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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Ukraine Longer-term Resettlement Fund

Mark Ruskell (Green) [S6O-01919] To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made toward increasing the availability of longer-term housing options for displaced people from Ukraine using the £50 million Ukraine longer-term resettlement fund.

Reply from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government (Shona Robison): When including the pilot in North Lanarkshire, a total of four projects providing 754 homes have so far been approved through the Ukraine longer-term resettlement fund. Those are supported by almost £13 million of Scottish Government grant funding. To date, more than 400 homes have been brought back into use, and work is under way to deliver the remaining homes as quickly as possible. We continue to work with councils and registered social

landlords on a pipeline of further applications to bring more homes back into use at a time when they are needed most.

Mark Ruskell: Having somewhere safe to live is an absolute necessity for every displaced person who is rebuilding their life here in Scotland, free from war, persecution and violence. However, over recent weeks, we have seen horrific racist attacks on people seeking asylum who are living in hotels, which have been whipped up by far-right agitators and hostile language in Westminster. Will the cabinet secretary update me on what the Scottish Government is doing to protect people seeking refuge from far-right attacks?

Reply from Shona Robison: I share Mark Ruskell's concerns. The Scottish Government unequivocally condemns any form of hatred or prejudice—indeed, it condemns hostile language, too. It is not acceptable that people who have fled war and persecution are being targeted in that way. Such attacks will not be tolerated, and we must all play our part in challenging dangerous rhetoric that seeks to divide our communities. People seeking asylum should be treated with dignity and respect at all stages of the asylum process, with suitable accommodation provided based in communities. The Home Office is, of course, responsible for asylum accommodation, so it must ensure that people are safe and can access the support and services that they need.

Foyso Choudhury (Labour): The MS Ambition and the MS Victoria are temporary homes to thousands of Ukrainian refugees. The lease on those boats will soon come to an end and those on the boats will need to be rehoused in suitable accommodation. Many individuals on those boats have formed communities and begun to put down roots where they have been docked. What action is being taken to ensure the safe and suitable rehousing of every individual who is currently residing on those boats?

Reply from Shona Robison: It is very important that the people on the cruise ships, which have provided important temporary accommodation, are supported into settled accommodation, whether that is through hosts, in social rented accommodation or even in private accommodation when that is appropriate. I know that my colleague Neil Gray is working hard with agencies to make that happen at pace, and I will ask him to write to the member with an update.

Clare Adamson (SNP): The Scottish Government and local authorities have exceeded expectations by providing £200 million in this financial year to safely accommodate 23,000 displaced Ukrainians. It is clear, though, that to maintain the current level of support the United Kingdom Government must commit to funding, too. Will the Scottish Government continue to urge its Westminster counterparts not to slash the tariff funding for local authorities, so that Scottish councils can continue to meet the housing and public service needs of displaced Ukrainians, who are welcome in our country?

Reply from Shona Robison: The Scottish Government is proud to work in partnership with local authorities to support displaced Ukrainian people. The UK Government's decision to reduce the tariff funding that is available to local authorities from £10,500 to £5,900 per arrival in the first year, to replace year 2 funding with a UK-wide fund, which could be as low as £1,500 per arrival, and to discontinue the education tariff completely will make the task of supporting displaced Ukrainians that much harder. We will continue to press the UK Government to increase, not decrease, the support that is available to perform that vital long-term work.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14159&i=128274#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Refugees: Ukraine

Miles Briggs (Conservative) [S6W-14852] To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on how many Ukrainian refugees, who arrived in Scotland after 24 February 2022, have returned to Ukraine.

Reply from Neil Gray: The Scottish Government do not hold this information. Under the current constitutional arrangements in the United Kingdom immigration is fully reserved to the UK Government and is dealt with by the Home Office. If a displaced person from Ukraine has been issued a visa, they are free to travel anywhere within the UK or to leave and re-enter the UK when they wish, as long as they are meeting the conditions within their visa. The UK Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities publish data on arrivals in the UK, with a Scottish Sponsor Visa:

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

In addition, the Scottish Government publish the latest Scotland-level data and information on people displaced by the war in Ukraine coming to Scotland through the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. This data can be found on our website via: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-in-scotland-statistics-january-2023/>

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-14852>

Refugees: Ukraine

Pam Duncan-Glancy (Labour) [S6W-14559] To ask the Scottish Government what plans are in place to house the reported 1,111 Ukrainians currently onboard MS Ambition after 31 March 2023.

Reply from Neil Gray: Since November 2022, Scottish Government officials and Glasgow City Council engage regularly to undertake a Joint Assurance Review to ensure exit planning for the exit of the MS Ambition remains on track.

Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council have been meeting with guests to help them make an informed decision about their next accommodation and where possible, we are seeking to move a displaced people according to their needs. The lack of suitable properties in Glasgow however means that it is unlikely that everyone on board MS Ambition will be able to be accommodated in Glasgow.

Should guests be unable to secure alternative accommodation or not accept an offer of accommodation from the Scottish Government matching team or Glasgow City Council, they will be allocated alternative welcome accommodation before 31 March 2023.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-14559>

Refugees: Ukraine

Pam Duncan-Glancy (Labour) [S6W-14560] To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Glasgow City Council about the reported 1,111 Ukrainians who are due to disembark MS Ambition by 31 March 2023.

Reply from Neil Gray: Scottish Government officials and Glasgow City Council have been engaging regularly since November 2022 to undertake a Joint Assurance Review to ensure exit planning for the disembarkation of the MS Ambition remains on track.

The Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council have been meeting with guests to help them make an informed decision about their next accommodation and

where possible, we are seeking to move a displaced people according to their needs. This has been supplemented by ongoing and regular discussions between the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, regional local authorities, and CoSLA, where host and accommodation matches for MS Ambition-based Ukrainians are identified as efficiently and effectively as possible.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-14560>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Refugees: Ukraine

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat): Some of the Homes for Ukraine six-month placements are now starting to come to an end, and some Ukrainian nationals in my constituency cannot get into private rented accommodation because they have no credit history. The local council is ready to look at rematching families, but if that does not work out, some of those Ukrainian refugees will have no choice but to present as homeless. Will the Secretary of State look at this issue, and look at the suggestion of a guarantor system backed by the Government?

Reply from Michael Gove: That is actually a very fair and constructive point. Making sure that there are not just banking facilities, but the kinds of guarantees that the hon. Lady asks for, is something we have been looking at in the past. I will ask the Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Felicity Buchan), to talk to the hon. Lady and to St Albans council in order to make sure that the generosity of her constituents is not undermined by the activity of the financial sector.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2023-02-20/debates/194A3E0D-6DFE-4DB8-84A2-4EBC55B8537D/TopicalQuestions#contribution-4EDC75FB-FD71-4F98-8A3B-3CE6947B1B9D>

Knowsley Incident

George Howarth (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will make a statement on the wider implications of the violent incident in Knowsley on Friday 10 February 2023.

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick): The incident at the asylum accommodation centre in Knowsley on 10 February was totally unacceptable. As the Home Secretary and I have repeatedly made clear, there is never any excuse for violence. A substantial police response was deployed to the incident, and I offer my thanks to the officers involved on the night and subsequently for their service. A number of arrests were made, and the police investigation is ongoing. The Home Office remains in close contact with Merseyside police.

The Home Office takes its responsibilities to those in temporary asylum accommodation and to local communities extremely seriously. Alongside the police and Home Office accommodation providers, we are closely monitoring the situation around the country and the activities of relevant groups. Security at our accommodation sites has been enhanced and is kept under constant review.

We will always defend the right to peaceful protest and freedom of speech, but we will not tolerate violence, intimidation or attacks on the police. The police have a range of powers to deal with unlawful behaviour, and anyone taking part in criminal activity can and should expect the full force of the law. I have met senior Home Office officials and the police to discuss the lessons to be learned from this and other incidents and to ensure that appropriate steps are being taken.

