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovLondon/status/1597931521083469828>

**Cabinet Secretary calls for public to report domestic abuse incidents**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/cabinet-secretary-calls-for-public-to-report-domestic-abuse-incidents/>

## **Domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland, 2021-22**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/domestic-abuse-recorded-by-the-police-in-scotland-2021-22/>

## **Improving access to public information**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/improving-access-to-public-information/>

## **New Publication**

### **What can we learn from the COVID-19 response in supporting migrant and minority ethnic populations?**

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2022/11/29/guest-blog-what-can-we-learn-from-the-covid-19-response-in-supporting-migrant-and-minority-ethnic-populations/>

## **News**

### **Census lessons must be learned**

[https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2022/s22\\_221129\\_national\\_records\\_pr.pdf](https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2022/s22_221129_national_records_pr.pdf)

### **Lessons must be learned on low census rate - report**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-63797117>

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## **Other UK Parliament and Government**

### **Debate**

#### **Independence Referendum for Scotland**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-30/debates/152919E3-27C4-4FB1-8FF0-CBCC13867FF9/IndependenceReferendumForScotland>

### **New Publications**

#### **Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021>

#### **Ethnic group, England and Wales: Census 2021**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/ethnicgroupenglandandwales/census2021>

#### **National identity, England and Wales: Census 2021**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/nationalidentityenglandandwales/census2021>

#### **Language, England and Wales: Census 2021**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/bulletins/languageenglandandwales/census2021>

**Data tables and methodology: Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion: Census 2021 in England and Wales**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/ethnicgroupnationalidentitylanguageandreligioncensus2021inenglandandwales>

**Scottish independence referendum: legal issues**

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9104/CBP-9104.pdf>

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## **Cost of Living**

### **Scottish Government Website**

#### **Help during the cost of living crisis**

Most households are concerned about the cost of living, with worries about issues such as rent and mortgages, food and utility bills, energy costs, and debt.

In response, the Scottish Government has launched a new website that provides information to help people access support with

- Energy and Bills
- Benefits and Income
- Children and Families
- Debt and Money
- Health and Wellbeing

Your local council might be able to help if you need urgent help with money, food or fuel – contact the council for information.

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/>

### **News**

**Struggling to cope with the cost of living at Christmas? Seek help here**

<https://tfn.scot/news/struggling-to-cope-with-the-cost-of-living-at-christmas-seek-help-here>

**UK food prices soar to a new record high**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/11/30/egg-shortage-helps-drive-food-inflation-new-record-high/>

**“Worried this winter”: Millions anxious about the cost of living and energy bills**

<https://tfn.scot/news/worried-this-winter-millions-anxious-about-the-cost-of-living-and-energy-bills>

**‘Humanitarian crisis’: One million young families face fuel poverty in 2023**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/cost-living-energy-bills-fuel-poverty-b2233591.html>

**Triple jeopardy: Women of colour, austerity and the cost-of-living crisis**

<https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/triple-jeopardy-women-of-colour-austerity-and-the-cost-of-living-crisis/>

**'Cost of living? It's the cost of just surviving more like'**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/long-reads/health-nhs-energy-prices-poverty-b2237114.html>

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## New Publications

**Muslim Council of Britain: Census 2021 – First Look**

[https://mcusercontent.com/4efd81e7012b9e8ff1197ab2c/files/f858ad4b-0d15-54fe-65e8-da9b07c93816/MCB\\_Census\\_2021\\_First\\_Look\\_1\\_.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/4efd81e7012b9e8ff1197ab2c/files/f858ad4b-0d15-54fe-65e8-da9b07c93816/MCB_Census_2021_First_Look_1_.pdf)

**Jews in Britain in 2021: First results from the Census of England and Wales**

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Jews%20in%20Britain%20in%202021.First%20results%20from%20the%20census.November%202022.UPdated%20%282%29.pdf>

**Forgotten voices: Policing, stop and search and the perspectives of Black children**

[https://64e09bbc-abdd-42c6-90a8-58992ce46e59.usfiles.com/ugd/64e09b\\_bc69e917ecc4ae897dfaabb9cae3c1b.pdf](https://64e09bbc-abdd-42c6-90a8-58992ce46e59.usfiles.com/ugd/64e09b_bc69e917ecc4ae897dfaabb9cae3c1b.pdf)

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## Other News

**Leicester one of first cities in UK with no ethnic group majority, Census shows**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/leicester-uk-city-no-ethnic-group-majority-census-b2235630.html>

**Less than half of England and Wales population Christian, Census 2021 shows**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63792408>

**Census 2021 in charts: Christianity now minority religion in England and Wales**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/29/census-2021-in-charts-christianity-now-minority-religion-in-england-and-wales>

**Less than half of population are Christian, census reveals**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/census-uk-no-religion-christian-countries-2flscljds>

**As an atheist, declining religion worries me**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/as-an-atheist-declining-religion-worries-me-nsd3kl13n>

**Census shows 39 per cent of Muslims live in most deprived areas in England and Wales**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/census-2021-ons-muslim-deprived-b2235881.html>

**Census says 39% of Muslims live in most deprived areas of England and Wales**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/30/census-says-39-of-muslims-live-in-most-deprived-areas-of-england-and-wales>

