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The Scottish Parliament will be in recess from 24 December 2022 to 8 January 2023, and the UK Parliament will be in recess from 21 December 2022 to 9 January 2023. The next two issues of MEMO will be published on 23 December 2022, and 16 January 2023.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Displaced Ukrainians (Funding)

Clare Adamson (SNP): To ask the First Minister for her response to the update from the United Kingdom Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the funding for displaced Ukrainians and the funding implications for Scotland's public sector support.

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The announcement represents a significant cut in the funding available to deliver public services to those in need.

I think that it is counterproductive and short-sighted for the UK Government to make those cuts to the tariff for local councils, and we will be joining with the Welsh Government to make clear our opposition to them.

Right now, Ukrainians displaced by the war need more, not less, support, and we have continually called on the UK Government to extend funding in line with the three-year visa. Of course, Scotland has the highest number of arrivals by population share in the UK as we continue to seek to provide a place of safety; we use our own budget to do that—and we will continue to do so—but the UK Government needs to continue to step up and fulfil its responsibilities, and we will continue to encourage it to do exactly that.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14054&i=127314#ScotParlOR>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/2212145800012/HomesForUkraineSchemeUpdate>

UK Parliament Debates

Visa Processing Times

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/B7A2B986-93D3-4537-9F3C-994604ECCA9F/VisaProcessingTimes>

Asylum Seeker Employment and the Cost of Living

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/783AA4D4-5D03-4D11-BC77-28DBFB2FCBD9/AsylumSeekerEmploymentAndTheCostOfLiving>

Asylum Seekers (Removal to Safe Countries)

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/53238148-ADD5-4AB1-BAD1-7DE59FE79CF4/AsylumSeekers\(RemovalToSafeCountries\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/53238148-ADD5-4AB1-BAD1-7DE59FE79CF4/AsylumSeekers(RemovalToSafeCountries))

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Update

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Michael Gove)

[HCWS447] Today I announce measures to update the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This scheme has been a significant success. Although the initial roll-out of visas was slower than the Government would have liked, over 100,000 Ukrainian guests are now safe in the United Kingdom, and 37,500 more have valid visas and may choose to travel to the United Kingdom if circumstances change. The sheer number of applicants and of British families willing to open their homes to those seeking shelter is truly extraordinary.

The Government are committed to protecting this route to safety into its second year, but we need to do so in a way that is sustainable considering the wider pressures on public finances and the UK's overseas development assistance budgets. We are therefore setting out today a series of updates. These measures taken together are designed to recognise the contribution made by sponsors while also ensuring the sustainability of the programme over the longer term and to provide certainty to all those who are supporting our guests here in the UK.

“Thank you” payments

Hosting is a very significant commitment. The Government are enormously grateful to all those who have volunteered to share their home with Ukrainian people fleeing war. Without

the generosity of all our British sponsors, we simply would not have been able to give shelter to so many of those in need. In recognition of this, I am announcing today that the £350 “thank you” payments, will be extended from 12 months to a maximum duration of two years. The UK Government will also increase the minimum “thank you” payments for hosts from £350 per month to £500 per month, once a guest has been here in the UK for 12 months.

This additional financial support is aimed at helping existing hosts to continue with their sponsorship, as well as new hosts who come forward to offer a home to a Ukrainian individual or family.

Some local authorities are already uprating “thank you” payments using their own resource, and this is a measure we fully support. Our new package shows our strong desire to recognise the contribution made by sponsors, to help them with the rising cost of living and incentivise further sponsorships and rematching.

Funding for local authorities

Since the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched in March 2022, the UK Government have provided £1.1 billion to councils through a tariff for each arrival in their area.

This funding is available for councils to support Ukrainian guests and their sponsors. Given a fraction of Ukrainian arrivals return to Ukraine, after arriving in the UK, and the need to manage public finances at a time of significant economic challenge for the UK and the global economy, the Government will reduce the tariff for each local authority. Councils will continue to receive the existing year 1 tariff to support those Ukrainians who have already arrived, as previously set out.

From 1 January 2023, councils will receive funding of £5,900 for each new arrival to support guests and their sponsors, in addition to the “thank you” paid to sponsors. Local authorities will continue to receive separate funding in 2022-23 for the Ukraine education tariff under the rates and terms previously set out—a per child tariff of £3,000 for early years, £6,580 for primary and £8,755 for secondary and payments calculated on a pro-rata basis—and the Ukrainians families will also continue to receive Government support on skills training, jobcentre access and welfare payments. The Department fully recognises the many pressures on local authority budgets and at the autumn statement the Government announced a further £6.5 billion to be made available for local government to deliver core services over the next two years.

The Department will also provide £150 million of new UK-wide funding in the 2023-24 financial year to local authorities and devolved Governments to help support Ukrainian guests move into their own homes and reduce the risk of homelessness. Local authorities are best placed to understand the support needed for local communities, and as is typically the case for various local authority funding, they will also be able to use this funding to support other people at risk of homelessness. This funding will be allocated between the different parts of the UK in relation to their proportion of Ukrainian guests. I will be writing to local authorities and my counterparts in the devolved Administrations with more details on this shortly.

Local authority housing fund

Today, I am also launching a £500 million local authority housing fund, which will provide capital funding directly to English councils in areas that are facing the most significant housing pressures as a result of recent Ukrainian arrivals. These local authorities are facing housing challenges on the back of their generosity, which unless alleviated will further impact existing housing pressures. This fund will allow them to address the immediate pressures as well as build a sustainable stock of affordable housing for the future. This fund will also be used to provide homes for up to 500 Afghan families currently living in bridging hotels at a significant cost to taxpayers. Whilst helping to fulfil the UK’s humanitarian duties to assist those fleeing war, the fund will create a lasting legacy for UK nationals by providing a new supply of accommodation for councils with which to address local housing and homelessness pressures.

The UK Government continues to work with the Ukrainian Government, the devolved Governments, local authorities and charities and voluntary groups to deliver the Homes for Ukraine scheme and support sponsors and their guests.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/22121458000012/HomesForUkraineSchemeUpdate>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Illegal Immigration

The Prime Minister (Rishi Sunak): ... With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on illegal migration. I hope that the whole House will agree that there is a complex moral dimension to illegal migration. The balancing of our duty to support people in dire need with the responsibility to have genuine control over our borders understandably provokes strong feelings. So it is my view that the basis for any solution should be not just what works but what is right.

The simplest moral framing for this issue, and one that I believe Members on both sides of the House believe in, is fairness. It is unfair that people come here illegally. It is unfair on those with a genuine case for asylum when our capacity to help is taken up by people coming through—and from—countries that are perfectly safe. It is unfair on those who migrate here legally when others come here by cheating the system. Above all, it is unfair on the British people who play by the rules when others come here illegally and benefit from breaking those rules. So people are right to be angry, because they see what I see, which is that this simply is not fair.

It is not cruel or unkind to want to break the stranglehold of criminal gangs who trade in human misery and who exploit our system and laws. Enough is enough. As currently constructed, the global asylum framework has become obsolete. Today, there are 100 million people displaced globally. Hostile states are using migration as a weapon on the very borders of Europe. As the world becomes more unstable, and the effects of climate change make more places uninhabitable, the numbers displaced will only grow.

We have a proud history of providing sanctuary to those most in need. Britain helped craft the 1951 refugee convention to protect those fleeing persecution. My right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) passed the world's first Modern Slavery Act in 2015. In the last year, we have opened our hearts and our homes to people from Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Ukraine. Thousands of families will be setting extra places around the Christmas table this year. No one—no one—can doubt our generosity of spirit.

But today, far too many of the beneficiaries of that generosity are not those directly fleeing war zones or at risk of persecution, but people crossing the channel in small boats. Many originate from fundamentally safe countries. All travel through safe countries. Their journeys are not ad hoc, but co-ordinated by ruthless, organised criminals. And every single journey risks the lives of women, children and—we should be honest—mostly men at sea.

This is not what previous generations intended when they drafted our humanitarian laws, nor is it the purpose of the numerous international treaties to which the UK is a signatory. Unless we act now and decisively, this will only get worse. Already in just seven weeks since I became Prime Minister, we have delivered the largest ever small boats deal with France, with significantly more boots on the ground patrolling their beaches. For the first time, UK and French officers are embedded in respective operations in Dover and northern France. We have re-established the Calais group of northern European nations to disrupt traffickers all along the migration route. Last week, the group set a long-term ambition for a UK-EU-wide agreement on migration. Of course, that is not a panacea and we need to go much further. Over the last month, the Home Secretary and I have studied every aspect of this issue in detail, and we can now set out five new steps today.

First, our policing of the channel has been too fragmented, with different people doing different things being pulled in different directions. So we will establish a new, permanent, unified small boats operational command. This will bring together our military, our civilian capabilities and the National Crime Agency. It will co-ordinate our intelligence, interception, processing and enforcement, and use all available technology, including drones for reconnaissance and surveillance, to pick people up and identify and then prosecute more gang-led boat pilots. We are adding more than 700 new staff and also doubling the funding given to the NCA for tackling organised immigration crime in Europe.

Secondly, those extra resources will free up immigration officers to go back to enforcement, which will, in turn, allow us to increase raids on illegal working by 50%. And it is frankly absurd that today illegal migrants can get bank accounts which help them live and work here. So we will re-start data sharing to stop that.

Thirdly, it is unfair and appalling that we are spending £5.5 million every day on using hotels to house asylum seekers. We must end this. We will shortly bring forward a range of alternative sites, such as disused holiday parks, former student halls and surplus military sites. We have already identified locations that could accommodate 10,000 people, and are in active discussions to secure these and more. ...

These sites will accommodate 10,000 people, and we are in active discussions to secure them and many more. Our aim is to add thousands of places through this type of accommodation in the coming months, at half the cost of hotels. At the same time, as we consulted on over the summer, the cheapest and fairest way to solve this problem is for all local authorities to take their fair share of asylum seekers in the private rental sector, and we will work to achieve this as quickly as possible.

Fourthly, we need to process claims in days or weeks, not months or years, so we will double the number of asylum caseworkers. We are radically re-engineering the end-to-end process, with shorter guidance, fewer interviews and less paperwork, and we are introducing specialist caseworkers by nationality. We will also remove the gold-plating in our modern slavery system, including by reducing the cooling-off period from 45 days to 30 days, the legal minimum set out in the Council of Europe convention on action against trafficking in human beings. As a result of all these changes, we will triple the productivity of our caseworkers and we expect to abolish the backlog of initial asylum decisions by the end of next year.