The unprecedented number of illegal, unnecessary and dangerous small boat crossings has pushed our asylum system to breaking point. We share the

frustrations of the British public about the abuse of our generosity by human traffickers and illegal migrants, who are leaving the evidently safe France and entering our country in flagrant breach of our laws. Just as everyone has the duty to obey the law, they have the right to expect that the law, including our immigration laws, will be enforced.

The enduring solution is to break the business model of the evil people smugglers and to stop the boats. The system we will build is one where if someone comes here illegally via a safe country, they will not have a route to life in the UK, and we will bring forward legislation to that effect in due course. That does not mean we are abandoning our country's instinct and history of generosity and compassion. We will continue to assist those in genuine need of our protection. To do that, we must address illegal migration, and that is what this Government's reforms will do.

George Howarth: ... The scenes that unfolded were truly shocking, with three people, one of whom was a police officer, receiving minor injuries and a police vehicle being vandalised and set on fire. I should point out that the demonstration was attended by a substantial number of residents, many of whom conducted themselves peacefully and lawfully. Unfortunately, some did not, as the number of arrests regrettably illustrates. ...

I do have concerns, as the Minister is aware, about the involvement of far-right groups from outside of Knowsley, such as Patriotic Alternative, Yorkshire Rose and Britain First, in promoting that event and seeking to stir up racial hatred in our community and others. ... Firstly, does [the Minister] share my concern about the involvement of those far-right groups in such incidents, and will he consider proscribing them? Secondly, will the Minister undertake an urgent review of the use of hotels to house refugees and report back to the House? Thirdly, as part of such a review, will the Minister look at alternatives to hotels, taking into account the housing needs of local residents, and work with local councils to arrive at more suitable options? ...

Fourthly, can the Minister at some point make a further statement to the House about how the Government propose to fix the asylum system? Finally, does the Minister agree with me that in these circumstances, some social media sites are used as platforms for poison and misinformation? Will he urge the companies that own them to ensure that the platforms are used more responsibly?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... The right hon. Gentleman is right to say that a number of groups have been involved in the protest in his constituency, as well as those elsewhere in the country, and that the behaviour of those groups is at times disgraceful and vile, and should be stamped out. We have been monitoring those groups closely, and I have asked my officials at the Home Office and police colleagues, including the National Police Co-ordination Centre, to continue doing so and to step up that activity. If we need to take further action against those groups, we will. We will be monitoring them very closely, including the social media content that they and their supporters are perpetuating.

The right hon. Gentleman is right to draw attention to the social media companies and their involvement in such activities. There have been some vile posts in recent days, including some about Members of this House, for no good reason. Again, we are monitoring that social media content; we raise it with the police and they raise it with social media companies through the appropriate channels.

With regard to accommodation more broadly, none of us wants to see hotels being used in this manner on an ongoing basis. They are an emergency, temporary solution to a serious national emergency. The number of individuals crossing the channel illegally in recent years has been on such a scale that the Home Office had to resort to options that are clearly undesirable.

The Prime Minister set out at the end of last year our intention to end the use of hotels as swiftly as possible. Better forms of accommodation will include dispersal accommodation, where we work closely and constructively with local authorities—

including that of the right hon. Member for Knowsley—to find suitable properties, consult the local community and then house asylum seekers for as long as is necessary. That plan is now moving forward, and we have reached regional agreements with local authorities. It is for the Home Office and those local authorities to ensure that it is implemented as swiftly as possible.

More broadly, as I said in my opening remarks, hotels are a symptom of the problem. The cause is the number of people crossing the channel. That will be resolved only by breaking the business model of the people smugglers and deterring those people from crossing the channel. It is for that reason that we will bring forward further legislation very soon. ...

Yvette Cooper (Labour): The scenes outside the Suites Hotel in Knowsley 10 days ago—violence, intimidation and a police van smashed up and set on fire—were appalling and shameful, and all of us should support Merseyside police in its response to keep people safe. It comes just a few months after the appalling terrorist attack at Dover, when someone who had been engaging with far-right and extremist groups online attempted to use a petrol bomb on a centre. In the last year, the number of so-called migrant hunts organised by far-right groups has doubled, and there has been an increase in far-right groups organising protests and intimidation and attempting to increase and inflame community tensions.

All of us have a responsibility to take this issue seriously, and there is an important debate about asylum accommodation and asylum policy. We have disagreements, and we have criticised the Home Office for the collapse in decision making on asylum, which has led to an increase in delays and in the backlog. People should not be spending a long time in hotels—they should not be put in hotels in the first place—and we should be targeting the criminal gangs, seeking new agreements with France to prevent dangerous boat crossings, and ensuring that the UK does its bit to help those who have fled persecution. We can have that debate, but we all—Government and Opposition—have a responsibility to do so calmly, with common sense, and in a way that does not inflame tensions or divide communities. ...

What is being done to co-ordinate the monitoring of far-right activity around asylum accommodation? What is being done about the hateful extremism that has grown and that can radicalise people into violence? The former commissioner for countering extremism has said that the Government have actually reversed some of their action on this. Will he now revisit the downgrading of the response to far-right extremism as part of the Prevent strategy? Serious concerns have been raised about the links between some far-right extremist groups and people who have been exploiting these issues, as well as some links between them and National Action, which has been proscribed because it was so serious. Does the Minister agree that, nationally, the responsibility is on all of us to be calm and to promote community cohesion and a sensible response to all the challenges we face, rather than divide and inflame tensions that the police and local communities then have to deal with?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... It is absolutely incumbent on all of us to treat this in a respectful and serious manner, and ensure that we do nothing to inflame tensions within our communities. ...

The Home Secretary has condemned unequivocally the violence we saw in Knowsley, and that is absolutely right, because there is never any excuse for violence, intimidation or attacks on the police. That does not mean that we should not seek to understand the level of public frustration that lies behind wider concerns about our asylum and immigration system. To understand is not to condone, and there are those who treat those frustrations as a phenomenon to be managed, rather than as a warning to be heeded. We in Government take the approach that this is a serious concern for the British public, and that is why we need to take all appropriate steps to stop the illegal channel crossings as quickly as possible.

On the right hon. Lady's specific questions, we are co-ordinating with police colleagues to ensure that all police forces have the correct and up-to-date advice on how they can support asylum accommodation and manage protests should they happen in the future. The National Police Co-ordination Centre is assisting us in monitoring the activities of relevant groups, including on social media, and we will take such steps as are required if there is content that constitutes a criminal offence. We have also worked with our asylum accommodation providers to ensure that they put in place enhanced security where appropriate, and have the best possible advice from the police as to how they can protect the people working in the hotels and other centres, and, of course, the residents. ...

Jackie Doyle-Price (Conservative): ... Will my right hon. Friend deconstruct the point he is making about the fact that we must tackle the organised criminal activity that sits behind all this, as that should redouble the effort to tackle detention in hotels? I have been advised by police representatives that some slave masters are targeting some of these hotels, where they try to entice young men to work on their various businesses. The suggestion that arriving here from a safe country is made illegal would drive people who arrive by small boats back into the hands of the slave masters because there would simply be no incentive for them to give themselves up to the authorities. What representations has my right hon. Friend had on those matters? Does the situation not underline the fact that we need to get the hotels emptied and the Home Office working properly?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: I agree that we need to ensure that the operational side of the Home Office performs, but there is no easy way to build our way out of this problem; we have to stop people crossing the channel illegally in the first place, because the numbers crossing the channel today are of an order that will always place our asylum and immigration system under enormous strain.

