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Contents

[Immigration and Asylum](#)

[Equality](#)

[Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination](#)

[Other Scottish Parliament and Government](#)

[Other UK Parliament and Government](#)

[Cost of Living](#)

[Other New Publications](#)

[Other News](#)

[Bills in Progress](#)

[Consultations](#)

[Job Opportunities](#)

[Funding Opportunities](#)

[Events, Conferences, and Training](#)

[Useful Links](#)

[Back issues](#)

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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Illegal Migration Act 2023 (Mitigation)

Paul Sweeney (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what action it has taken to mitigate any impact of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 on the provision of support for refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people living in Scotland. (S6O-02814)

Reply from the Minister for Equalities, Migration and Refugees (Emma Roddick): The Scottish Government is vehemently opposed to the Illegal Migration Act 2023.

The United Kingdom Government's plans to implement the act remain unclear, making it challenging for the Scottish Government to consider what action may be possible. We are assessing the scope of the mitigations that are available within

our devolved competence.

We continue to deliver a range of interventions to mitigate the impact of the cruel and inhumane UK Government immigration policy, including through the new Scots refugee integration strategy, the ending destitution together strategy, the trafficking and exploitation strategy and the Scottish guardianship service. We also recently launched our paper on migration in an independent Scotland, setting out our approach to migration, which is very much based on the values of dignity, fairness and respect.

Paul Sweeney: Although the act is a product of the UK Tory Government, it will have an impact on areas devolved to Scotland, including child protection and protection against human trafficking. I understand that the Scottish Government worked with stakeholders over the summer on a plan to mitigate those impacts, as the minister mentioned. Will she confirm what steps the Scottish Government will take to strengthen human trafficking and child protection measures in addition to the high-level strategies that she already outlined, and will she set out a clear timeline for the specific interventions that are urgently required?

Reply from Emma Roddick: I appreciate the member's interest in the issue and remember him attending the summit on illegal migration that we held in order to explore potential mitigations. However, as I explained in my previous answer, without knowing the detail of how the act is to be implemented, it is very difficult for us to come up with specific measures to mitigate its worst impacts.

I am more than happy to continue our engagement both with the member and with stakeholders in the wider policy area, to ensure that we get on top of what we can possibly do, within our devolved competence.

Karen Adam (SNP): As the recent "Building a New Scotland" paper on migration demonstrates, the only realistic way to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers receive the support that they need from the day of their arrival is to have the full powers of an independent state. How transformational does the minister believe it would be for asylum seekers to be granted the right to work in an independent Scotland?

Reply from Emma Roddick: Having the right to work, and being able to do so without being limited to the shortage occupation list, would be absolutely transformational for people seeking asylum in Scotland. We recognise that access to employment can support people to settle and integrate, enable them to use their skills and experience, rebuild their confidence and expand their social networks while reducing the risk of poverty and reliance on Government support, as well as contributing to our economy and communities.

Scotland has already seen the enormous and valuable contribution made to our economy and communities by refugees and displaced people from Ukraine, who have the right to work from the day that they arrive or are granted refugee status.

Earlier this year, we commissioned our expert advisory group on migration and population to explore the potential impacts of giving asylum seekers the right to work in Scotland, and we expect the group to publish its report very shortly.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15582&i=132979#ScotParlOR>

Information about the summit referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/news/protecting-people-seeking-refuge-in-scotland/>

The "Building a New Scotland" paper referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-new-scotland-migration-scotland-independence/>

UK Parliament Debate

Refugee Family Reunion Routes: Sudan

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-29/debates/4121EA45-F2F4-41C4-B3B5-EBEECF8E6F1A/RefugeeFamilyReunionRoutesSudan>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Net Migration Figures

Yvette Cooper (Labour): To ask the Home Secretary to make a statement on the publication of net migration figures.

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick): The most recent published data from the Office for National Statistics estimated that net migration in the year to June 2023 was at 672,000. That places untold pressure on housing supply and public services and makes successful integration virtually impossible. As the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary have repeatedly made clear, it is far too high. The Government remain committed to reducing levels of legal migration ... Earlier this year, we took action to tackle an unforeseen and substantial rise in the number of students bringing dependants into the UK to roughly 150,000. That means that, beginning with courses starting in January, students on taught postgraduate courses will no longer have the ability to bring dependants; only students on designated postgraduate research programmes will be able to bring dependants. That will have a tangible effect on net migration.