Fifthly, and most significantly, a third of all those arriving in small boats this year, almost 13,000 people, are Albanian, yet Albania is a safe, prosperous European country. It is deemed safe for returns by Germany, France, Italy and Sweden. It is an EU accession country, a NATO ally and a member of the same convention against trafficking as the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister of Albania has himself said there is no reason why we cannot return Albanian asylum seekers immediately. Last year, Germany, France, Belgium and Sweden all rejected almost 100% of Albanian asylum claims, yet our rejection rate is just 45%. That must not continue, so today I can announce a new agreement with Albania and a new approach.

First, we will embed Border Force officers in Tirana airport for the first time ever, helping to disrupt organised crime and stop people coming here illegally. Secondly, we will issue new guidance for our caseworkers to make it crystal clear that Albania is a safe country. Thirdly, one of the reasons why we struggle to remove people is that they unfairly exploit our modern slavery system, so we will significantly raise the threshold someone must meet to be considered a modern slave. For the first time, we will require a caseworker to have objective evidence of modern slavery, rather than just a suspicion. Fourthly, we have sought and received formal assurances from Albania confirming that it will protect genuine victims and people at risk of re-trafficking, allowing us to detain and return people to Albania with confidence and in line with ECAT. As a result of these changes, the vast majority of claims from Albania can simply be declared clearly unfounded, and those individuals can be swiftly returned. Lastly, we will change how we process Albanian illegal

migrants with a new dedicated unit, staffed by 400 new specialists, expediting cases within weeks. Over the coming months, thousands of Albanians will be returned home, and we will keep going with weekly flights until all the Albanians in our backlog have been removed.

In addition to all these new steps, let the House be in no doubt that, when legal proceedings conclude on our migration and economic development partnership, we will restart the first flights to Rwanda, so that those who are here illegally and cannot be returned to their home country can build a new life there.

However, even with the huge progress that we will make with the changes I have announced today, there remains a fundamental question: how do we solve this problem once and for all? It is not just our asylum system that needs fundamental reform; our laws need reform too. We must be able to control our borders to ensure that the only people who come here come through safe and legal routes. However well intended, our legal frameworks are being manipulated by people who exploit our courts to frustrate their removal for months or years on end.

I said, "Enough is enough", and I meant it. That means that I am prepared to do what must be done, so early next year we will introduce new legislation to make it unambiguously clear that, if you enter the UK illegally, you should not be able to remain here. Instead, you will be detained and swiftly returned either to your home country or to a safe country where your asylum claim will be considered. You will no longer be able to frustrate removal attempts with late or spurious claims or appeals, and once removed, you should have no right to re-entry, settlement or citizenship.

Furthermore, if our reforms on Albania are challenged in the courts, we will also put them on a statutory footing to ensure that the UK's treatment of Albanian arrivals is no different from that of Germany or France. The only way to come to the UK for asylum will be through safe and legal routes and, as we get a grip on illegal migration, we will create more of those routes. We will work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to identify those who are most in need so that the UK remains a safe haven for the most vulnerable. We will also introduce an annual quota on numbers, set by Parliament in consultation with local authorities to determine our capacity, and amendable in the face of humanitarian emergencies.

That is the fair way to address this global challenge. Tackling this problem will not be quick; it will not be easy; but it is the right thing to do. We cannot persist with a system that was designed for a different era. We have to stop the boats, and this Government will do what must be done. We will be tough but fair, and where we lead, others will follow. ...

Keir Starmer (Labour): ... Channel crossings are a serious problem requiring serious solutions. We need leadership at home and abroad, we need a Home Office that functions effectively, and we need to defeat the criminal gangs operating on the coast. ...

As I listened to the Prime Minister's statement, I thought, "All of that has been said before, almost word for word." It was said the last time we had measures—the last time we had legislation. There have been plenty of newspaper headlines about wave machines, prison ships and fantasy islands, but there has been no effective action. ...

Over 40,000 people have crossed the channel this year—that is a record—but only 2% have had their asylum claim processed. What happens to the other 98%? They are placed in hotels, costing around £7 million a day. That is bad for refugees who want to rebuild their lives and bad for taxpayers. And 2022 is not just a one-off bad year ... Last year, the percentage of channel crossing asylum claims processed was just 4%. ...

I welcome the commitment to fast-track clearly unfounded claims. ... Can the Prime Minister confirm—I want to have an answer on this—that he will clear the backlog by the end of next year? That is 150,000 cases in the backlog ...

I also welcome more staff for processing. ... But processing is only part of the answer. Criminal gangs are sending these people to risk their lives, and they thrive because of a total failure of any co-ordinated response or effective deterrent to their criminal activity. For

months, we have been calling for action to tackle this root cause: a specialist cell in the National Crime Agency to catch, prosecute and disband criminal gangs. We need to be working internationally to end this cross-border crime. ...

Money is being wasted on the unworkable, unethical plan to deport people to Rwanda: £140 million has been wasted already, with not a single deportation. The most senior civil servant in the Home Office is the only one in Government to tell the truth: it does not even work as a deterrent. ... We need to bring this to an end, and that means a proper plan to crack down on the gangs, quick processing, return agreements: serious solutions to a serious problem. ...

Reply from the Prime Minister: ... He talks about processing and about the hotels, but the only way to stop that problem is to stop the boats. We are the only party that has a plan to tackle these issues, with a new small boats operational command in the channel, deals with Albania and France, cheaper accommodation, tougher immigration enforcement, and new legislation making it clear in law for the first time that, if you come here illegally, you cannot stay. ...

Theresa May (Conservative): ... Does he agree that, in dealing with asylum claims, the onus must be on the Home Office to improve its processing; that, contrary to what is said by some commentators and, sadly, some Members of this House, people smuggling and human trafficking are distinct and separate crimes and should not be treated or spoken of as one; that modern slavery is a real and current threat, with too many people brought to this country into slavery; and that we must do nothing to diminish our world-leading protections for the victims of this terrible, horrific crime?

Reply from the Prime Minister: ... She is absolutely right that it is incumbent on us to ensure our processing is swift and effective. I know she will want to join me in ensuring that our world-leading modern slavery regime actually helps the people who are most in need and most vulnerable. They are the people who need our support and that is what our reforms today will deliver.

Stephen Flynn (SNP): ... Nobody is illegal. Indeed, there is no such thing as an illegal asylum seeker. But what we all agree on is that the UK's system is broken and we cannot escape from the fact of who has broken it. To address some of the problems that are faced, I welcome some of what the Prime Minister said. I have personally visited hotel accommodation and seen the damaging impact that those long stays have had on people within it, so I hope we can all agree on the positive words about speeding up the process. However, I have grave concerns about the proposed legislation, about the proposals on accommodation and about the one-size-fits-all approach to asylum seekers emanating from Albania. In that regard, I ask the Prime Minister a simple question: has he consulted with the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees in respect of these proposals? If not, why not?

Ultimately, the solutions lie not in any of the above proposals but in ensuring that safe and legal routes exist. ...

Reply from the Prime Minister: I am happy to tell the hon. Gentleman that the Development Secretary met the UN High Commissioner for Refugees last weekend. A point of difference between us and the Opposition parties is that we believe that we should not need the permission of someone outside to control our own borders.

The hon. Gentleman also asked about Albania and our approach. I gently point out to him that what we are doing is in line with what almost every other European country already does with regard to Albanian migrants.

Lastly, the hon. Gentleman made the frankly absurd claim that we do not have safe and legal routes into the UK. In the last few years, we have made offers of over 450,000 places to welcome people from Afghanistan, Syria, Hong Kong and, most recently, Ukraine. That is because this is a compassionate, tolerant country, and it always will be. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/DB61C374-16B5-411C-9A29-CC3DCA119EB3/IllegalImmigration>

Small Boats Incident in the Channel

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman): With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement about an incident in the channel this morning. This is an ongoing search and rescue incident, but I can confirm that at the time of making this statement, tragically, there have been four fatalities. ...

I know that everyone in this House and across the country will join me in expressing our profound sadness and deepest sympathies for everyone affected by this terrible event. I know they will also join me in offering our profound gratitude to those working on the search and rescue operation. ...

These are the days we dread. Crossing the channel in unseaworthy vessels is a lethally dangerous endeavour, and it is for this reason, above all, that we are working so hard to destroy the business model of the people smugglers—the evil, organised criminals who treat human beings as cargo.

As the Prime Minister told the House only yesterday: “It is not cruel or unkind to want to break the stranglehold of criminal gangs who trade in human misery and who exploit our system and laws.”—[\[Official Report, 13 December 2022; Vol. 724, c. 885.\]](#)

He was right. This morning’s tragedy, like the loss of 27 people on one November day last year, is the most sobering reminder possible of why we have to end these crossings.

We recently agreed the largest ever small boats deal with France, with more boots on the ground patrolling France’s beaches and with UK and French officers working together in both countries. The Calais group of northern European nations works to disrupt trafficking and smuggling all along the migration route and has set an ambition for a UK and EU-wide agreement on migration.

Since 2015, we have welcomed 450,000 people here from across the world via safe and legal routes, making these dangerous crossings totally unnecessary, but it is evident that we have to go much further, which is why [the Prime Minister announced a new package](#) yesterday. ...

As we grip illegal migration, we will create more safe and legal routes, working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to identify those most in need, and we will introduce an annual quota set by Parliament. We will work closely with local authorities to determine capacity.

It is not true that our capacity is limitless. We are already spending millions on hotels every day. People do not need to seek asylum if they are already in a safe country. It is vital—literally vital—that we end the illegal crossings of the channel. ...

Yvette Cooper (Labour): ... This is truly tragic, deeply distressing news. All our thoughts and prayers are with those who lost their lives, and with the families and friends who lost loved ones in the icy waters of the channel. We are also thinking of those who are receiving support and medical assistance, and who may have been rescued, too.

We all give our thanks to the brave responders and rescuers from Border Force, the RNLI, the coastguard, the MOD, our emergency services and the French authorities. ...

It was barely more than a year ago that 27 lives were lost when a boat went down, and all of us have warned and all of us have feared that it was just a matter of time before more lives were lost. It is, of course, why the UK and France both need to act to stop these dangerous boat crossings. The brutal truth as well is that criminal gangs have made money from those lives that were lost today; they have profited as people have drowned. Day after day, week after week, criminal gangs are putting lives at risk for money. The other brutal truth is that, far from our stopping those criminal gangs, those gangs have grown and grown. ...

Those gangs have created a multimillion-pound criminal industry, with lives at stake, and the action against those gangs has been too weak. There have been barely any prosecutions or convictions, and barely any inroads into the smuggler gangs. ...