We are working very closely with the police and the National Crime Agency to bear down on organised immigration crime. We have doubled the budget of the NCA in that regard, and are working with it across Europe and beyond to tackle the gangs upstream in every respect. Here in the UK, we are increasing the number of immigration enforcement visits, including raids on illegal employers, by 50%. That activity started at the beginning of the year.

I do not agree with my hon. Friend's premise that if we pursue a policy like Rwanda, we will see people escaping into the broader community, although I understand where she is coming from. In fact, almost 99% of people crossing the channel in small boats are apprehended by British law enforcement authorities—mostly when we save them at sea and bring them to Western Jet Foil and Manston—so we do meet people who arrive on our shores. The key thing is to stop them arriving in the first place.

Alison Thewliss (SNP): It is clear that putting people in hotels in this large-scale way has allowed right-wing extremist groups to target groups of vulnerable people. It is Home Office policy, therefore, that is putting people at risk—not just vulnerable asylum seekers, but our police, who have to protect everybody in such situations. Does the Minister agree that a lot more needs to be done with social media companies? He said that there is some kind of monitoring and conversations with the police regarding social media companies, but what meetings has he had directly with social media companies? It is very clear that these right-wing extremist groups are organising on social media platforms. I saw some of it myself—was offered it by an algorithm—at the weekend; I do not want to see that kind of hatred on any social media site.

Will any asylum seekers who have been badly impacted by the attack on the hotel, or who still feel at risk, have the option to be moved somewhere else where they feel safer, and will they get additional support if that is required? Will the Minister tell me what additional security measures have been put in place at all sites where asylum seekers are being held in such accommodation, and does he agree with the statement from Merseyside police

that, "Social media speculation, misinformation and rumour can actually damage the outcome of investigations and cause unnecessary fear and consequent behaviour"?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: We are working closely with the social media companies, and in fact are stepping up that activity. We supported a recent proposal to amend the Online Safety Bill by putting extra duties on the social media companies in respect of tackling organised immigration crime and abuse of this kind. We monitor social media content closely and the police will raise that with the social media companies through the appropriate channels. ...

The way to tackle this issue is not by making the UK a more attractive destination, but by tackling the illegal gangs and changing the incentives. We will only do that through having the most robust approach to illegal migration, including by ensuring those who come here in this manner are removed to a safe third country. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-02-20/debates/4B7CA781-6170-43DC-9C81-9A70F04F1236/KnowsleyIncident>

Information about the incident discussed above can be read at
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-64611823>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Julian Sturdy (Conservative) [146950] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to help reunite family members who have come to the UK under the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The government remains committed to providing protection for vulnerable and at-risk people fleeing Afghanistan. The situation is very complex and presents significant challenges, including how those who are eligible for resettlement in the UK can leave Afghanistan. This includes the eligible family members of those being resettled under the ACRS. For those evacuated from Afghanistan under the ACRS without their immediate family members, further information will be made available in due course about options for reuniting with them.

In line with our existing policy, those resettled under the ACRS may be able to be accompanied by their immediate family members (their spouse or partner, and dependent children under 18).

Those referred by UNHCR under the ACRS will have refugee status and will therefore be able to access the refugee family reunion route.

Those without refugee status wishing to bring family members would need to apply through the regular family visa route under Appendix FM of the Immigration Rules. Whilst the UK has made a generous resettlement commitment, we must bear in mind the capacity of the UK to resettle people is not unlimited and therefore difficult decisions about who will be prioritised for resettlement have to be made.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/146950>

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

Appendix FM of the Immigration rules, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-fm-family-members>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [143853] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department keeps records of the number of unaccompanied

children in each local authority in the UK from Afghanistan who were separated from their families during the evacuation of Kabul.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: We don't hold centralised data on this. However, following the evacuation of Kabul any children who we became aware of in the UK, that were not with their parents, would have been dealt with on a case-by-case basis. When this has happened, we work in close collaboration with social services and the relevant local authority.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143853>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Ukraine

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat) [148806] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to establish a guarantor scheme to help support Ukrainian citizens leaving the Homes for Ukraine scheme into private rental accommodation.

Reply from Felicity Buchan: We recently published updated guidance on renting in Ukrainian and Russian to help households who wish to move on from sponsorship by accessing private accommodation [here](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-20/148806>

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

The following two questions both received the same answer

Visas: Turkey

Kevin Brennan (Labour) [146814] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to prioritise visa applications for the relatives of UK citizens and residents affected by the recent earthquake in Turkey.

Visas: Syria

Kevin Brennan (Labour) [146814] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prioritise visa applications for the relatives of UK citizens and residents affected by the recent earthquake in Syria.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The UK government continue to support British nationals with relatives impacted by the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Where family members do not have a current UK visa, they can apply online via one of our standard visa routes, which remain available, and biometrics can be submitted at the nearest Visa Application Centre (VAC).

UKVI will aim to process any compassionate cases as quickly as possible in line with current guidance.

Should individual circumstances require a quicker decision, customers should flag this with visa application centre staff when submitting their biometrics and UKVI will consider this as part of their wider application.

If customers have an existing visa application and have been impacted by the earthquake, then they should please contact the UKVI Contact Centre, details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/146813>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/146814>

Visas: British National (Overseas)

Steve McCabe (Labour) [146776] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether people from Hong Kong on a British National (Overseas) visa are permitted to referee sport at an amateur level.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Holders of a Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa can work in virtually any capacity in the UK, with the exception of being employed as a professional sportsperson or sports coach.

This Government does not restrict anyone taking part in recreational sport as an amateur. 'Amateur' is defined in the Immigration Rules as "a person who engages in a sport or creative activity solely for personal enjoyment and who is not seeking to derive a living from the activity."

However, if an individual meets any of the indicators listed in the definition of 'Professional Sportsperson' in the Immigration Rules, they are classified as such, and if the restriction on work as a professional sportsperson is present in their visa conditions, they would therefore be breaching the terms of their visa.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/146776>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Martyn Day (SNP) [143786] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential impacts of delayed EU Settlement Scheme Administrative Reviews upon applicants who are awaiting a decision.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The level of EU Settlement Scheme administrative reviews is constantly monitored to manage the potential impacts on applicants awaiting their decision. Resources are being increased in order to address delays and we continue to work through applications in turn and as quickly as possible.

All EU Settlement Scheme administrative review applicants awaiting a decision continue to benefit from the protected rights gained when their initial EUSS application was made, as confirmed by a Certificate of Application.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143786>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Alyn Smith (SNP) [143865] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications made by EU citizens to remain in the UK were refused by her Department in each of the last six months.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Statistics of immigration applications refused, by the applicant's nationality, are published quarterly.

Data to 30 September 2022 is currently available. Data to 31 December 2022 will be published on 23 February 2023.

Refusals of applications to the EU Settlement Scheme are available in table EUSS_02 at [EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, September 2022](#)

Refusals under the general immigration rules for both asylum and non-asylum applications are available in the [Asylum applications, initial decisions and resettlement](#) and [Extensions](#) data sets.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143865>

Universal Credit: EU Nationals

Stephen Timms (Labour) [148526] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to lift the stay of decisions on Universal Credit claims by EU citizens with pre-settled status who notify his Department that they are not able to meet their basic needs as a result of that stay.

Reply from Guy Opperman: Where an appeal is pending in a lead test case, as there is in relation to EU citizens with pre-settled status in scope of *SSWP v AT (AIRE Centre and IMA Intervening)* [2022] UKUT 330 (AAC), then under Section

25 of the Social Security Act 1998, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has the power to stay making decisions on any lookalike claims.

A stay may be lifted where there is application on hardship grounds. Each application is considered on its merits.