It is crystal clear that we need to reduce the numbers significantly by bringing forward further measures to control and reduce the number of people coming here, and separately to stop the abuse and exploitation of our visa system by companies and individuals. So far this year, we have initiated a significant number of investigations into sectors such as care companies suspected of breaching immigration rules. We are actively working across Government on further substantive measures and will announce details to the House as soon as possible.

Yvette Cooper: ... Net migration figures are now three times their level at the 2019 general election, when the Conservatives promised to reduce them. That includes a 65% increase in work migration this year ...

Net migration should come down. Immigration is important for Britain and always will be, but the system needs to be properly controlled and managed so that it is fair, effective and properly linked to the economy. Net migration for work has trebled since 2019 ... Social care visas have gone from 3,000 a year to more than 100,000 a year, yet this spring Ministers halved the programme for recruiting care workers here. ...

Will the Government immediately agree to Labour's plan to get rid of the unfair wage discount that means employers can pay overseas recruits 20% less than the going rate, and which prevents training and fair pay in the UK? Will the Government immediately ask the Migration Advisory Committee to review salary thresholds for skilled workers in shortage occupations, which have not kept up, and where the MAC has warned repeatedly about low-paid exploitation? Will the Minister link the points-based system to training and employment standards in the UK and have a proper plan for the economy and the immigration system? ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... We believe that the number of people coming into this country is too high, that it places unbearable pressure on our public services and on housing, and that it is making it impossible to integrate people into this country and harming community cohesion and national unity. It is also a moral failure, because it is leaving people on welfare and enabling companies all too often to reach for the easy lever of foreign labour. For all those reasons, we are

determined to tackle this issue. ...

Jonathan Gullis (Conservative): ... At the weekend, the Prime Minister said that migration was “too high” and needs to “come down to more sustainable levels”. ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... Of course, it is right that we want the UK to be a country that is open to the very best and the brightest, and that is why we have taken action in creating visa routes such as the global talent one ... but we must reduce net migration. ...

Alison Thewliss (SNP): ... I thank those people who have come to make their home here and to contribute to our universities, public services and health and care sector, and who have made our society and our economy all the richer for their presence. Have the Government thought this through? Who will carry out the vital tasks of those who have come to our shores if they pull up the drawbridge and send people away? The CBI has said that two thirds of UK businesses have been hit by labour shortages in the last year. Pressures on services are helped, not hindered, by those people coming here. ...

Interestingly, those who have come on small boats represent only 3% of the total, which is the flimsy basis on which the Minister and his colleagues want to disapply human rights laws, pull us out of the European convention on human rights and renege on our international commitments. It is clear that Scotland has different needs and attitudes towards migration. According to Migration Policy Scotland, six in 10 Scots say that immigration has a positive impact. ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... with respect to illegal migration and asylum seekers, the fine words that she says here in the Chamber are not matched by the actions of the SNP Scottish Government. For example, in June there were fewer asylum seekers in the entire city of Edinburgh than in a single hotel in ... Stoke-on-Trent North ...

On legal migration, here is the difference between us: we see that there is a reason for people to come to the UK, but we also see millions of people on welfare or economically inactive, and we care about those people getting back into the workplace. We do not want companies simply to reach for the easy lever of foreign labour. That is not a route to sustainable prosperity and productivity. ...

Tim Loughton (Conservative): The figures are unsustainably high, but to put them in context, they also include 200,000 Ukrainians and 150,000 Hong Kong citizens ... Can my right hon. Friend explain why 135,000 visas were granted to dependants last year, up from 19,000 just three years ago, and around 100,000 visas were granted to Chinese students, up 87% over the past 10 years? He mentioned care worker scandals and the 78,000 visas to care workers. Is it true that some visas have been granted to care workers to work in care homes that do not exist?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... It is certainly true that a very substantial number of dependants have come to the UK alongside visa holders, whether students, care workers or skilled workers. It is a choice for the country whether we want to continue to pursue that. There is a strong argument that it is unsustainable for the country to continue to take so many dependants, who put pressure on housing, public services, school places and so on. We could base our visa system on different models to stop so many dependants coming into the country. We have seen a very substantial number of care worker visas issued, and those care workers bring dependants with them on almost a one-for-one basis. ...