The Home Secretary has also referred to safe legal routes. ... When will she be taking action to address that, to prevent children who are seeking to rejoin family in the UK from making desperate journeys? ...

The responsibility for the lives that have been lost in the channel lies with the criminal gangs. They need to be caught, prosecuted and jailed for the loss of life in the cold sea, and we need comprehensive action. ...

Reply from Suella Braverman: Today is a day to demonstrate our sympathy for the victims and the families involved in this tragic incident. It is a day to express gratitude to our hard-working emergency services, Border Force, search and rescue and MOD colleagues who at this moment are conducting an operation in the channel, in very difficult and challenging circumstances. ...

The small boats operational command is going to be a new operational command, which the Prime Minister announced yesterday, as part of our plan to go further on our action to stop the boats crossing the channel. This means we are setting up a new headquarters, the small boats operational command, in Border Force, with military support for specialist planning and operational advice. As part of that, we will bring in new air and maritime capabilities, including new drones, land-based radar and fixed-wing aircraft, and we will more than double our current permanent staffing levels, with 100 new staff at HQ and more than 600 new operational staff based at Dover. ...

The deal that we signed last month with colleagues in France is a big step forward in our cross-channel co-operation, for we share a common challenge. That new arrangement will see more dangerous and unnecessary crossings being prevented. Last year our joint efforts prevented more than 23,000 unnecessary journeys, and this year, to date, the number is 31,000. ...

The right hon. Lady mentioned safe and legal routes. Since 2015 we have made it possible for 450,000 people to come here via safe and legal routes, and that is a record of which I am immensely proud. These are people who have come from countries such as Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan. ... We will extend safe and legal routes once we have dealt with the appalling people-smuggling gangs who are risking people's lives, as we have seen this morning. ...

Alison Thewliss (SNP): ... I and my SNP colleagues send our sincerest condolences to the families and friends of those four reported to have died in the early hours of this morning and hope that it will be possible for the rescued to make a full recovery. We give thanks to all those involved in the rescue efforts in such perishingly cold conditions and those still out searching in the channel.

We want to end these crossings; everybody does. The reality is, as it has always been, that while safe and legal routes do not exist, and while people wait years for applications for family reunions, desperate people will continue to take life-threatening journeys, because they feel that they have no choice. ...

If the Home Secretary truly wants to break the lucrative model of organised crime behind this, she should bring in Dubs and Dublin-style routes and allow people to apply from abroad and get on a plane rather than forcing them to get in a flimsy dinghy in the depths of winter. It is cruel to ignore the reality, and dangerous to keep repeating the same mistakes. People are paying not only with money, but with their lives. ...

Reply from Suella Braverman: As I have said, I am incredibly proud of this country's generosity and, in fact, of this Government's track record on extending the hand of friendship to more than 300,000 people this year alone. Those people have fled persecution, conflict and have come through humanitarian routes to find shelter and safety in the United Kingdom. I strongly dispute the hon. Lady's

suggestion that, somehow, our system is inadequate. None the less, the Prime Minister has committed to going further and ensuring that there is a legitimised, capped, quota-ised system of safe and legal routes, which will be part of our measures after we have tackled the issue of illegal migration. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/D6B7CC8D-19CC-4664-8E71-547E343B5ABC/SmallBoatsIncidentInTheChannel>

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme

Caroline Lucas (Green) [902772] How many at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni in Afghanistan [the Minister's] Department has (a) assessed as eligible for and (b) resettled under the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme pathway 3 since 6 January 2022.

Sam Tarry (Labour) [902777] What humanitarian support [the Minister's] Department is providing to Afghan people (a) in and (b) fleeing Afghanistan.

Reply from the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly): The UK has already resettled more than 6,300 people through various resettlement schemes. In the first phase of the Afghan resettlement scheme pathway 3, we will offer up to 1,500 places. We have received 11,400 expressions of interest and we are working through those quickly. We have disbursed £228 million since April 2022, on top of £286 million in aid for Afghanistan last financial year.

Caroline Lucas: The Foreign Secretary says that he is working quickly, yet we know that zero Afghans have been resettled under the ACRS. No wonder yesterday the Minister of State, the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), admitted that we must do better when confronted with the staggering delay. I am in touch with Chevening alumni, for example, who have been living in fear of their lives for more than 16 months now. By the Government's own admission, pathway 3 in its first year will help only 400 applicants and their families—a tiny number—out of more than 11,000. Will the Foreign Secretary and the Home Office urgently supercharge the scheme, increase the number of people working on it in the Department and, crucially, allow the 20,000 people Ministers say they want to help over five years to come now? They cannot wait for another four or five years; they are in fear of their lives now.

Reply from James Cleverly: I have to correct the hon. Lady. She says that we have not made any resettlements under the ACRS. As I said in my answer, we have granted indefinite leave to remain to 6,300 eligible people. I think that she was making specific reference to pathway 3, which we are working on, but the House ought to recognise that we have already given indefinite leave to remain to more than 6,000 eligible people.

Sam Tarry: Last year my team and I heard countless harrowing, brutal stories of people and their families being murdered in Afghanistan, often while on the phone to my casework team. My team are still shocked and triggered by that awful experience; by the pictures they saw and the voicemails they heard. The FCDO really has to do a lot more to make sure that more people in Afghanistan do not die at the hands of the Taliban. I do not know whether I am going to correct my friend the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas), but my understanding is that only four Afghans have been resettled under the ACRS. Many of my constituents have lost loved ones, so I want to know just two things from the Foreign Secretary: what support is being offered to Afghan refugees currently stuck in Pakistan, and what will he be doing to speak to Home Office colleagues and ensure that this absolute mess of resettling people is sorted out promptly?

Reply from James Cleverly: Yet again, I have to correct the hon. Gentleman. He said that only four people had been settled under the ACRS. I say again, for the

third time, that around 6,300 eligible people have been granted indefinite leave to remain under the referral pathways of the ACRS. We will of course continue to work both across HMG and with our international partners to resettle at-risk Afghans, and will particularly look at the individuals who have been supportive of the UK, and those particularly at risk because they are women, academics or members of the judiciary.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/C21F362C-3661-474F-BBDC-C46EC775A834/AfghanCitizensResettlementScheme>

Information about Pathway 3, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme-pathway-3-eligibility-for-british-council-and-gardaworld-contractors-and-chevening-alumni>

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

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Channel Migrants

Deportation: EU Countries

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [108230] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the joint statement on migration issues by Ministers from the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium on 8 December 2022, what specific discussions she had with representatives of those governments on a potential returns agreement between the UK and (a) France and (b) the EU as a whole; and what the outcome was of those discussions.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Migrant crossings across the Channel are illegal, dangerous and unnecessary. This Government is determined to work with European partners to put the evil people smuggling gangs out of business and save lives.

In the joint statement agreed at the 8 December 2022 meeting of Interior Ministers, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium expressed their willingness to work towards an EU-UK cooperation agreement on migration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-12/108230>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/interior-ministers-joint-statement-on-migration/joint-statement-on-migration-issues>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Lee Anderson (Conservative) [103021] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers who (a) came across the Channel illegally in small boats and (b) arrived in the UK by other means have been arrested by police for offences other than under the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 since the commencement of that Act.

Lee Anderson (Conservative) [103023] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many allegations of assault have been made against asylum seekers who (a) came across the Channel illegally in small boats and (b) arrived in the UK by other means since 1 January 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: If Police suspect they are dealing with a non-settled person, the Police will contact Immigration Enforcement to check a person's status and a record is made of that on our databases; however this information is not recorded in a way which is reportable

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-05/103021>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-05/103023>

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Beth Winter (Labour) [105514] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her foreword to the report by the Centre for Policy Studies entitled Stopping the Crossings, published in November 2022, whether she has had recent discussions with the UNHCR Representative to the UK on the recommendations of the report.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Secretary has not discussed the recommendations with the UNHCR Representative. The latest transparency returns for the Home Office can be found here: [Home Office: ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings, April to June 2022](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-07/105514>

The report referred to above can be read at

[https://cps.org.uk/wp-](https://cps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/CPS_STOPPING_THE_CROSSINGSV4.pdf)

[content/uploads/2022/12/CPS_STOPPING_THE_CROSSINGSV4.pdf](https://cps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/CPS_STOPPING_THE_CROSSINGSV4.pdf)

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [89834] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications have received decisions as of 16 November.

Reply from James Heapey: Between August 2021 and November 2022, over 8,800 decisions have been issued to principal applicants. It is important to note that issuing decisions to principal applicants will simultaneously close all duplicate applications that the principal may have also submitted. As such, the total number processed during this period will be significantly higher.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-17/89834>

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

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

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [97483] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of those eligible for the Afghan Relations and Assistance Policy scheme and safely evacuated to the UK have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Since April 2021, we have relocated over 11,200 Afghans to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). The recent update to the published '[Afghan Resettlement: Operational Data](#)', shows that, at 4th November 2022:

- The UK has welcomed 22,833 individuals from Afghanistan since June 2021.
- We have granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) to 12,296 individuals across ARAP and ACRS - of which the total number granted ILR under ARAP stands at 5,982.

The figures shown here should be considered provisional, whilst work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the ARAP and resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the

number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/97483>

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>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Ruth Jones (Labour) [103047] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan refugees have been resettled in (a) Wales and the (b) the UK in the last 12 months.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The recent update to the published '[Afghan Resettlement: Operational Data](#)', shows that, as of 4th November 2022:

- 22,833 individuals from Afghanistan have been brought to safety in the UK (since the end of June 2021).
- We have granted Indefinite Leave to Remain to 12,296 individuals.

Work is now underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the ARAP and ACRS on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on the number of people resettled under each scheme will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

At present a breakdown of Afghan resettlement by region and by year has not been publicly released. In line with past publications, we anticipate that this data will be included in future editions of the [quarterly Immigration Statistics](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-05/103047>

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>

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [97485] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September to Question 41934 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how many principals with confirmed eligibility under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme have not been relocated to the UK for more than six months since confirmation of that eligibility.

Reply from James Heappey: As of 29 November 2022, we are aware of approximately 332 Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) eligible principals who received an eligibility decision either on or prior to 28 May 2022 that have not yet been relocated to the UK. We are relocating individuals and their family members as quickly as possible, actively communicating with individuals to resolve a range of potential barriers to travel.

The conditions in Afghanistan mean that supporting the movement of ARAP eligible persons out of Afghanistan is complex, but despite this we are continuing to move individuals to safety. To date, we have relocated over 12,000 ARAP principals and their dependants to the UK, including over 5,000 since Op PITTING concluded at the end of August 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/97485>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-21/41934>

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

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Ukraine

Local Housing Allowance: Refugees

Hilary Benn (Labour) [106346] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to issue Ukrainian refugees with a letter confirming their entitlement to local housing payments.