We are not staying any cases where a right to reside has been identified for those with pre-settled status, and in such cases, the grant of UC should follow subject to the usual eligibility criteria being met.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-20/148526>

The December 2022 judgement in the case referred to above can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63a1dfb2e90e07586dacf4c7/UA-2022-001067-USTA.pdf>

Refugees: Homelessness

Apsana Begum (Labour) [142852] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of ending Section 95 asylum support 28 days after a newly-recognised refugee has received their immigration status documents on rates of homelessness amongst newly-recognised refugees.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: If an asylum seeker is granted refugee status, they gain immediate access to the labour market and receive advice to help them transition to the mainstream benefit system if they still require support. Newly recognised refugees are entitled to housing assistance from their local authority and are treated as a priority need if they have children or are considered vulnerable. The asylum accommodation estate is under huge strain and increasing the 28 day 'move-on' period would only exacerbate these pressures.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/142852>

Asylum: Vetting

Matt Vickers (Conservative) [147221] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve background checks on asylum seekers.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: All asylum claimants are subject to mandatory security checks against their claimed identity including criminality checks on UK databases. This is critical to the delivery of a safe and secure immigration system. We are working to strengthen ties with international partners to make vital intelligence sharing more seamless.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/147221>

Asylum: Hotels

Stella Creasy (Labour Co-op) [146955] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which public bodies have (a) statutory responsibility for safeguarding residents and (b) power to inspect safeguarding provisions in asylum accommodation hotels.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The safety and wellbeing of asylum seekers in our care is of paramount importance to the Home Office. We have an important role to play in identifying those at risk and sharing relevant information with statutory agencies so they can fulfil their legal responsibilities.

The statutory agencies responsible for safeguarding adults and children are local authorities, health care providers and the police.

The Home Office has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as detailed in Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/146955>

Asylum: Housing

Ben Everitt (Conservative) [142874] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to ensure that accommodation sites for asylum seekers will be distributed equally across the UK.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The enduring solution to this challenge is to stop the illegal, dangerous and unnecessary small boat crossings that are overwhelming our asylum system. Not only is every crossing attempt a potential tragedy, as we have seen far too often, but the people arriving via these small boats have travelled through, and have left, safe countries with fully functioning asylum systems to reach the UK.

The former Minister for safe and Legal Routes announced a move to full dispersal on 13 April 2022. The new system of full dispersal accommodation allows the Home Office to move from using hotels to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation. Under full dispersal plans, all Local Authorities in England, Scotland and Wales are considered a dispersal area and are required to take part in asylum dispersal. This will lead to a more equitable distribution of asylum seekers across the UK and reduce pressures on the minority of Local Authorities which previously participated.

To support full dispersal, delivery plans have been developed in partnership with local government across all UK regions. Plans were designed to ensure a more equitable spread of dispersed accommodation across the UK. Regional Governance Boards will monitor performance against plans.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/142874>

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [142885] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there are circumstances in which asylum-seeking women and children would be moved into shared dispersal accommodation with (a) adult men and (b) single adult men.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. We take the safety and welfare of those in our care seriously and the Home Office has robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure those in our accommodation are as safe and supported as possible as we seek urgent placements with a local authority.

Adult men are not accommodated with asylum seeking women and children in dispersal accommodation unless they are part of the same family group. Single adult men are not accommodated with female adults, families or unrelated children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/142885>

Asylum: Food

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [146817] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the quantity of food provided to asylum seekers in temporary accommodation.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Asylum seekers in contingency accommodation are provided breakfast, lunch and evening meals, with a choice of at least one hot and one cold selection, at least one vegetarian option, a beverage service with each main meal and a food service for babies and small children with the appropriate foodstuffs. Food is provided in a location easily accessible to all. Additional foodstuffs or meals are also provided as required to meet the nutritional needs of Service Users for whom three daily meals may be insufficient.

We continuously look at ways to improve our procedures to ensure we address concerns quickly and effectively, and one of the tools we use to achieve this is

through our targeted customer experience surveys. These are 100% anonymous and available 24/7 in a variety of languages. The Initial Accommodation (IA) survey in particular is aimed at all those who reside in all forms of contingency accommodation and seeks insight directly from service users on their experience of fundamental aspects of the provision. This includes questions on the accommodation standards and suitability, food offering, information provided and overall service.

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration also conducted a thorough review of contingency accommodation. Their findings were published in May 2022 and the Home Office has accepted all of the recommendations made. The food service at hotels meets appropriate nutritional standards for each varied menu and satisfies cultural, religious, health or other specific requirements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/146817>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1137444/An_inspection_of_contingency_asylum_accommodation.pdf

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-an-inspection-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-hotels/response-to-the-icibis-report-an-inspection-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-may-2021-to-november-2021>

Asylum: Children

Stephen Timms (Labour) [143677] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish her Department's plans for ending the use of hotels to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. We take the safety and welfare of those in our care seriously and the Home Office has robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure those in our accommodation are as safe and supported as possible as we seek urgent placements with a local authority.

Adult men are not accommodated with asylum seeking women and children in dispersal accommodation unless they are part of the same family group. Single adult men are not accommodated with female adults, families or unrelated children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143677>

Asylum: Children

Stephen Timms (Labour) [143678] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure unaccompanied children moved from hotels are accommodated in safe, appropriate placements.

Reply from Claire Coutinho: Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) are accommodated in hotels by the Home Office, on a temporary basis before they transfer to the care of a local authority through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS).

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that UASC, like all looked-after children, are accommodated in safe and appropriate placements in accordance with the Children Act 1989. The department's statutory guidance for local authorities 'Care of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of Modern Slavery (2017)' sets out a range of factors that local authorities should consider when making placement decisions. This guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-of-unaccompanied-and-trafficked-children>

The department continues to work closely with the Home Office to ensure that all UASC are provided with care by a local authority as soon as possible after their arrival.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143678>

Asylum: Children

Grahame Morris (Labour) [146886] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February to Question 129763 on Asylum: Children, if he will provide a breakdown of the (a) age and (b) gender of the 199 missing children as of 26 January.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Of the 199 missing UASC as of 26.01.23, one is female and 198 are male. The majority of missing UASC are aged 16-17; a definitive breakdown is not currently available. Please note that this is not the current figure of missing people as that is currently 196.

This information was taken from live operational data and is subject to change.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/146886>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-23/129763>

Asylum: Children

Caroline Lucas (Green) [142660] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2023 to Question 132333 on Asylum: Children, and with reference to the response to the Urgent Question on 24 January 2023 on Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children, Official Report column 859, of the 4,600 unaccompanied children who have been accommodated in hotels since July 2021 and who have not gone missing, what is the (a) shortest, (b) average and (c) longest number of days that they have remained in that form of accommodation.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: All unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) in interim emergency UASC hotels are referred to local authorities under the mandated National Transfer Scheme (NTS) within the shortest time frame possible. The time it takes for a local authority to identify a placement varies and has meant some UASC experiencing delays in transferring. The NTS transferred 3,148 children to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 30 September 2022. Over four times the number of transfers on the year before. To incentivise further transfers, we are providing local authorities with children's services with an additional £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

Some transfers fail on the day because the minor refuses to transfer. In these instances, social workers from the emergency hotels and local authorities work closely with the children to help them understand the options and encourage them to accept the placement.

As of 08.02.23 the figures were as below for the young people who've been accommodated in UASC Hotels:

- a) Shortest length of stay – less than 1 day
- b) Average length of stay – 20.11 days
- c) Longest length of stay – 128 days

The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. Robust safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with a local authority. This includes support workers being onsite in the hotels 24 hours a day, supported by nurses and social workers. UASC are not detained and are free to leave the accommodation. All contingency sites have security staff and providers liaise

closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents.
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/142660>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-25/132333>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-24/debates/290AF292-5D7E-411C-8FB8-A6E0F288365C/UnaccompaniedAsylum-SeekingChildren>

Asylum: Children

Catherine West (Labour) [147171] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with police forces in areas experiencing disappearances of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from hotels on (a) investigating the disappearances and (b) helping to prevent future disappearances; and what steps she is taking with the impacted hotels to help to prevent future disappearances.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst local authority accommodation is found.