Diana Johnson (Labour): Although today we are discussing one single set of net migration figures, we know that net migration has hugely varying impacts in regions and communities. We also know that the most skilled migrants flow disproportionately towards London and the south-east. Has the Minister given any thought to developing a more regionalised approach to immigration, to ensure that communities across the country benefit evenly and fairly from it?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: In recent years we have given thought to the concept

of creating a more regional system, but it is difficult to create in practice ... As a general rule, we have maintained one single United Kingdom immigration system, but there are a number of visa categories that reflect particular issues facing different parts of the country. Those include the seasonal agricultural workers scheme, which is focused on rural England, and global talent, which increasingly takes individuals with a science or technology background and will impact those parts of the country with a science cluster. The system is able to support different sectors and needs of parts of the country. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-28/debates/14FC9FEC-63E7-4B77-B1B3-DCE477B081EA/NetMigrationFigures>

Scottish Work Visa Scheme

Douglas Chapman (SNP) [900321] If [the Minister] will make an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential merits of devolving the power to introduce a Scottish work visa scheme to the Scottish Government.

Brendan O'Hara (SNP) [900327] If [the Minister] will make an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential merits of devolving the power to introduce a Scottish work visa scheme to the Scottish Government. (900327)

Deidre Brock (SNP): [900330] If he will make an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential merits of devolving the power to introduce a Scottish work visa scheme to the Scottish Government. (900330)

Reply from the Secretary of State for Scotland (Alister Jack): The United Kingdom Government have introduced a single, flexible immigration system that works in the interest of the whole United Kingdom. A separate visa system would create an economic migration border between Scotland and the rest of the UK, which would be harmful for employers and far less attractive for workers.

Douglas Chapman: Last week, the CBI conference raised the serious issue of a lack of people to do vital jobs that we need filling, especially in hospitality and food production. Both the Fraser of Allander Institute and the highlands MSP Kate Forbes have suggested localised worker visa solutions to boost the economy. Why is the Secretary of State not listening to those smart voices, and why is he not acting in the best interests of the Scottish economy?

Reply from Alister Jack: Because we have a specific Scottish occupation list for shortages, which gives us flexibility. The salary rate is set at £20,960. We believe that the best way is for stakeholder bodies to make representations to the Home Office to add to the shortage occupation list.

Brendan O'Hara: Five years ago, the Migration Advisory Committee said that the current system was failing remote communities. Recently published figures show that my Argyll and Bute constituency is suffering further depopulation, with the town of Rothesay on the Isle of Bute particularly badly affected. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the Government still insist that the current system delivers for all parts of the UK. Will the Secretary of State explain how a one-size-fits-all policy, simultaneous catering for the vastly different needs of densely populated urban areas and Argyll and Bute, can deliver equally for both?

Reply from Alister Jack: Argyll and Bute is a beautiful part of the United Kingdom, but what it lacks is infrastructure, public services and affordable housing, because the Scottish Government have failed in all those areas. What it also has, with the rest of Scotland, is the problem of being the highest-taxed part of the United Kingdom. That is the problem the Scottish Government have to address.

Deidre Brock: The UK Government said that post-Brexit domestic employment would fill labour gaps, but the executive director of UKHospitality Scotland has said that the gaps

left by excluding EU workers have not been filled, leaving huge numbers of specialist vacancies, such as for chefs and managers. When will this Government accept reality and stop destroying Scotland's economy in the name of a purist Brexit ideology?

Reply from Alister Jack: I think the hon. Lady lives in a parallel universe. We have the highest net migration to the UK since records began, far higher than when we were in the EU. As I say, if we want to attract people to Scotland, we must stop making it the highest-taxed part of the United Kingdom.

Kevin Foster (Conservative): The Secretary of State has correctly identified that there are some who want to use immigration policy to enforce a hard border between England and Scotland as part of their aim to break up the Union. Does he agree, and in his assessment did he identify, that we need to ensure that immigration policy is not used as an alternative to offering the rewarding packages that key workers deserve?

Reply from Alister Jack: Absolutely. We are one United Kingdom. We have no physical border. It is important that we treat immigration equally across the whole United Kingdom and give everyone equal opportunity. ...