Reply from Mims Davies: Eligibility for benefits, including help with housing costs depends on a person's immigration status in the UK as determined by the Home Office. Those who were residing in Ukraine immediately before 1 January 2022, and who have fled in response to the Russian Invasion are eligible for income-related, disability and carer benefits from day one of their arrival in the UK, subject to all other entitlement conditions being met.

DWP does not issue letters to individuals regarding potential eligibility. However, all claims to benefit will be decided in accordance with current legislation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-08/106346>

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

Visas: Skilled Workers

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [96668] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps applicants for skilled worker visas need to take if their non-British passport expires while their visa application is under consideration.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Where a person makes an application as a skilled worker from overseas and their passport expires before a decision is made, we will consider the application and, if the application is to be granted, we will write to the person and ask them to provide a new or extended passport. If they do not provide a new or extended passport, we will refuse their application.

Where the person makes an application as a skilled worker from within the UK and their passport expires before a decision is made, we will continue to consider and decide their application. If they are granted permission to stay, they will be issued with a standalone document (a biometric residence or an eVisa) and so their grant of permission is not reliant on them having a valid passport.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-25/96668>

Migrants: Domestic Abuse

Owen Thompson (SNP) [106497] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he plans to take steps to review the No Recourse to Public Funds condition for migrants who have suffered from domestic abuse.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for this Government and we are committed to supporting all victims. Anyone who has suffered domestic abuse should be treated as a victim first and foremost, regardless of their immigration status.

The Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) already allows for eligible migrant victims to apply for the lifting of the no recourse to public funds condition

(NRPF) associated with their leave, enabling the victim to access welfare benefits while their application for indefinite leave to remain as a victim of domestic abuse (DVILR) is made and considered.

To be eligible for DVILR an individual's last grant of leave must have been on a spouse, civil partner, unmarried partner or same sex partner visa in a relationship with a British citizen or settled person. Other cohorts, such as those with refugee leave or the partners of those with pre-settled status via the EU Settlement Scheme, are also eligible to apply for DVILR. Migrant victims of domestic abuse who are subsequently granted DVILR are not subject to NRPF.

In March 2021 we launched the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme. This pilot, run by Southall Black Sisters and their delivery partners and supported with £1.5 million of Government funding, has provided wraparound support services for all migrant victims of domestic abuse with NRPF.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-08/106497>

Migrants: Finance

Owen Thompson (SNP) [106499] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of (a) adults and (b) children in the UK who have No Recourse to Public Funds as of 8 December 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition applies to millions of people, the vast majority of whom are visitors or other temporary migrants who have no need for public funds during their stay. It also applies to those without status, many of whom may not be in touch with the Home Office.

The Home Office's Chief Statistician wrote to the Office for Statistics Regulation on 3 July 2020 to explain why the Home Office does not feel that it is of practical application to produce an estimate of the total population subject to NRPF present in the UK at any one time.

The Home Office publishes an extensive range of data in respect of No Recourse to Public Funds change of conditions applications, including data on age, gender and nationality. This data is available in the Home Office transparency data, published here:

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

in the "Immigration & Protection" data tables.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-08/106499>

Refugees

Jim Shannon (DUP) [105351] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to help protect people who have fled from (a) Hong Kong, (b) Taiwan and (c) authoritarian regimes.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: On 31 January 2021 the UK Government opened the BN(O) route for BN(O) status holders in Hong Kong. As of 30 September, over 144,000 visas been granted so far on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) route (BN(O)). The route gives them and their eligible family members the opportunity to live, study and work in the UK on a pathway to citizenship. On 30 November 2022 the BN(O) route was expanded to allow the adult children of BN(O) status holders who were born on or after 1 July 1997 and are aged 18 or over the ability to apply to the route independently of their BN(O) parents. They will need to meet all remaining requirements of the route.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-07/105351>

Information about the BN(O) route, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa>

Asylum: Albania

Selaine Saxby (Conservative) [97785] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons the rates of approval for asylum claims made by people from Albania are different in the UK to those of other countries in Europe.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Other countries in Europe have legal migration routes that may impact the number of asylum claims lodged and subsequently granted. For example, Germany pursued a Western Balkan strategy which included issuing of 250,000 work visas from 2016-2020 and subsequently saw a 90% reduction in total asylum claims from the region across 2015-2017, from 120,882 first time applications in 2015 to 10,915 in 2017. Asylum grant rates can fluctuate for a number of different reasons, for example prioritisation of certain case types, including those more vulnerable for safeguarding or health-related reasons, and changes in country situations. Within a nationality, the grant rate can also vary. For example, despite the overall grant rate for Albanians in the year ending September 2022 being 51%, for Albanian adult men the grant rate was 13% and for Albanian women and children it was 88% ([How many people do we grant protection to?](#)). The domestic UK case law of [TD and AD \(Trafficked women\) CG \[2016\] UKUT 92 \(IAC\)](#) sets out the current approach to assess asylum claims from Albanian females who claim to be a victim of trafficking. It details the likelihood of risk on return, vulnerability factors that must be taken into account, and whether there is sufficiency of protection in Albania. Other European countries are not bound by this, or any other UK case law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/97785>

Asylum: Interviews

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [102989] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) accommodation and (b) other support her Department provides to asylum seekers between the time of an asylum seeker making an appointment with an asylum intake unit and that appointment taking place.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office has a legal obligation to provide support to asylum-seekers who would otherwise be destitute.

Those wishing to claim asylum are expected to do so on arrival at the port of entry or, if already in the UK, and their circumstances change, as soon as possible at the Asylum Intake Unit (AIU) in Croydon. The AIU operates an appointment process for those who have accommodation, but a walk-in service is available for those who are destitute and need immediate accommodation.

Destitute asylum seekers can access initial support under section 98 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 which is offered as initial or contingency accommodation (usually full board) when they make an appointment to attend an asylum screening interview at the AIU and until the appointment time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-05/102989>

Asylum: Employment

Rupa Huq (Independent) [104316] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing asylum seekers the right to work while they await a decision on their asylum application.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-06/104316>

Asylum: Housing

Peter Grant (SNP) [106469] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what

recent progress her Department has made on implementing the (a) Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation programme and (b) PACE pilot in Scotland.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: a - Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation programme – The Home Office are looking to implement delivery plans in conjunction with our providers and Local Authorities to further support full dispersal.

b - PACE pilot in Scotland – As part of the Home Office Asylum Transformation programme, we are taking immediate action to bring the asylum backlog down with the nationwide rollout of a successful casework Pilot from Leeds. The aim of this is to improve asylum initial decision-making productivity, focussing on streamlining the decision-making process and reducing the time it takes to interview, consider and serve an asylum decision through a number of process improvements. The rollout of the PACE pilot to all Home Office sites is due to be complete by May 2023 and we will roll out the approach to our operational sites over the coming months. To further accelerate decision making we will further drive productivity improvements by simplifying and modernising our system. This includes measures like shortening interviews, removing unnecessary interviews, making guidance simpler and more accessible, dealing with cases more swiftly where they can be certified as manifestly unfounded and recruiting extra decision makers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-08/106469>

Refugees: Children

Diana Johnson (Labour) [99772] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied children under the age of eight have been held at Manston for any period of time during 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office is not aware of any unaccompanied children among the family groups who have been processed at Manston. The Home Office does not routinely use Manston to process unaccompanied children, instead every effort is made to prioritise them through the Kent Intake Unit. There are no unaccompanied children currently at Manston.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/99772>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Illegal Immigration

[The statement made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons](#) was read in the House of Lords.

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Labour): My Lords, I am grateful that the Government made an [additional Statement](#) in the other place on the truly dreadful incident in the channel in the early hours of this morning. It is tragic, but it is also an immensely distressing event and our thoughts are with those who have lost their lives, their families and their loved ones ...

There has been a complete collapse in decision-making by the Home Office, with only 4% of people who made small boat crossings being processed last year, an ever-growing backlog of almost 150,000 cases, huge pressures on accommodation, rising costs, and people waiting in limbo, sometimes for years, for basic initial decisions to be taken. Staffing problems have been made worse by inadequate training and appalling attrition rates. In Home Office-provided accommodation, we have witnessed disease outbreaks and child safe-guarding failures. While these problems have grown, the backlog waiting for government action has increased by over 300% ... in the past five years. ...

The Prime Minister is right now to notice the scale of the Home Office backlog and that initial decisions need to be made in days and weeks rather than taking years.

However ... Just a few hours after the Prime Minister addressed Parliament yesterday with the promise to clear the backlog, that was downgraded to a promise to clear some of the backlog, with cases up to only June 2022 being in scope when the Nationality and Borders Act is commenced. ...

We welcome proposals for fast-tracking claims, which we have been calling for and have been recommended for some time by the UNHCR. ...

At the heart of everything we are discussing are the criminal gangs putting lives at risk and making profit from misery. ... Much of this is advertised on the internet. Surely it must be possible to do far more than is done at the moment.

Can the noble Lord also give more information on the proposed operational unit for small boats? How will this differ from what is in place already? How will that unit link into the wider work on cross-border immigration crime? ...

On accommodation, the Prime Minister said that alternative sites would be brought forward "shortly". I know that is a bit like "in the fullness of time" and "when resources allow", but can the noble Lord say something about the timescale? ...

A crucial point I would like the noble Lord to say something about is how safeguarding procedures are being changed to address some catastrophic failures of Home Office safeguarding that have led to children in Home Office care going missing and just disappearing from the system. ...

The UK has a proud record of being at the forefront of tackling modern slavery. That is a result of years of cross-party working and a proud legacy of a former Conservative Prime Minister. The modern slavery system protects adults and children from being trafficked into the UK into unimaginable situations, and secures prosecutions of vile people traffickers. ... When the Prime Minister says, rather too casually, that he wants to remove what he called the "gold-plating" in our system, what exactly does he mean? ...

Safe, managed, legal routes are the most effective way to prevent those seeking asylum—not economic migrants—making desperate, dangerous crossings, and to break the business model of people smugglers. The Home Office should, as a minimum, review family reunion routes and safe routes for unaccompanied children. ...

When we talk about the numbers of those crossing the Channel, about asylum seekers and refugees, we should never forget that each is an individual with hopes and aspirations for their future, and that in so many cases they are being abused and conned by criminal gangs. ...

Lord Newby (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the tragic deaths of four migrants attempting to cross the channel in a small boat overnight are horrifying and heartbreaking. They underline the importance of sorting out not only the channel crossings but the immigration and asylum system as a whole.