We take the safety and welfare of those in our care seriously and the Home Office has robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure those in our accommodation are as safe and supported as possible as we seek urgent placements with a local authority. The National Transfer scheme (NTS) has seen 3,148 children transferred to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 30 September 2022. This compares to 739 children transferred in the same time period in the previous year. We are providing local authorities with children's services with an additional £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

For any young person that goes missing from an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC) hotel, the local authority will convene a multi-agency forum including local police forces and the Home Office to seek to locate the child and ensure their safety, following the 'missing persons protocol', led by our directly engaged social workers. The MARS (Missing After Reasonable Steps) protocol is followed for any looked after child who goes missing from a care setting, including the UASC hotels. Similar protocols within police forces have safely reduced the number of missing episodes from placements by 36%.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-17/147171>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Asylum Seekers: Accommodation in Hotels

Lord Howarth of Newport (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to discontinue the practice of accommodating asylum seekers in hotels.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Murray of Blidworth): The Home Office is working to reduce the Government's dependency on hotels for contingency accommodation through a package of long-term and short-term measures. The full dispersal model increases the number of suitable properties that can be procured for destitute asylum seekers across the United Kingdom.

Lord Howarth of Newport: My Lords, the Immigration Minister admitted in January that

some 200 child asylum seekers were missing. Will the noble Lord admit that the abduction by criminal gangs of these children placed in hotels represents a disastrous failure of responsibility by the Home Office? Does he also acknowledge that the Home Secretary's inflammatory language effectively licensed the far-right racists and bullies who besieged the Suites Hotel in Knowsley and are planning other brutalities? More than two months ago, the Prime Minister said that enough is enough and promised to end the use of hotels as quickly as possible. What steps, on what timetable, will the Government take to fulfil that promise?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: ... of course unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are not detained or in any way restrained from leaving hotels. If they choose to leave, they can do so. There is no evidence to suggest that 200 people have been kidnapped, as the noble Lord appears to suggest. Of course it is a matter of great concern when unaccompanied asylum-seeking children go missing, and there are protocols in place, as I have already informed the House, in relation to involving the police in their relocation. On the second point he raised, there is certainly nothing to be achieved by the use of language which exacerbates the issue, but the problem around the accommodation of asylum seekers in hotels is caused by the large numbers of people crossing the channel. Finally, on the question of what steps are being taken, as I have already said, the Home Office is implementing the full dispersal model in an attempt to house those in hotels in private rented accommodation and, as announced in April last year, the intention is to do that fairly across the local authorities across the United Kingdom.

Lord Bellingham (Conservative): My Lords, surely the key to solving the hotel crisis is to break the business model of the people traffickers. The only way to do that is with the French, through close intelligence co-operation and a shared policing initiative. Obviously the £63 million announcement in November to ensure that British police are posted on to French beaches is a move in the right direction. How much of that deployment has taken place, and will this be on the agenda for the forthcoming summit between our Prime Minister and President Macron?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: My noble friend is right that breaking the business model of the people smugglers is vital, and the agreement we recently made with the French Government will go some way to achieve that. The other aspect will be the forthcoming Bill in relation to stopping the small boats, and I look forward to the support of all those in the House when it comes before your Lordships.

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, we have hotels accommodating young asylum seekers, although we want to bring that to an end. Are the Government satisfied that their contracts with the providers deal properly with their safeguarding responsibilities? Will the Minister publish the results of the Home Office's monitoring and supervision—as I hope that it is doing—of the providers' performance, including checking that the many staff involved are properly DBS checked?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The contracts with the three providers, who then engage the hotel accommodation, are of course commercially sensitive and the Home Office cannot therefore publish their contents. However, I am satisfied that sufficient safeguards are built into those contracts, and I reassure the noble Baroness that there is a requirement that all staff are appropriately DBS checked.

Lord Hylton (Crossbench): My Lords, only yesterday the Minister, in reply to a Written Question, gave very precise figures for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children placed in hotels and for the numbers who had gone missing. Will he therefore give us a better indication of when more suitable accommodation will be found for such people?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who have arrived on a small boat are first referred to the Kent intake unit. Then

there are five specific hotels for the use of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and as soon as possible they are transferred to the care of local authorities. This is clearly a priority and it is obviously a very important matter. ...

Lord Harrington of Watford (Conservative): My Lords, the Minister will be aware that the Homes for Ukraine scheme has led to 150,000 refugees from another country being settled in this country in people's homes, while Afghans who came a year prior to that are still largely in hotels. Will the Minister look at the Homes for Ukraine scheme, see what lessons can be learned, and make sure there is a standing scheme of sponsorship and hospitality which will take refugees from wherever the Government decide they should come?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Of course I will look at the proposal that my noble friend recommends. The Homes for Ukraine scheme is different from Afghan applications for asylum in that it is anticipated—and indeed encouraged by the Government of Ukraine—that those Ukrainians will return to Ukraine after the danger has passed.

Lord Coaker (Labour): It was never supposed to be like this. The Government's use of hotels is a result of a catastrophic failure of their policy. People are waiting years for an asylum decision, and we now have hundreds of children going missing. Alongside that, we have right-wing extremist groups using these hotels as a way to foment community disunity. What are the Government going to do to tackle right-wing extremism and deal with the policy that is leading to these problems in the first place?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Clearly, the instances of violence we saw in Knowsley last week were to be deplored. Indeed, the House will be reassured to know that the Home Office has in place a careful programme to deal with these issues. It is hoped that those in hotels can feel secure as a result of knowing that the Home Office has in place arrangements to protect asylum seekers, but of course that has to be balanced against the liberty of people to protest. These are all matters being carefully considered by the department.

The Lord Bishop of Durham: My Lords, slightly contrary to what the Minister said earlier, surely one of the main reasons hotels are being filled is because accommodation is being blocked, in a sense, because so many applications have not been processed in due time. Could the Minister update us on the reduction in the numbers awaiting their claims being dealt with, as was promised in January? Have they been reduced, and by what number?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: I am afraid that I must disagree with the right reverend Prelate. The reason for the number of people in hotels is the number of people crossing the channel illegally and causing accommodation to be needed. It is not simply a question of a failure to determine their asylum claims, not least because those whose claims are determined are then accommodated by local authorities in very similar types of housing.

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, those statistics are not correct. The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee showed that, from quarter 2 in 2017 to quarter 2 in 2022, applications were up by 103%, but in the same period the backlog had quadrupled, particularly for those waiting over six months. The committee came to the conclusion that the slow processing of applications had been a bigger driver of the increase in the backlog than the number of applications. Why does the Minister not know that, and why does he not start dealing with that issue, which is causing people to be held in hotels?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The question we are addressing today is about the reason for the number of people in hotels, and I say again that the reason is the number of people crossing the channel. When we bring forward our Bill, the message will go out and the business model of the people smugglers will be smashed. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-02-21/debates/014720FB-703E-4D00-A66B-A11D48916AA5/AsylumSeekersAccommodationInHotels>

The written answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-24/hl5041>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Lister of Burtsett (Labour_ [HL5519] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 6 February (HL5085), what steps they are taking to determine the details of any family members who were separated from people evacuated to the UK from Afghanistan as part of Operation Pitting.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The government remains committed to providing protection for vulnerable people fleeing Afghanistan. However, the situation is very complex and presents significant challenges, including how those who are eligible for resettlement in the UK can leave the country. This includes the eligible family members of those being resettled under the ACRS. For those evacuated from Afghanistan under the ACRS without their immediate family members, further information will be made available in due course about options for reuniting with them.