Tommy Sheppard (SNP): Let me be clear: we are talking about the administration of work permits for people from overseas who wish to work in Scotland on a temporary basis. Just about everyone thinks it would be better administered in Scotland, but the Secretary of State insists that it should be centralised by his Government in Westminster. His argument would be plausible if the UK demonstrated that it is managing the migration service well but, given the catastrophe that is the UK immigration system, when will he wake up and realise this would be better done in Scotland, by the people who live there?

Reply from Alister Jack: I point the hon. Gentleman to the seasonal agricultural workers scheme. That is 45,000 people, with the ability to flex it up to 55,000. Those people come to work in a flexible system across the United Kingdom, and it has proved to be a huge success.

Tommy Sheppard: The Secretary of State is standing against everyone. He is standing against experts, against academics, against representatives of industry and even against the people of Scotland, only 28% of whom think immigration is too high. More than six in 10 think more immigration would benefit the country. ...

Reply from Alister Jack: ... The reality is that Scotland is the most taxed part of the United Kingdom, which is not attractive for people to work there. We have the highest ever net migration. If the Scottish Government focus more on good public services, good infrastructure and lower taxation, hopefully those high net migration figures will see more people settle in Scotland.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-29/debates/41901C03-C5DB-4DE9-85BE-EBCBEF3BA08F/ScottishWorkVisaScheme>

Rwanda Relocation Scheme: Supreme Court Judgment

Steven Bonnar (SNP) [900288] What recent assessment [the Minister] has made of the implications for his policies of the Supreme Court judgment of 15 November 2023 on the Rwanda relocation scheme.

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (James Cleverly): The Rwanda scheme remains an important part of our response to illegal migration and people smuggling. We will continue to negotiate with the Government of Rwanda on a treaty that will be underpinned by domestic law so that the Rwanda scheme will join the other effective parts of our response in stopping the boats.

Steven Bonnar: The Prime Minister has indicated his intention to override the Supreme Court by introducing emergency laws and a new treaty with Rwanda to save his unlawful deportation plans. So far, the UK has paid the Rwanda Government £140 million and the Home Office has spent £1.4 million on failed legal challenges, with no asylum seekers being sent there as of yet. How much has the Home Office spent in total on the Rwanda

scheme? Can the Secretary of State give us a figure, please?

Reply from James Cleverly: ... I do not have the figures to hand, but I will make sure the House is updated on the costs. ...

I would make the point that we are committed to dealing with illegal migrants. ...

Julian Lewis (Conservative): ... Does he agree that, if democracies both within the EU and, like ourselves, outside the EU cannot find a solution to this problem, we will see the increasing emergence of far-right politicians in positions of power? That ought to frighten us all.

Reply from James Cleverly: ... Countries across the continent are now looking at us in order to emulate the actions we are taking. ... If the good people do not grip this issue, the bad people will attempt to do so, and I will never let that happen. ...

Diana Johnson (Labour): The Home Affairs Committee has taken a particular interest in small-boat crossings. ... Owing to our interest and expertise in this area, will the Home Secretary consider giving the Home Affairs Committee and the Joint Committee on Human Rights the opportunity to carry out pre-legislative scrutiny of any emergency legislation that he plans to bring forward?

Reply from James Cleverly: There is an urgency to the legislation that we seek to put forward and, although pre-legislative scrutiny has a part to play, I will not do anything that delays the implementation of this incredibly important legislation.

Simon Clarke (Conservative): It is imperative if we are to crack the business model of the evil people smugglers that we operationalise the Rwanda scheme. ...

Reply from James Cleverly: ... we will do everything we can to ensure that we break the business model of the evil people smugglers he highlights and drive down the small-boat arrivals. He is absolutely right that the deterrent effect of the Rwanda scheme is a key element of that multi-strand approach.

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-27/debates/BBE6F66A-FCB7-4DC3-B34C-31008170F9AD/RwandaRelocationSchemeSupremeCourtJudgment>

The Supreme Court judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2023/745.html>

Illegal Migration

Miriam Cates (Conservative) [900286] What steps [the Minister] is taking to tackle illegal migration.