There are a number of distinct but related questions covered by the Prime Minister's Statement. First, how do we deal with the surging numbers of Albanians who are using this route, the vast majority of whom are straightforward economic migrants? ...

The second question is: how do we deter and deal with those crossing the channel who are not Albanian? The Government are going to improve policing in the channel by appointing 700 new staff and yet again tinkering with the management structure for the operation; they hope that this will disrupt the criminal gangs involved, and for those who do reach our shores, they are going to restart flights to Rwanda. Even in the unlikely event of these policies being effective, they are not going to deal with a large part of the underlying problem: they will not deal with the problem of genuine asylum seekers.

So far this year, some 40% of those making the crossings are from five countries: Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Iran, of whom the overwhelming majority will be granted asylum because they are genuine asylum seekers. To deter these people from boarding a dinghy, we need to establish safe and legal routes. ...

The third question is: how do we deal with the huge backlog of asylum and other immigration cases? ...

In terms of the overall approach, the Prime Minister says: “No one—no one—can doubt our generosity of spirit.”

Given the “hostile environment” policy, the whole raft of blood-curdling Statements by current and former Home Secretaries and the shameful slowness to deal with some of the most vulnerable groups of asylum seekers, not least from Afghanistan, I am afraid I doubt the generosity of spirit shown consistently by this Government. Far from generosity of spirit, their whole approach has been mean-spirited and unwelcoming. Moreover, this alleged generosity is now to be tempered by having an annual cap on asylum seekers. ...

Reply from the Lord Privy Seal (Lord True): ... It is easy to throw criticisms. ... However, what we need to do now—and, frankly, I think that the public expects this—is to address the abuses that are going on. ...

The Government’s intention is to make our migration and economic development partnership with Rwanda work, so that, yes, we can send people who make dangerous, illegal and unnecessary journeys to the UK to a safe third country. That will allow us to remove many people who travel to the UK illegally. ...

It was made very clear in the briefing I have that, with regard to the pledge and intention to clear the backlog of those who came into the process before 28 June 2022, there was an absolute commitment to get it completed by the end of next year. ...

Modern slavery is a problem; it remains an issue, and the Government are determined to tackle it and deal with it. As for gold-plating, there are aspects of the decisions made in relation to modern slavery that will be considered, such as the evidential basis and points where there has been clear evidence of modern slavery. ...

On safe routes, I agree profoundly ... The Prime Minister made it very clear that, while being firm on illegal immigration, we wish to maintain safe and legal routes. ... In fact, by cracking down on illegal immigration, we will be able to be more generous with those who really need our help, and we will introduce new safe and legal routes for those at risk of war and persecution to come and seek refuge and protection in the United Kingdom. ...

We should not forget that the United Kingdom has been extraordinarily generous—the most generous in recent political history. We have a proud history of supporting those fleeing persecution. Since 2015, we have resettled 450,000 vulnerable people here, including 144,000 from Hong Kong, 20,000 from Syria, approximately 20,000 from Afghanistan and around 150,000 Ukrainians. We will continue that compassionate stance towards others. ...

We are spending £5.6 million a day— £6.5 million if you include Afghan refugees—on accommodation. We are accommodating 112,000 people at the moment, and I think it reasonable that consideration be given to alternative sites ...

Against the background of the generosity I have described, I do not think the hostile environment mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Newby, is correct. It is true that we have learned lessons from the Windrush scheme and what happened in relation to Windrush, but we believe it to be reasonable that bank data and other data should be used and considered to identify illegals. ...

We believe Albania is a safe country, and 100% of Albanian applications are rejected by those vicious nations Germany and Sweden. Germany and Sweden are liberal nations and reject 100%; we reject only 44.6%. I think it perfectly reasonable that, with the co-operation of the Albanian Government, we take action to address this problem, which, like many others involved, has grown, changed and morphed, and the Government are responding to it. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-12-14/debates/7D8F2E8C-AEFE-4B62-A3D0-F08A07965752/IllegalImmigration>

Albanian Asylum Seekers

Lord Dubs (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government how many Albanian asylum seekers are currently waiting for a decision about their claim; how many applications have been accepted in the last 12 months and how many have been refused.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Murray of Blidworth): As of 30 September 2022, there were 19,897 Albanian asylum cases pending an initial decision. In the year ending September 2022, 334 decisions on asylum claims from Albanian nationals were grants and 318 were refusals.

Lord Dubs: I am grateful to the Minister for those figures. He will be aware that I tabled my Question long before I knew that the Prime Minister would make a Statement on this issue this morning. His Statement suggested to me that the Conservatives must have been in opposition for the past 12 years, but I will let that one go. I have two questions. Will the Minister confirm that, even if we are going to move to a fast-track approach for Albanians, which the Labour Party has already supported, that does not mean that an individual claimant will not have his or her claim properly considered? Secondly, will the Minister confirm that referring to asylum seekers as "illegal immigrants" is totally the wrong term? An asylum seeker cannot be illegal, even if he or she flees for safety to another country.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: I thank the noble Lord for his question. As ever, he is very à la mode and clearly foresaw that there would be a Statement by the Prime Minister. I will answer his two questions. First, on the fast-track removal of Albanians, as the Prime Minister made clear in the other place, the new deal with Albania will allow us to return people with confidence that necessary protections will be provided for genuine modern slavery claims, in line with our international obligations. Of course, Albania is already a scheduled safe country under the 2002 Act, passed under Mr Blair's Administration. On the noble Lord's second question, on the term "illegal immigrant", that nomenclature derives from the provisions in Nationality and Borders Act, which make it an offence to enter illegally.

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, it is reported that there has been a big rise in online advertisements offering transfers from Albania to the UK by boat or lorry for a price—in other words, smuggling. If this is openly advertised, is it not possible to track down the smugglers and prosecute them?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The noble Baroness is exactly right: the gangs involved in people smuggling do advertise in Albania, usually on social media platforms—I understand that TikTok is particularly favoured. The Home Office has an intelligence unit that considers all these sources and, working with the National Crime Agency, steps are taken to prevent this sort of criminal activity. As the noble Baroness will have seen, the Prime Minister's announcement increases the NCA's funding to tackle organised crime within Europe, which will achieve greater control of this type of criminality.

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour): My Lords, when will the new policy announced by the Prime Minister this morning be fully implemented? Is it proposed that there be any element of retrospectivity—looking back to those who are already here—in the scheme?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Certainly, the deal with Albania will take effect as soon as it is agreed, which should be in the near future. The asylum backlogs will be dealt with by the end of next year. A new permanent small boats operational command will be set up, with more or less immediate effect, and enforcement activity will be boosted in the near future. As noble Lords will have heard the Prime Minister say, we plan to bring forward legislation in early January next year.

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): My Lords, will the Minister assure the House that people who have been involved in people smuggling or cocaine trafficking will be brought to justice, but also that a distinction will be made where women and children, for instance,

are involved and are clearly victims of the criminal gangs that have been identified? Will he also update the House as to the total number of outstanding claims by refugees and asylum seekers? When I last looked it was 143,000, which was a 180% increase since 2019. What are the Government doing to ensure that those claims are processed more expeditiously?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: As of the end of September, there were 117,400 cases, which related to 143,377 people awaiting an initial decision. On enforcement and the penalisation of those engaging in people smuggling, as the noble Lord will know, it is a criminal offence to be the criminal mastermind—if you like—behind a smuggling operation, and the maximum penalty for those types of offences is life. I have no doubt that a sentencing court would bear in mind, as the noble Lord anticipates, that it is an aggravating factor if women and children are involved.

Lord Leong (Labour): My Lords, asylum seekers coming here from Hong Kong have a very different experience from British national (overseas) visa arrivals. They are not given the same freedom as BNO holders to study, work or live, and that is very impactful on their mental health. Nearly one in four Hong Kongers who fled the crackdown of the ruling Chinese Communist Party says that they still suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, linked to the violent crackdown on the 2019 protests and the subsequent fear engendered by the national security law. What assessment have the Government made to identify those suffering from PTSD?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: On the BNO Hong Kong cohort, I do not have the answer ...

Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate (Conservative): My Lords, I am very pleased that the Government have reached an agreement with Albania about the large number of Albanians arriving in this country. However, I dispute slightly what my noble friend said about the legality or illegality of asylum seekers. Under the 1951 convention, it is perfectly clear that merely seeking asylum cannot in itself be an act of illegality. It is, however, obvious to all of us, I think, that the illegality about which we are so concerned lies with the people traffickers, smugglers and those forcing often very poor people to come to this country. I urge my noble friend that we must take further action to alleviate that problem.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: I entirely agree with my noble friend: the 1951 convention prohibits the penalisation of asylum seekers. It is the illegal entry—entry without leave—that renders it unlawful under the Act.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): ... The Minister quoted the Prime Minister saying that there will be protection for modern slavery claims. What about people who are fleeing domestic violence? Will youths be treated the same way as adults through this appeals process?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office is increasing the number of staff making asylum decisions in relation to these areas. We have increased the number of asylum case workers by 112%, from 597 staff in 2019 to 1,276 as of this month, and we propose to increase that again next year with a further 500 in March 2023, up to 1,800 by the summer. In terms of the appeal mechanism, as the noble Lord will be aware, Albania is a certified safe country and the mechanism for inadmissibility will apply. Plainly, there is an appeal right out of country and judicial review opportunities in relation to certification decisions.

Lord Dobbs (Conservative): My Lords, I will step back from the subject of Albania. Is it not a fact that the large, underlining trend of asylum seekers or illegal refugees—whatever term one wants to use—still comes from Iraq and Afghanistan, countries in which we went to war, with the promise that we would make them safe parliamentary democracies? Will the Minister remind his colleagues constantly that military adventures of the sort that Mr Blair and others pursued, rather than solving the problems, have only made them very much worse?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Obviously, I agree with my noble friend that the consequences of conflict have led to greater migration. As the Prime Minister observed, that problem is not going to go away; we have to address it head-on.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-12-13/debates/2C04F250-8DF5-4997-86D5-581F2E689F31/AlbanianAsylumSeekers>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/DB61C374-16B5-411C-9A29-CC3DCA119EB3/IllegalImmigration>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Asylum: Rwanda

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL4007] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Analysis of the Legality and Appropriateness of the Transfer of Asylum Seekers under the UK–Rwanda arrangement, published on 8 June; and what steps they are taking to respond to concerns raised in that report.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: We are confident our arrangement with Rwanda is fully compatible with our international obligations and guarantees the safety of those relocated.