Whilst the Home Office are currently not able to provide a breakdown of family members data, work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the ARAP and ACRS is on case working systems. Once this work concludes, further 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/2023-02-07/hl5519>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-25/hl5085>

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

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

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

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

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

Refugees: Resettlement

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL5546] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to trial an Emergency Resettlement Mechanism that is wider than existing schemes as originally proposed in the New Plan for Immigration, published on 24 March 2021.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: An Emergency Resettlement Mechanism would allow the government to provide urgent protection in exceptional circumstances to refugees referred by UNHCR as being in need of rapid emergency resettlement. The UK already works alongside the UNHCR to resettle refugees through its existing resettlement schemes; these include the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Community Sponsorship, the Mandate Resettlement Scheme, and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

Responding to the situation in Afghanistan, the UK military undertook the largest military evacuation since the Second World War, during which we evacuated c.15,000 individuals to the UK. Over 20,000 Afghans have been brought over to the

UK since the fall of Kabul. This, alongside the UK's response to Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, continues to impact on available local authority housing and support. As a result, the commencement of the pilot has been put on hold temporarily.

The UK has a strong record of helping those most in need and the UK continues to welcome refugees and people in need of protection through our resettlement and relocation schemes. Since 2015, the UK has resettled over 28,000 refugees directly from regions of conflict and instability.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/hl5546>

Asylum: Applications

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL5609] To ask His Majesty's Government whether there are any circumstances in which it is currently possible for refugees to claim asylum from within the UK other than for claimants from Ukraine, Afghanistan or Hong Kong who apply under the relevant time-limited schemes.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: In addition to dedicated resettlement schemes for 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. Any person who is not a British Citizen can claim asylum in the UK as long as they meet the requirements to do so, as set out in the Immigration Rules and published policy.

A claim for asylum from an adult who is not a British Citizen will be accepted where they make a particularised protection claim in person at a designated location. If they have previously applied for asylum, they would be required to submit new evidence under the further submissions process. A particularise protection claim refers to them providing a basic reason why they fear persecution or serious harm. In the case of children claiming asylum, there is no requirement to particularise a protection claim when they register their claim.

A self-declared refugee or someone who has been recognised as a refugee by another country or the UNHCR would not be excluded from claiming asylum. If refugee status has been provided by another country or the UNHCR, that will be taken into consideration when the claim is decided.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/hl5609>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Hotels

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench) [HL5575] To ask His Majesty's Government what criteria they use to identify hotels that are suitable to accommodate migrants.

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench) [HL5576] To ask His Majesty's Government how many migrants are accommodated in hotels in each upper tier authority for the latest date on which figures are available.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The Asylum Accommodation service providers identify suitable hotels and ensure that they conform to the accommodation standards and provision set out in Schedule 2 of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC). The Home Office will then assess the recommendation, undertaking a site visit if needed to ensure the suitability of the site. The Home Office will work with the service provider and the hotel owner to bring the site up to a suitable standard if necessary.

In addition to meeting the necessary standards, other factors in the sourcing of contingency hotels are important to note. The hotel needs to be agreeable to contract and be able to accommodate sole use for the duration of the contract. Many hotels do not wish to enter into a contract and some have offered partial use which we cannot allow.

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each region and local authority area. These statistics can be found at [Asylum and resettlement datasets](#). Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published on 24 November, correct to end September.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/hl5575>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/hl5576>

The Schedule 2 referred to above can be read at

<https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-1112/AASC - Schedule 2 - Statement of Requirements.pdf>

Asylum: Children

Baroness Eaton (Conservative) [HL5547] To ask His Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children arrived in England in each month in 2022.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). These statistics can be found at Asylum and resettlement datasets:

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

UASC application data is located within table ASY_D0.

[Immigration statistics](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/hl5547>

Asylum: Children

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL5629] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 9 February (HL5157), whether they have evidence of organised criminal gangs targeting any unaccompanied child refugees staying in hotels, including those children that have reportedly gone missing from hotels housing asylum seekers in the last 12 months.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: We have no evidence of organised criminal gangs targeting unaccompanied child refugees staying in hotels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/hl5629>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-26/hl5157>

Asylum: Children

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL5041] To ask His Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied children seeking asylum have been placed in hotels in the last 12 months; and of that number, how many have ever been identified as missing.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst local authority accommodation is found.

The safety and welfare of those in our care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), is our primary concern and the Home Office has robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure those in our accommodation are as safe and supported as possible as we seek urgent placements with a local authority. This includes support workers being onsite in the hotels 24 hours a day, alongside nurses and social workers. However, UASC are not detained and are free to leave the accommodation. All contingency sites have security staff and providers liaise closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of

vulnerable residents.

3658 UASC arrived and were temporarily accommodated in Home Office UASC Hotels in 2022 (Jan-Dec) whilst awaiting a transfer to a local authority. 404 young people have gone missing in this period, most of which have since been found. There are currently 199 young people missing from Home Office UASC hotels however, this is a live operational figure and subject to change.

When a young person goes missing the 'missing persons protocol' is followed and led by our directly engaged social workers.

The MARS (Missing After Reasonable Steps) protocol is followed for any looked after child who goes missing from a care setting, including the UASC hotels. When used correctly, similar protocols within police forces have safely reduced the number of missing episodes from placements by 36%.

For any young person that goes missing from a UASC hotel, the local authority will convene a multi-agency forum including local police forces and the Home Office to seek to locate the child and ensure their safety.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-24/hl5041>

Asylum: Children

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL5557] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to end the use of hotels accommodating unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL5558] To ask His Majesty's Government what support, including (1) legal support, (2) mental health support, and (3) medical provision, they are providing to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children placed in hotels.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give some unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst local authority accommodation is found.

The safety and welfare of those in our care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), is our primary concern and the Home Office has robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure those in our accommodation are as safe and supported as possible as we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day, alongside social workers and nurses.

The National Transfer scheme (NTS) has already transferred 3,148 children to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 30 September 2022. This compares to 739 children transferred in the same time period in the previous year. We are providing local authorities with children's services with an additional £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

All UASC in interim emergency hotels are referred to local authorities under the mandated NTS within the shortest time frame possible. The time it takes for a local authority to identify a placement varies and has meant some UASC experiencing delays in transferring.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/hl5557>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/hl5558>

Napier Barracks: Accommodation Centres

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL5541] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 6 December 2022 (HL3643), why they did

not produce a statement of community involvement when the consultation on extending planning permission for the accommodation facility at Napier barracks was for this stated purpose.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is normally used in the development of a Local Plan by a local planning authority. However, in the case of a change of use application which was the subject of the Special Development Order (SDO) then an SCI would generally not be required. It is for the developer to decide if they wish to submit an SCI which would usually provide a summary of who, when and how stakeholders had been engaged with. An SCI will not be produced as it is not a requirement of the SDO; however, we have sought to engage with the local community through correspondence and the provision of relevant information on the gov.uk website.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-08/hl5541>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-22/hl3643>

Press Releases

Streamlined asylum processing: OISC position

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/streamlined-asylum-processing-oisc-position>

An open letter to Ukrainians in Scotland and across the world

<https://www.gov.scot/news/an-open-letter-to-ukrainians-in-scotland-and-across-the-world/>

Displaced Ukrainians in line for thousands of tickets for Eurovision Song Contest

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/displaced-ukrainians-in-line-for-thousands-of-tickets-for-eurovision-song-contest>

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees helped to access UK banking services

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tens-of-thousands-of-ukrainian-refugees-helped-to-access-uk-banking-services>

**Inspection report published: A reinspection of family reunion applications
September – October 2022**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/inspection-report-published-a-reinspection-of-family-reunion-applications-september-october-2022>