**Forgotten voices: Policing, stop and search and the perspectives of Black children**  
<https://www.crestadvisory.com/post/forgotten-voices-policing-stop-and-search-and-the-perspectives-of-black-children>

**Only a third of black teenage girls trust the police**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/only-a-third-of-black-teenage-girls-trust-the-police-vwhfhndck>

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## **Bills in Progress** \*\* new or updated this week

### **Scottish Parliament**

**Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

**Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

### **UK Parliament**

**Asylum Seekers (Accommodation Eviction Procedures) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3257>

**Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3263>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3304>

**Bill of Rights Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

**Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3264>

**Human Trafficking (Child Protection) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3248>

**Human Trafficking (Sentencing) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3249>

**\*\* Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3282>

Bill as introduced

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/48625/documents/2590>

Explanatory Notes



<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0104/en/220104en.pdf>

## **\*\* Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Notice of amendments

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0121/amend/onlinesafety\\_rm\\_rep\\_1201.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0121/amend/onlinesafety_rm_rep_1201.pdf)

Written Ministerial Statements

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-29/debates/22112948000012/OnlineSafetyBill>  
and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-30/debates/22113030000010/OnlineSafetyBillGovernmentAmendments>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3164>

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated this week

**\*\* closes this week!**

**Let's Talk Scottish Education** (closing date 5 December 2022)

<https://consult.gov.scot/national-discussion-scottish-education/>

**Human Rights of Asylum Seekers in the UK** (closing date 15 December 2022)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/2967/>

**Possible changes to the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) Rules and the Upper Tribunal Rules arising from Nationality and Borders Act 2022**  
(applies in England and Wales only) (closing date 19 January 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/possible-changes-to-the-first-tier-tribunal-immigration-and-asylum-chamber-rules-and-the-upper-tribunal-rules-arising-from-nationality-and-borders-a>

**\*\* Access to information rights in Scotland** (closing date 14 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/access-information-rights-scotland-consultation/>

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## **Job Opportunities**

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

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## **Funding Opportunities**

\*\* new or updated this week

**Reaching New Scots Fund**

Closing date for applications: 18 December 2022

The Reaching New Scots Fund is designed and managed by people from refugee backgrounds in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, and is open to groups and organisations across Scotland that are run by New Scots or offer support to refugees and people seeking asylum. The fund aims to support smaller charities and not for profit groups that are often underfunded, and will therefore only accept applications from organisations with an average annual income of less than £250,000. For information and to apply see <https://tinyurl.com/5ch4pj3d>

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## Events, Conferences, and Training

\*\* new or updated this week

**\*\* this week!**

### **Building Support for Protecting Human Rights**

6 December 2022 (online, 9.30–12.00)

Human rights Consortium Scotland workshop about threats and opportunities around human rights in Scotland and the UK, including: What do we need to do to build active support and understanding of human rights in Scotland? And How do we cement support for the Human Rights Act, and get even more support to put all our rights in law? For information see <https://tinyurl.com/mvppwpt2>

**\*\* this week!**

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

6 and 7 December 2022 (Glasgow, 1.00–4.30)

Scottish Refugee Council course 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/rwr5cujc>

**\*\* this week!**

### **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. The course will 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](mailto:jamie@interfaithscotland.org)

**\*\* this week!**

### **Using OSCR Online to submit your annual return**

7 December 2022 (online, 1.00–2.00)

Office of the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR) webinar to explain why they ask for annual information, the recent changes to OSCR Online, and how to use the system to submit an online annual return. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/y68n7wd4>

**\*\* this week!**

### **Lifecycle of a charity - when is the right time to wind up?**

7 December 2022 (online, 1.00–2.00)

SCVO webinar looking at how to recognise when it's the right time to wind up and dissolve a charity. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2kvfva7>

**\*\* this week!**

### **The role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in tackling racism**

8 December 2022 (Glasgow, 9.30–11.30)

BEMIS consultation event to inform Hate Crime strategy in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2xzj4pch>

**\*\* this week!**

### **Abuses in Spiritual Contexts**

8 November 2022 (online, 11.00–12.30)

Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre event to work on solutions for better safeguarding in religious spaces, gather ideas for actions to promote healthy communities, and make reporting accessible when anything goes wrong. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2a3ye8j4>

**\*\* this week!**

### **A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach – The Basics**

9 December 2022 (online, 10.00–3.30)

13 January 2023 (online, 10.00–3.30)

THRE course about human rights and equalities - what are they, and why do they matter? What a human rights and equalities first approach is and why it is relevant to you and your organisation, and how we can start a conversation and talk constructively about human rights and equalities. For information about the November event see <https://tinyurl.com/ywajmvbp>, for the December event see <https://tinyurl.com/32sxxrfd>, and for the January event see <https://tinyurl.com/mpnfcddd>

### **Re-forming the Curriculum: Education as part of tackling hate crime**

14 December 2022 (online, 9.30–11.30)

BEMIS consultation event to inform Hate Crime strategy in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yckjvme8>

### **Supporting Refugee Integration**

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>

### **\*\* Funding and Fundraising - A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach**

23 January 2023 (online, 10.00–1.00)

THRE introduction to what a human rights and equalities approach means when talking about funding and fundraising. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/5fvak64s>

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## **Useful Links**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Disclosure Scotland** <https://www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types>

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

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

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**SCoJeC**  
Scottish Council of  
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

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

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



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

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