Safeguards and assurances were considered throughout the development of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership between the UK and Rwanda, and the commitments made by both Participants have been recorded in the published Memorandum of Understanding. A Joint Committee has been established under the MEDP to oversee the operation of Partnership and has already met. It will be informed by an independent Monitoring Committee that has been appointed to monitor the implementation of the safeguards and assurances. The Home Office Country Policy and Information Team also carried out an assessment of the asylum system and human rights position in Rwanda. More information on its findings can be found at Gov.UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-05/hl4007>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/62a317d34/unhcr-analysis-of-the-legality-and-appropriateness-of-the-transfer-of-asylum.html>

The Memorandum of Understanding referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/memorandum-of-understanding-mou-between-the-uk-and-rwanda/memorandum-of-understanding-between-the-government-of-the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-and-the-government-of-the-republic-of-r>

The Country policy and information note for Rwanda, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rwanda-country-policy-and-information-notes/country-policy-and-information-note-rwanda-assessment-may-2022-accessible>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Lord Rosser (Labour) [HL4035] To ask His Majesty's Government why individuals who enter under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme are not currently included in the

quarterly Immigration Statistics publications; and what plans, if any, they have to include them.

Reply from Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. ...

In your question, you refer to “quarterly immigration statistics publications”. If referring to the Home Office data Immigration statistics, year ending September 2022^[1], this was published on 24 November 2022, and contains a webpage entitled ‘How many people do we grant protection to?’^[2]. This page provides details of the inclusion of people resettled from Afghanistan in those statistics (see section 1.1 Resettlement).

The Office for National Statistics’ (ONS) Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR), has not been published since August 2020^[3] and therefore will not contain information on the Afghan citizen resettlement scheme, which opened on 6 January 2022^[4]. In our most recent Long-term international migration bulletin (published on 24 November 2022), Section 4, Migration Events^[5] details that around 21,000 Afghans arrived in the UK and are included in the ONS’ total longterm international migration estimates.

This figure is based on published Home Office operational data, which estimates around 21,000 arrivals are associated with Operation PITTING (the evacuation of people from Afghanistan in August 2021), and are included in our total immigration estimates. This figure will include some British nationals. Similar to those arriving on the Ukrainian Visa Schemes, in the absence of reliable evidence to suggest otherwise, this subpopulation are included under the assumption that they are arriving in the UK for 12 months or more. This means that these estimates will be an upper bound for these populations and may be revised down once we have more information on their actual length of stay. Please see the Measuring the data section^[6] for more detail on our methods. ...

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2022/how-many-people-do-we-grant-protection-to>

[3] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/migrationstatisticsquarterlyreport/previousReleases>

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

[5] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendinjune2022#migration-events>

[6] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendinjune2022#measuring-the-data>

[Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-05/hl4035>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Ukraine

Refugees: Taxation

Lord Cromwell (Crossbench) [HL3882] To ask His Majesty's Government at what point Ukrainian refugees who have been in the UK for over 180 days are liable to pay tax.

Reply from Baroness Penn: Under UK tax rules, all income earned through employment is taxable. The Government has made guidance available on GOV.UK

for Ukrainians arriving in the UK, which includes a section on employment and tax. The Government is committed to a fair tax system in which those with the most contribute the most. The income tax system is highly progressive, with different rates of tax sitting above an internationally high tax-free Personal Allowance. Ukrainians arriving in the UK will have to claim the Personal Allowance at the end of each tax year in which they receive UK income.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/hl3882>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk#finding-a-job-and-paying-tax>

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

Migrants

Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench) [HL3965] To ask His Majesty's Government how many arrivals by (1) Ukrainians and their dependants, (2) Hong Kong BNOs and their dependants, and (3) Afghan citizens and their dependants, are included in the latest Office for National Statistics net migration figures, published on 24 November.

Reply from Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. ...

In the Office for National Statistics (ONS) bulletin published on 24 November, Section 4, Migration Events^[1] details the following published Home Office data included in the ONS' total long-term international migration estimates:

Ukrainians: around 89,000 arrived in the UK in the year to June 2022

Afghans: around 21,000 arrived in the UK in the year to June 2022

For British nationals overseas (BN(O)) status holders and their families from Hong Kong, colleagues from the ONS and the Home Office are working together to resolve how we identify those that are long-term international migrants in the data. Home Office statistics show that around 76,000 visas were issued for the BN(O) route in the year ending June 2022. This will represent the upper bound for arrivals, as not all of those with a visa will arrive in the UK or stay long term. The ONS is also working to identify BN(O) status holders in their International Passenger Survey (IPS) data using country of birth and country of last residences as this may help provide a more robust estimate. Current analysis suggests that 28,000 British nationals with a country of birth of Hong Kong immigrated into the UK in the year ending June 2022.

The long-term international migration data from the IPS was the largest component of the LongTerm International Migration (LTIM) estimates until its suspension in March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In August 2020 the ONS announced that they would not return to producing official migration statistics from the IPS because it had been stretched beyond its original purpose. The ONS now focuses on measuring actual migration, as opposed to intentions, using primarily administrative data (admin-based migration estimates (ABMEs)). The ONS' International migration statistical design progress report: July 2022 provides more information^[2]

For the latest long-term international migration estimates; non-EU figures are based on Home Office Border Systems data, EU figures are based on Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) data received from Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs, and British Nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See the Measuring the data

section^[3] for more detail. ...

[1] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2022#migration-events>

[2] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/internationalmigrationstatisticaldesignprogressreport/july2022>

[3] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2022#measuring-the-data>
[Migration calculation](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-02/hl3965>

Migrants: Cost of Living

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL3888] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 8 November (HL2809), what support is available to individuals subject to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) conditions as part of their total cost of living package of £37 billion this year, but excluding the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

Reply from Baroness Stedman-Scott: In addition to the Government supporting those in receipt of public fund benefits with cost-of-living payments, the package also includes a range of measures that those with no recourse to public funds could also benefit from, if they meet the eligibility criteria.

This would include an increase to the National Living Wage (NLW) by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour for workers aged 23 and over, from 1 April 2023 for those individuals who have a right to work. In addition, the Government's commitment to the triple lock will see an increase from April 2023 of 10.1% to their State Pension.

For those who require extra support, the government is providing an additional £1bn to help with the cost of household essentials, for the 2023-24 financial year, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding for this support to £2.5 billion.

In England this includes an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £842m, running from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Guidance and individual Local Authority indicative allocations for this further extension will be announced in due course. Devolved administrations will receive £158 million through the Barnett formula.

Local Authorities can provide a basic safety net support to an individual, regardless of their immigration status, if there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example if:

- there are community care needs
- they have serious health problems
- there is a risk to a child's wellbeing

Local Authorities must use their judgement to decide what legal powers and funding can be used to support individuals who are ineligible for public funds or statutory housing assistance.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/hl3888>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-24/hl2809>

Refugees

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL3939] To ask His Majesty's Government, other than for asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, what are the safe and

legal routes into the UK for those seeking asylum.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people fleeing war and persecution. 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. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach as that is the fastest route to safety.

In addition to dedicated resettlement schemes for Syria, Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Ukraine, the UK welcomes refugees and people in need of protection through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Community Sponsorship, Family Reunion, and Mandate Resettlement Schemes. These are global routes which have allowed thousands of people fleeing war and persecution to rebuild their lives in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-01/hl3939>

Information about the UK Resettlement Scheme, Family Reunion Scheme, and Mandate Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1011824/Resettlement_Policy_Guidance_2021.pdf

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: Children

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL3607] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the answer of Lord Murray of Blidworth on 21 November (HL3244), whether they plan to publish the report of the independent Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: In December 2021, the Chief Scientific Adviser at the Home Office set up an independent Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee to provide her with independent scientific and associated ethical advice, recommendations for best practice and advice relating to issues raised by key stakeholders on the implementation of scientific methods of age assessment.

We have always been clear that any decision to implement scientific methods of age assessment would be subject to independent scientific advice. No official decisions have been made about if and how to implement scientific methods.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/hl3607>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-07/hl3244>

Asylum: Resettlement

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL3887] To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people likely to be granted resettlement in the UK for (1) the remainder of this year, and (2) the following two years thereafter.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Currently, our commitment to resettle refugees is a multiyear commitment with no specific targets. The numbers resettled in a particular period will depend on a range of factors including the flow of referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the field, and the availability of suitable accommodation and care packages in the UK.

We will manage the flows based on need and in support of the wellbeing of the people and communities involved.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/hl3887>

Asylum: Hotels

Baroness Humphreys (Liberal Democrat) [HL3899] To ask His Majesty's Government

how many asylum seekers have been transferred from Manston processing centre to the Hilton Garden Hotel in Dolgarrog in the Conwy Valley, North Wales since January.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Due to the continuing unprecedented high volume of small boats arrivals and the historical pressure from COVID-19 on the asylum system it has been necessary to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers. This is only a temporary solution, and we are working with our accommodation providers to find appropriate dispersed accommodation across the United Kingdom.

For safeguarding purposes, we do not publicly comment on individual hotels which may or may not be utilised, or those that may be accommodated at any sites.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/hl3899>

Migrants: Detainees

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL3602] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to introduce a maximum time limit for immigration detention; and, if not, why not.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Detention is an essential part of effective immigration control. We only detain people where removal is a realistic prospect within a reasonable timeframe, or to establish their identity or the basis of their claim.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/hl3602>

Migrants: Detainees

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL3600] To ask His Majesty's Government how many individuals were held in immigration detention at the (1) Dover, (2) Manston, and (3) Napier Barracks, immigration centres on the most recent dates for which data are available; and what is the normal capacity of each facility.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Western Jetfoil at Dover is a reception area for individuals rescued from the Channel. Napier Barracks is not a detention facility. No individuals are held under immigration detention at either Western Jetfoil or Napier Barracks.

Manston is a processing centre and short-term holding facility, not a detention facility. As of 1500hrs on 24 November 2022, no persons were held under immigration detention at Manston. Manston provides a mix of different types of accommodation to allow the Home Office to flex to meet the demands of fluctuating numbers and cohorts of people crossing the Channel. That inevitably brings a level of fluidity to capacity levels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/hl3600>

Detention Centres

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL3601] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of (1) electricity and water supplies, (2) sanitary equipment, (3) food and cooking arrangements, and (4) precautions against communicable diseases, at each of the immigration detention centres.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The safety and welfare of all those in our care is of the utmost importance and we accept nothing but the highest standards from companies employed to provide detention and escorting services on our behalf.

Immigration removal centres (IRC) suppliers are required to provide a safe and secure environment for detained individuals in their care and the conditions and facilities at all immigration detention facilities are kept under regular review.