British husband and wife sentenced for smuggling migrants in sofas

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/british-husband-and-wife-sentenced-for-smuggling-migrants-in-sofas>

New Publications

Guidance: Streamlined asylum processing

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/streamlined-asylum-processing/streamlined-asylum-processing-accessible#about-this-guidance>

Immigration Assistance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1072638/Immigration Assistance - Practice Note amended copy 26.04.22.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1072638/Immigration_Assistance_-_Practice_Note_amended_copy_26.04.22.pdf)

A reinspection of family reunion applications September – October 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1137651/A_reinspection_of_family_reunion_applications_September_October_2022.pdf

Home Office response to report on re-inspection of family reunion applications

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-report-on-a-re-inspection-of-family-reunion-applications/home-office-response-to-report-on-re-inspection-of-family-reunion-applications>

Irregular migration to the UK, year ending December 2022

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

Migrants detected crossing the English Channel in small boats – last 7 days

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats-last-7-days>

EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, December 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2022/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2022>

Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data/afghan-resettlement-programme-operational-data>

Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme in Scotland: statistics - February 2023

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-in-scotland-statistics-february-2023/>

Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by age and sex of applicant up to 31 December 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1138169/Ukraine_Sponsorship_scheme_visas_-_by_age_and_sex_to_31_December_2022.ods

Immigration system statistics, year ending December 2022

Overview of the immigration system

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/overview-of-the-immigration-system>

Summary of latest statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/summary-of-latest-statistics>

Recent changes to visa numbers in Home Office data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/recent-changes-to-visa-numbers-in-home-office-data>

Statistics on Ukrainians in the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/statistics-on-ukrainians-in-the-uk>

How many people come to the UK each year (including visitors)?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors>

Why do people come to the UK? To work

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work>

Why do people come to the UK? To study

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-study>

Why do people come to the UK? For family reasons

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-for-family-reasons>

How many people do we grant protection to?

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

How many people continue their stay in the UK or apply to stay permanently?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/how-many-people-continue-their-stay-in-the-uk-or-apply-to-stay-permanently>

How many people are detained or returned?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned>

News: Ukraine

Some Ukrainian refugees returning home 'because savings running out'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/foreign-office-russia-kharkiv-kyiv-austria-b2287369.html>

Eurovision tickets to be allocated to displaced Ukrainians in UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2023/feb/25/eurovision-tickets-to-be-allocated-to-displaced-ukrainians-in-uk>

Ukraine orphans enjoy 'paradise' in Scotland

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64744305>

Ukraine war: I told friends I'd play football, then Russia invaded

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-64756904>

From Kyiv to Glasgow: A story of hope and humanity amid a horrific war

<https://www.paih.org/from-kyiv-to-glasgow-a-story-of-hope-and-humanity-amid-a-horrific-war/>

The wounded Ukraine soldier being treated in Scotland

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64706376>

From Ukraine to Scotland: Olga and Oleksii's story

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/from-ukraine-to-scotland-olga-and-oleksiis-story/>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Only 22 Afghans resettled in UK under 'pathway' to help vulnerable refugees

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/23/only-22-afghans-resettled-in-uk-scheme-vulnerable-refugees-small-boats-channel>

MPs could set migrant cap, says Home Office minister

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/mps-should-set-limit-migration-asylum-robert-jenrick-xkdls6sqk>

Immigration curbs after huge rise in foreign student families

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/asylum-backlog-hits-record-as-160-000-migrants-await-decisions-7n65xxn3c>

New asylum plan will replicate Ukrainian refugee scheme, says immigration minister

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/02/19/new-asylum-plan-will-replicate-ukrainian-refugee-scheme-says/>

Top mandarin omits illegal migration from list of Home Office priorities

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/02/21/top-mandarin-omits-illegal-migration-list-home-office-priorities/>

Asylum backlog at record high, Home Office figures show

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64744553>

UK asylum backlog hits new record of 160,000

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-office-rishi-sunak-government-channel-data-b2288172.html>

Asylum-seeker backlog passes 150,000 mark as upkeep bill hits £2.1bn a year

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/02/21/asylum-seeker-backlog-passes-150000-mark-upkeep-bill-hits-21bn/>

Asylum 'amnesty' to clear backlog of 90,000 claims

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/02/23/asylum-amnesty-clear-backlog-90000-claims/>

Asylum claims for 12,000 to be considered without face-to-face interview

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64736123>

Asylum plan will admit thousands without interview checks

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/asylum-plan-will-admit-thousands-without-interview-checks-n3kk6j2zn>

Ending face-to-face interviews could be 'devastating' for UK asylum seekers

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/23/questionnaires-for-uk-asylum-seekers-could-have-devastating-impact>

Thousands of asylum cases to be fast-tracked as Home Office struggles with Sunak's backlog pledge

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-questionnaires-sunak-backlog-b2287597.html>

The UK's asylum questionnaires plan has inflamed left and right alike. All the while, lives remain in limbo

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/feb/24/asylum-questionnaires-debate-lives-backlog-government>

Barring skilled refugees from work in the UK is a travesty that must be solved

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/feb/24/barring-skilled-refugees-from-work-in-the-uk-is-a-travesty-that-must-be-solved>

The government is failing its duty to young asylum seekers

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-government-is-failing-its-duty-to-young-asylum-seekers-g9669rsfh>

Suella Braverman's child migrant rules 'a gift to gangs'

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-bravermans-child-migrant-rules-a-gift-to-gangs-6gqpfrg6d>

Braverman: Frustrations over hotels for migrants 'understandable'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/suella-braverman-violence-cornwall-home-secretary-merseyside-b2287585.html>

Home Office accused of lies over use of asylum seeker hotel despite terror threat warning

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-hotel-row-gravesham-kent-b2286512.html>

Home Secretary must stop far right targeting of asylum hotels

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/home-secretary-must-stop-far-right-targeting-of-asylum-hotels/>

The government must crack down on migrant hunting

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/government-must-crack-down-migrant-hunting-comment-d95cq9m7q>

Asylum seeker hotel protests take place in Skegness and Newquay

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/25/asylum-seeker-hotel-protests-take-place-in-skegness-and-newquay>

Anti-fascist demonstrators barricade Newquay asylum-seeker hotel as far-right threaten protest

<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/beresford-hotel-newquay-asylum-seekers-b2289549.html>

Asylum seekers in Bedfordshire 'afraid to leave hotel' because of being filmed

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/24/asylum-seekers-bedfordshire-dunstable-hotel>

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Community Relations

News

So what does it really mean to identify as Scottish?

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23347373.really-mean-identify-scottish/>

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Equality

New Publication

UK Government response to: A thematic inspection of the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1138172/bhnb-action-plan.pdf

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Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Pupils: Ethnic Groups

Marsha De Cordova (Labour) [143858] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken to put in place safeguarding practices for Black, Asian and ethnic minority students at risk of racist abuse.

Pupils: Protection

Marsha De Cordova (Labour) [143859] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department can take to reprimand schools where safeguarding processes for students have been inadequate.

Thomas Knyvett College: Ethnic Groups

Marsha De Cordova (Labour) [143860] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has had discussions with Thomas Knyvett College in Ashford on safeguarding of Black, Asian and Ethnic minority students.

Reply from Nick Gibb: The safety and wellbeing of children is a priority for the Government. All schools and colleges have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Schools and colleges must have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE). The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

The Department's 'Behaviour in Schools' guidance, updated in July 2022, states that every school should ensure pupils can be taught in a calm, safe and supportive environment. The guidance is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101597/Behaviour_in_schools_guidance_sept_22.pdf

Schools should be clear which behaviours are permitted and prohibited, the values, attitudes, and beliefs they promote, and the social norms and routines that should

be encouraged throughout the school community.