In addition, all IRCs, short term holding facilities (STHFs) and the escort provider have robust contingency plans covering a wide range of risks (including loss of power and water supplies and communicable diseases). These are tested on a

regular basis and are audited by Home Office compliance teams.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-21/hl3601>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Detention Centres: Manston

Baroness Humphreys (Liberal Democrat) [HL3902] To ask His Majesty's Government whether any other infectious diseases, other than scabies and diphtheria, have been identified as originating from the Manston processing centre.

Baroness Humphreys (Liberal Democrat) [HL3903] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to provide access to medical professions for those infected by infectious disease after staying in the Manston processing centre.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: No diseases are known to have originated from Manston. To date, there is no evidence of community transmission of either Diphtheria or Scabies at Manston. Individuals receive an initial high level medical screening on arrival at Western Jet Foil – as of 10 December, this has now been supplemented by a doctor being onsite at Western Jetfoil between 0800 and 2000 each day, mirroring the Emergency Department Consultant cover at Manston. Manston Asylum Processing Centre is equipped with all necessary medical facilities. If individuals display infectious disease symptoms after arrival at Manston then these people are examined by medical personnel. A tiny fraction of arrivals so examined have been found to be suffering communicable and/or notifiable diseases. If this happens then individuals are immediately isolated and treated with antibiotics, being accommodated in an appropriate isolation facility until medically fit. Only once individuals are deemed medically fit can they be transferred from isolation to contingency dispersal accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/hl3902>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/hl3903>

Detention Centres: Notifiable Diseases

Lord Goodlad (Conservative) [HL3801] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions the Home Office has had with the Association of Directors of Public Health in the last six months about notifiable diseases at the Western Jet Foil and Manston Processing Centres; and what was the outcome of any such discussions.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Home Office has regular engagement with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) on matters of communicable and notifiable diseases detected at Western Jetfoil and Manston.

Directors of Public Health do attend operational asylum accommodation meetings relating specifically to health, either in person or through representatives. These are multi-agency forums, where any issues or concerns around the management of infectious diseases in asylum accommodation can be discussed. However, the collaborative approach to managing communicable diseases within the context of Manston and Western Jetfoil and reducing the risk of their spreading is led by UKHSA and supported by the Home Office.

The Home Office and DLUHC 2nd Permanent Secretary wrote to Directors of Public Health, outlining the Home Office's ongoing programme of work to limit the spread of infectious diseases in hotels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/hl3801>

UK Parliament, Home Affairs Committee

Evidence session: Migration and asylum

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/12450/html/>

Press Releases

UK and France joint statement on small boat incident in the Channel

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-france-joint-statement-on-small-boat-incident-in-the-channel>

New over £650 million support package for Ukrainians sees increased ‘thank you’ payments for longer-term hosts

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-over-650m-support-package-for-ukrainians-sees-increased-thank-you-payments-for-longer-term-hosts>

Government provides boost to horticulture industry with certainty over seasonal workers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-provides-boost-to-horticulture-industry-with-certainty-over-seasonal-workers>

Message by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on International Migrants Day 2022

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/12/message-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-international-migrants-day>

New Publications

PM statement on illegal migration: 13 December 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-illegal-migration-13-december-2022>

Joint UK-Albania communique in relation to trafficking

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-uk-albania-communique-on-trafficking/joint-uk-albania-communique-in-relation-to-trafficking>

HM Prison and Probation Service Response to: Thematic Report: The experience of immigration detainees in prisons

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1124944/Thematic_inspection_The_experience_of_immigration_detainees_in_prisons_Action_Plan_Final_docx.pdf

The report to which this responds can be read at

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/10/Thematic-inspection-The-experience-of-immigration-detainees-in-prisons-web-2022.pdf>

House of Commons Library Briefing: The UK aid budget and support for refugees in the UK in 2022

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9663/CBP-9663.pdf>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Irregular migration: A timeline of UK-French co-operation

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9681/CBP-9681.pdf>

House of Commons Library Briefing: UK immigration routes for Afghan nationals
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9307/CBP-9307.pdf>

Migration Advisory Committee Annual Report
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1123358/Annual_Report_22_Compiled_Draft_FINAL.pdf

People arriving from Ukraine - risk and need: public protection guidance
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/people-arriving-from-ukraine-risk-and-need-public-protection-guidance/>

Weekly number of migrants detected in small boats - 5 December to 11 December 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-5-december-to-11-december-2022>

Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme in Scotland: statistics - December 2022
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-in-scotland-statistics-december-2022/>

Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by country, upper and lower tier local authority
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority>

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Almost 70 Tory MPs join bid to force Rishi Sunak's hand on sending asylum seekers to Rwanda
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/12/14/rwanda-migrant-plan-european-court-human-rights-channel-crisis/>

Sunak rejects Tory calls to ignore human rights court rulings over Rwanda deportations
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/14/sunak-rejects-tory-calls-to-ignore-human-rights-court-rulings-over-rwanda-deportations>

Rebel Tory bid to overrule court rulings on Rwanda deportation flights fails
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-patel-johnson-gullis-refugee-b2245168.html>

Boris Johnson backs Tory plan to defy European court on Rwanda deportations
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-deportation-echr-boris-johnson-b2244875.html>

News: Channel Migrants

Rishi Sunak sets out five-point plan to halt Channel migrant crisis
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rishi-sunak-will-unveil-crackdown-to-tackle-asylum-case-backlog-p2w9s6z7m>

Channel migrant asylum ban will save lives, says Braverman
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63975279>

Suella Braverman: 'Unforgivable to not halt small boats, it's last-chance saloon'
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-migrants-home-secretary-rishi-sunak-interview-rkbzd686s>

No 10 denies Sunak has 'blood on hands' over Channel migrant deaths
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/channel-deaths-boat-sunak-refugees-b2245108.html>

Coastguard union calls on Suella Braverman to 'resign in disgrace' after Channel deaths
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/channel-rescue-deaths-migrants-braverman-b2245206.html>

Channel migrant deaths: Man, 19, charged after four die at sea
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-64017542>

Four people dead after migrant boat incident
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63968941>

Eight children among 39 rescued from migrant boat
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63982143>

Migrant boat incident: Four people dead after boat capsizes in English Channel
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/migrant-boat-incident-four-people-dead-after-boat-capsizes-in-english-channel-3953038>

Channel boat disaster: teenager among four people confirmed dead
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/15/channel-boat-incident-search-missing>

'You could see the panic': how the Channel small boat incident unfolded
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/14/you-could-see-the-panic-how-the-channel-small-boat-incident-unfolded>

Channel migrants crisis: 'There were people screaming in the water, it was like a war film'
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/channel-migrants-crisis-there-were-people-screaming-in-the-water-it-was-like-a-war-film-pd8twhknn>

Police and NCA investigating four Channel boat deaths
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/16/channel-boat-deaths-police-nca-investigating>

Family of man who died after crossing Channel did not hear of death for 11 days
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/15/family-of-man-hussein-haseeb-ahmed-who-died-after-crossing-channel-did-not-hear-of-death-for-11-days>

Channel tragedy shows hardline policies will not deter those desperate to reach UK
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/14/channel-tragedy-shows-hardline-policies-wont-deter-those-desperate-to-reach-uk>

Hounded or left to the sea, Channel migrants' fate is written in sands of France
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hounded-or-left-to-the-sea-channel-migrants-fate-is-written-in-sands-of-france-qvqc87cn3>

News: Ukraine

Homes for Ukraine: Sponsorship ends for thousands of Ukrainians

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63949576>

Council funding cut for Ukrainian refugee scheme

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63975994>

One in five Homes for Ukraine hosts struggling to help families due to cost of living, ONS reveals

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-costs-ons-b2246557.html>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Rishi Sunak pledges more staff to help clear asylum backlog

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-63959729>

Rishi Sunak's migration plan raises big questions

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63965141>

Sunak asylum plan violates international law, UN says

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-boats-channel-sunak-un-law-b2244580.html>

Rishi Sunak vows to stop illegal migrants who 'cheat' to reach UK

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/12/13/rishi-sunak-vows-stop-illegal-migrants-who-cheat-reach-uk/>

Rishi Sunak unveils new plans to tackle migrant crisis

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/12/13/rishi-sunak-announces-new-small-boats-operational-command-unit/>

Campaigners claim Rishi Sunak's new migrant measures treat asylum seekers like criminals

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/campaigners-claim-rishi-sunaks-new-migrant-measures-treat-asylum-seekers-like-criminals-3952723>

Sunak's migrant plan: Asylum Crackdown

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-sunaks-migrant-plan-asylum-crackdown-nhsq3k675>

Fewer than 100 migrants arrested for arriving in UK illegally

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63938698>

Asylum hotel bill has grown by £500 million since Government crackdown, claims Labour

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/12/18/asylum-hotel-bill-has-grown-500-million-since-government-crackdown/>

Asylum seekers to be housed in disused holiday parks

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23188524.asylum-seekers-housed-disused-holiday-parks/>

Clive Lewis: Labour criticises MP's 'concentration camp' comment

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63974981>

Ban on allowing asylum seekers to work 'pushes them into exploitation'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seeker-work-ban-migration-committee-b2244155.html>

MP Christian Wakeford apologises for asylum seeker comments

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/14/mp-christian-wakeford-mp-bury-south-apologise-asylum-seeker-comments>

Migrants to be kept longer at Manston processing centre

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63992009>

Family point finger over father's death at Manston migrant centre

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/kurdish-family-is-left-only-with-questions-after-death-at-marston-q75nqrqfl>

Albanians to face immediate removal from UK under tough new asylum rules

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/asylum-migration-albania-sunak-boats-b2244293.html>

Rishi Sunak set to announce deal to speed up return of Albanian migrants

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/12/12/rishi-sunak-announce-albania-deal-send-migrants-back-faster/>

The SNP is taking the high moral ground on refugees

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-snp-is-taking-the-high-moral-ground-on-refugees-tjdbxjstr>

Immigration detention is never in the best interest of children and must end, OSCE human rights head says

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/535056>

"Has she got status?": Gender based violence and the needs of migrant women

<https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/has-she-got-status-gender-based-violence-and-the-needs-of-migrant-women/>

Migrant crisis: Imagine a world where human beings weren't viewed as infiltrators

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/migrant-crisis-imagine-a-world-where-human-beings-werent-viewed-as-infiltrators-dani-garavelli-3957734>

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Community Relations

News

How King Charles became 'Defender of all Faiths'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2022/12/14/how-king-charles-became-monarch-faiths/>