All headteachers should ensure the school's approach to behaviour meets the national minimum expectation that all members of the school community create a positive, safe environment in which bullying, physical threats or abuse and intimidation are not tolerated. This includes prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. The school behaviour policy needs to ensure that any incidents of bullying, discrimination, aggression and derogatory language are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Behaviour policies should also set out what the school will do in response to non-criminal poor behaviour and bullying that occurs off the school premises, and which is witnessed by a staff member or reported to the school, including the sanctions that will be imposed on pupils.

Where concerns regarding the safeguarding arrangements in an academy are identified, the Department will work closely with the relevant academy trust to ensure statutory requirements are being met.

A trust's obligations for ensuring the welfare and health and safety of pupils attending an academy are set out in Part 3 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Part 4 of the regulations sets out the requirements for ensuring the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors. The regulations are available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/made>

The regulations set out several policies which trusts must ensure are in place and require the policies to be effectively implemented. Trusts are to have regard to guidance issued by the Department, specifically KCSIE and Working together to safeguard children.

Where serious weaknesses in trust governance or non-compliance are found, the Department can take formal intervention action against trusts through a Notice to Improve, as set out in the Academy Trust Handbook, available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60c8d0318fa8f57ce8c4621e/Academy_trust_handbook_2021.pdf

The recent violent incident in the vicinity of Thomas Knyvett College was abhorrent. The Department has been in regular contact with the CEO of the Howard Partnership Trust. This is an ongoing police investigation, and the Trust is following their advice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143858>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143859>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143860>

Information about the incident referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-surrey-64585043>

New Publication

Hate Crime Toolkit

<https://victimsupport.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Hate-Crime-Toolkit-fv.pdf>

News

VSS and Police Scotland launch new Hate Crime Toolkit

<https://victimsupport.scot/about-us/news-list/hate-crime-toolkit/>

Addressing racist bullying in schools

<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/blog/addressing-racist-bullying-in-schools>

Black people who were labelled ‘backward’ as children seek justice for lifelong trauma

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/feb/21/black-people-labelled-backward-as-children-seek-justice-for-lifelong-trauma>

Police investigate ‘neo-Nazi’ death threats sent to black activist and trans broadcaster

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/21/police-investigate-neo-nazi-threats-black-activist-trans-broadcaster/>

Black activist threatened with ‘execution’ by British ‘Neo Nazi group’ in chilling letter

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/shola-mos-shogbamimu-death-threat-b2286089.html>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Release

Chief Constable tribute

<https://www.gov.scot/news/chief-constable-tribute/>

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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/>

Scottish Government Press Releases

Helping families with their living costs

<https://www.gov.scot/news/helping-families-with-their-living-costs/>

£20m to help 400,000 people with heating costs

<https://www.gov.scot/news/gbp-20m-to-help-400-000-people-with-heating-costs/>

Publications

Destitution in the UK: income thresholds for October 2022

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/59667/download?token=AH1kwJt1&filetype=full-report>

Households Below the Minimum Income Standard: 2008 – 2021

[https://www.jrf.org.uk/system/files/files-research/households below the minimum income standard 2008-2021 0.pdf](https://www.jrf.org.uk/system/files/files-research/households%20below%20the%20minimum%20income%20standard%202008-2021%200.pdf)

News

Household energy bills 'will be much cheaper than feared' by summer

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/household-energy-bills-will-be-much-cheaper-than-feared-by-summer-lrng3pcf>

Supermarket basic range prices rise by more than 20%

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/uk-supermarket-basic-range-food-price-rise-inflation-2023-g6thhhbn6>

Counting the pennies: price of pasta shoots up by 90pc in two years

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/24/price-pasta-increases-90-per-cent-two-years-research-reveals/>

Penne for your thoughts: Pasta at a premium as prices soar

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/pasta-cost-food-shortage-restaurants-uk-b2288873.html>

Money Diary: 'I'm in £1,600 of energy debt'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64386700>

Money Diary: 'I have 25p left in my bank account'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64386700>

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Other News

Minorities in UK no longer at much higher risk of dying from Covid

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/22/minority-ethnic-risk-dying-covid-ons-figures-show>

Police Scotland chief constable to retire in summer

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64743930>

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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>

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/2023/2/21/76ae9826-7bfd-4703-98c7-bb7382e0d74f/SB%2023-07.pdf>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

UK Parliament

Asylum Seekers (Accommodation Eviction Procedures) Bill

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

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

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

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

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

Bill of Rights Bill

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

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

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

Human Trafficking (Child Protection) Bill

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

Human Trafficking (Sentencing) Bill

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

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

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

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/49991/documents/3013>

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

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

Scotland (Self-Determination) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3413>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Review (closing date 1 March 2023)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-statutory-review>

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/>

Adult Disability Payment: Review of the mobility component (closing date 25 April 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/social-security/adult-disability-payment-review/>

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Job Opportunities

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

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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

Refugee Festival funding available for communities

Closing date for applications: 5 March 2023

Scottish Refugee Council grants of up to £500 are available to help organisations cover the cost of running events and activities as part of the Refugee Festival Scotland. The Festival brings people from different backgrounds together to share the art, culture and traditions that make our communities so colourful and diverse. For information see

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/festival-funding-opens/>

Cost-of-Living Support Scotland

Application deadline not stated

National Lottery funding from £10,001 to £75,000 for projects to help support individuals, families and communities currently experiencing hardship as a result of the cost-of-living increases. The programme aims to fund activity that reduces the impact of, or prevents financial insecurity so that people have more resilience and are more able to identify ways to deal with the impact of increased cost of living in their lives, are able to shape activity in their community to address the increased cost-of-living, and have more access to support and services that will help them to deal with the increased cost of living. For information and to apply see

Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

**** this week!**

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/3cwpzvwv>

Martyn's Law Webinar for Education

8 March 2023 (online, 10.30–12.00)

Home Office webinar to provide an opportunity for people working in education settings to learn about Martyn's Law, which will place a requirement on those responsible for certain locations to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/5n97f5wa>

Martyn's Law Webinar for Charities

8 March 2023 (online, 2.30–4.00)

Home Office webinar to provide an opportunity for charities to learn about Martyn's Law, which will place a requirement on those responsible for certain locations to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/yckzyene>

Introduction to Racial Literacy

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>

Martyn's Law Webinar for Places of Worship

9 March 2023 (online, 11.00–12.30)

Home Office webinar to provide an opportunity for people working with faith communities and places of worship to learn about Martyn's Law, which will place a requirement on those responsible for certain locations to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/bdfch8rn>

**** Hong Kongers in Scotland**

10 March 2023 (Edinburgh, 10.00–1.30)

Migration Policy Scotland event to explore the experiences of Hong Kongers in Scotland, and consider what support they need to flourish in Scotland. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/ykd7wmzb>

Human Rights and Recruitment Training

10 March 2023 (online, 10.00–11.30)

CEMVO training session to develop knowledge and understanding of human rights and how to put them into practice within the recruitment process. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/44ukwx9v>

Refugee Week UK Conference

15 March 2023 (online, 10.30–12.30)

Refugee Week UK conference to find out all you need to know about putting your own activity on the theme of “Compassion”, and to learn about the history of Refugee Week. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/4wj7eute>

Journeying with New Scots – Building community with refugees & asylum seekers

25 March 2023 (Stirling, 10.00–3.30)

Faith Impact Forum event to share joint experiences, expand our learning and strengthen our ties in a shared concern for the deep longing to be seen, heard, and accepted. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p89wzr3>

**** The Big Help Out**

8 May 2023 (UK-wide)

The Big Help Out will be a national day of volunteering on the Bank Holiday Monday of the King's Coronation weekend. For information see <https://thebighelpout.org.uk/> or contact margaret.starkie@volunteerscotland.org.uk

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Useful Links

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/>

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

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SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

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



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

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