I'm a Muslim who loves Christmas – don't rename the holiday on my account]
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/christmas-rename-muslim-winter-holiday-b2245040.html>

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Equality

Press Release

Diversity and Inclusion of the Scottish Government Workforce

<https://www.gov.scot/news/diversity-and-inclusion-of-the-scottish-government-workforce/>

New Publications

Diversity and inclusion of the Scottish Government workforce - 2021

<https://data.gov.scot/workforce-diversity-2021/>

The RACE (Racial Action for the Climate Emergency) Report 2022

https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/623c7359fd38194a54b48eaa/6397552ecb940a007016399c_20221208_The%20RACE%20Report_2022%20Report.pdf

News

Police using force on Black people at higher rates than white people, data shows

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-force-black-people-white-b2246057.html>

Stop using equality laws to restrict free speech, universities warned

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/12/15/stop-using-equality-laws-restrict-free-speech-universities-warned/>

UK environmental charities lack racial diversity, research finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/13/uk-environmental-charities-lack-racial-diversity-research-finds>

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Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

New Publications

Guidance for employers on taking an anti-racist approach to tackling women's workplace inequality

<https://www.closesthegap.org.uk/content/resources/Employer-guidance-anti-racist-gender-equality-at-work.pdf>

Factsheet: Hate Crime and Hate Speech

<https://rm.coe.int/thematic-factsheet-hate-crime-eng-docx/1680a96865>

News

Job discrimination faced by ethnic minorities convinces public about racism

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/dec/15/job-discrimination-faced-by-ethnic-minorities-convinces-public-about-racism>

Half of black British police suffer racial incidents from colleagues, survey finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/15/half-of-black-british-police-in-survey-report-race-incidents-with-colleagues>

Police Scotland accused of profiling by ethnicity

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/police-scotland-accused-of-profiling-by-ethnicity-tjw62r0cm>

Black prisoners and white guards ‘should cook together to break down barriers’

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/dec/13/black-prisoners-white-guards-cook-together-break-down-barriers>

MPs fall silent on anniversary of declaration on the persecution of the Jews

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/lindsay-hoyle-mps-jews-house-of-commons-rishi-sunak-b2245751.html>

Eighty years on from the frown, a respectful silence

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/quentin-letts-eighty-years-on-from-the-frown-a-respectful-silence-0x9g9ws86>

MPs to mark day in 1942 when the Commons finally recognised the Holocaust

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/11/mps-to-mark-day-in-1942-when-the-commons-finally-recognised-the-holocaust>

Queen’s former lady in waiting apologises to charity boss for asking where she ‘really came from’

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/national/queens-former-lady-in-waiting-apologies-to-charity-boss-for-asking-where-she-really-came-from-3957390>

Prince William’s godmother meets Black charity boss and apologises for asking where she ‘really came from’

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lady-hussey-ngozi-fulani-racism-b2246731.html>

Lady Susan Hussey and Ngozi Fulani reconcile at ‘wonderfully warm’ Buckingham Palace meeting

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2022/12/16/lady-susan-hussey-apologises-ngozi-fulani-palace-announces-enhanced/>

Lady Susan Hussey’s apology at meeting with Ngozi Fulani

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/lady-susan-hussey-ngozi-fulani-apology-racism-comments-0zzx06jw>

Headteacher apologises after private school pupils perform Nazi salute during play about Hitler

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/private-school-pupils-nazi-salute-b2246272.html>

Boarding school pupils perform Nazi salute after watching 'educational play'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/12/15/headmaster-apologises-boarding-school-pupils-perform-nazi-salute/>

Millfield School sorry for pupils' Hitler salute

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/private-school-sorry-for-pupils-hitler-salutes-hv6sf22jd>

'Where is the moral compass?': Black women on monarchy's treatment of Meghan

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/15/black-women-feel-failed-by-royal-familys-treatment-of-meghan-markle>

Hibernian confirm 'racial comment' was made at defeat by Dundee United

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/63966042>

After Euros racism shame, England footballers face fewer hateful tweets

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/after-euros-racism-shame-england-footballers-face-fewer-hateful-tweets-v2d2ll9tr>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Releases

A Budget for a fair Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/news/a-budget-for-a-fair-scotland/>

Winter vaccines reminder for eligible groups

<https://www.gov.scot/news/winter-vaccines-reminder-for-eligible-groups/>

Citizens' Panel Recommendations on Public Participation to be heard by MSPs

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/news/news-listing/citizens-panel-recommendations-on-public-participation-to-be-heard-by-msps>

MSPs' expenses information for 2021/22 published online

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/news/news-listing/msps-expenses-information-for-202122-published-online>

New Publications

Scottish Budget 2023-24

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-budget-2023-24/>

Scottish Budget 2023-24: equality and Fairer Scotland statement

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-fairer-scotland-budget-statement-2023-24/>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

Debate

Scotland's Future

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-14/debates/A8E40BBE-0756-4BE1-95EE-46194E4167CF/Scotland'SFuture>

New Publication

Overcrowding in South Asian households: a qualitative report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overcrowding-in-south-asian-households-a-qualitative-report/overcrowding-in-south-asian-households-a-qualitative-report>

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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/>

UK Government Press Release

Small changes mean energy advice campaign adds up to big savings

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/small-changes-mean-energy-advice-campaign-adds-up-to-big-savings>

Publications

UK Government information and advice website: Help for Households

<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Research on the increasing cost of living & inflation

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9607/>

House of Commons Library Briefing: How is the rising cost of living affecting students?
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/how-is-the-rising-cost-of-living-affecting-students/>

House of Lords Library Briefing: Cost of living: Impact of rising costs on disabled people
<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/cost-of-living-impact-of-rising-costs-on-disabled-people/>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Going under and without: cost of living tracker, winter 2022/23
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/59381/download?token=cLtv8-Zf&filetype=briefing>

News

Glasgow warm hubs open their doors as cost of living crisis bites
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23187064.glasgow-warm-hubs-open-doors-cost-living-crisis-bites/>

One in four UK adults struggle to keep warm in their living rooms
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/dec/15/one-in-four-uk-adults-struggle-to-keep-warm-in-their-living-rooms>

Kirk Moderator on the agony of Scotland's forgotten poor at Christmas
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23198222.kirk-moderator-agony-scotlands-forgotten-poor-christmas/>

Cost of living: Parents ask for Calpol and baby wipes for Christmas
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-64000376>

More than a quarter of people 'expect to start 2023 in debt'
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/tesco-bank-credit-uk-government-people-citizens-advice-b2247006.html>

4% of pension holders consider pausing retirement saving as costs surge – survey
<https://www.independent.co.uk/money/4-of-pension-holders-consider-pausing-retirement-saving-as-costs-surge-survey-b2246291.html>

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Other News

Despite the census, faith is still key to the UK's identity
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/despite-the-census-faith-is-still-key-to-the-uks-identity-8h6prp5x5>

King dances with Anne Frank's stepsister during visit to Jewish community centre
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/anne-frank-jewish-the-king-london-eva-schloss-b2246735.html>

King Charles dances with Anne Frank's step-sister during visit to Jewish charity
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2022/12/16/king-charles-dances-anne-franks-step-sister-visit-jewish-charity/>

King Charles drops by with some Chanukkah cheer

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/king-charles-drops-by-CHANUKKAH-cheer-london-2hn7z5w0p>

King Charles dances with Anne Frank's stepsister to celebrate Hanukah

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/16/king-charles-dances-with-eva-schloss-anne-frank-stepsister-to-celebrate-hanukah>

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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>

Notices of amendments

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill/stage-3/daily-list-12-december-2022.pdf>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill/stage-3/daily-list-13-december-2022.pdf>

SPICe Briefing: Consideration prior to Stage 3

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnp.azureedge.net/published/2022/12/15/88f68206-2fc4-43e3-9ac1-76d2d40c40c0/SB%2022-69.pdf>

UN expert on gender identity calls on Scottish Parliament to adopt Gender Recognition Reform Bill

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/12/un-expert-gender-identity-calls-scottish-parliament-adopt-gender-recognition>

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>

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0209/amend/onlinesafety_day_pbc_1213.pdf
and

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0209/amend/onlinesafety_rm_pbc_1214.pdf
and

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0209/amend/onlinesafety_day_pbc_1215v2.pdf

Public Bill Committee, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/15826c72-e58b-4c89-a57f-6a08e19787be/ONLINESAFETYBILL\(FirstSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/15826c72-e58b-4c89-a57f-6a08e19787be/ONLINESAFETYBILL(FirstSitting))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/9cccea35-f420-499b-8721-ff36c6b1bb30/ONLINESAFETYBILL\(SecondSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/9cccea35-f420-499b-8721-ff36c6b1bb30/ONLINESAFETYBILL(SecondSitting))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-15/debates/b1d39788-337e-42f0-a588-a2ff94a4eb40/ONLINESAFETYBILL\(ThirdSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-15/debates/b1d39788-337e-42f0-a588-a2ff94a4eb40/ONLINESAFETYBILL(ThirdSitting))

Letter from the Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport to parents, carers and guardians

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/michelle-donelan-writes-to-parents-setting-out-how-the-online-safety-bill-will-keep-children-safe/read-the-secretary-of-states-open-letter-to-parents-carers-and-guardians>

A guide to the Online Safety Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-guide-to-the-online-safety-bill>

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

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>

Charities Bill (closing date 3 February 2023)

Short survey

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/sjssc/7b1ddd3e/>

Detailed consultation

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/sjssc/a3212a34/>

Inquiry into Public Administration – Effective Scottish Government decision-making
(closing date 7 February 2023)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/finance/inquiry-into-public-administration/>

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

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

**** Electoral reform** (closing date 15 March 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/constitution-and-cabinet/electoral-reform/>

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Job Opportunities

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

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach – The Basics

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/mpnfc DPP>

**** Introduction to Racial Literacy**

16 January 2023 (online, 10.00–1.00)

6 February 2023 (Edinburgh (10.00–1.00)

23 February 2023 (online, 10.00–1.00)

9 March 2023 (online, 10.00–1.00)

Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre, and Action on Prejudice training session to help youth workers explore and understand the impact of dominant identities, how people react to things they don't know, barriers to participation for young people, and what actions they can take to become more inclusive. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/mrxecjvy>

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>

**** Closed doors: How to safety plan with South Asian women experiencing domestic abuse**

28 February 2023 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Safe Lives, and Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre course to provide an overview of South Asian women's experiences of domestic abuse in Scotland. the impact of citizenship and immigration control on experiences of domestic abuse, including the effect of No Recourse to Public Funds, and safety planning, signposting, and referral pathways for South Asian Women. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3cwpzvwH>

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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 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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