Jack Brereton (Conservative) [900289] What steps [the Minister] is taking to tackle illegal migration. (900289)

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (James Cleverly): ... Small-boat crossings are down compared with those in other countries across Europe, where they are up. We are working closely with our international partners, including our nearest geographical neighbour France, we are dismantling the organised criminal gangs who are smuggling people, and we are taking action to reform the asylum system.

Miriam Cates: Following the Supreme Court ruling, the Government announced emergency legislation to address the issues mentioned in the judgment. I welcome the proposed new treaty with Rwanda, but does my right hon. Friend agree that the new legislation promised by the Prime Minister must be clear and unambiguous in establishing that the sovereign will of this Parliament, as expressed in primary legislation, takes legal precedence over the interpretation of international treaties and principles?

Reply from James Cleverly: I can assure my hon. Friend that the excellent working relationship we have with Rwanda ... will give us the opportunity to have a treaty that addresses the issues in the Supreme Court judgment. However, she is right to say that the legislation that will accompany that treaty must make it

absolutely clear that the will of the British people, as exemplified by the actions of this Government, means we will work to get flights to Rwanda to make it plain that if people come here illegally they will not stay here. I can give her my commitment that we will do everything we can to make that happen.

Jack Brereton: ... will my right hon. Friend give me a categorical assurance that he will do everything he can to enable us to deliver the Rwanda policy, and will introduce all the necessary legal exemptions so that we can get on with those flights as soon as possible and provide the necessary deterrence to illegal migration?

Reply from James Cleverly: The Rwanda scheme is an extremely important part of our basket of responses. I will do everything to ensure that we drive down small-boat arrivals: that is the promise we have made to the British people, and that is the commitment I will deliver.

Valerie Vaz (Labour): One of the ways of dealing with illegal migration is to look at the number of cases. Can the Home Secretary say how many legacy backlog cases there are—if they have yet been triaged—and how many of those result from illegal migration?

Reply from James Cleverly: The historic backlog has been reduced by 65%. It has fallen by more than 59,000 cases since the end of November 2022. We have recruited 2,500 asylum decision makers, and we have increased tenfold the pace at which these decisions are made.

Peter Grant (SNP): The Secretary of State is well aware that under international law an asylum seeker cannot be described as an illegal immigrant. They are here legally unless and until they are found to have no valid claim to asylum after due process. ...

Reply from James Cleverly: The hon. Gentleman makes reference to the refugee convention, but his definition is only accurate if they come directly from a place of danger. I have visited France and it is a wonderful country. I can assure the House that it is not a dangerous country.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-27/debates/8D8B7291-63ED-4593-BB89-3350CC706F58/IllegalMigration>

The Supreme Court judgement referred to above can be read at
<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2023/745.html>

Illegal Migration: Small Boats

Jill Mortimer (Conservative) [900282] What progress [the Minister] has made on stopping small boats transporting migrants across the English channel.

James Morris (Conservative) [900290] What progress [the Minister] has made on stopping small boats transporting migrants across the English channel.

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick): So far this year, we have reduced the number of these dangerous, illegal and completely unnecessary crossings by more than a third compared with last year, despite increases of nearly a third in Europe. Nevertheless, the number of illegal arrivals remains unacceptably high. We remain focused on delivering our comprehensive plan to stop the boats by breaking the business model of the people smugglers, and we will shortly be piloting emergency legislation through this House to ensure that flights to Rwanda take off as a matter of urgency.

Jill Mortimer: Figures on Thursday revealed that immigration to the UK is skyrocketing. Is it not time to realise that those well-intentioned international treaties and conventions agreed 70 years ago are no longer fit for purpose? We simply cannot accommodate all those who would qualify for asylum under existing rules. The world is facing troubled times and more mass migration. Will my right hon. Friend assure me that he will do all he can to raise the bar for those migrating or seeking asylum here and look at other solutions to stop people leaving their homelands, so that those countries can make better futures for themselves without the loss of so many of their young? ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: My hon. Friend makes a strong point. While some of those coming here to claim asylum have genuine grounds for asylum, many are economic migrants making spurious claims to game the system. For some nationalities, our grant rates are out of sync with European countries, and that is why we have undertaken extensive work to lower them. For example, the grant rate for Albanians reduced from 53% in June last year to 19% in June this year, and it has fallen further since, as that remains unacceptably high. Last month, we added India and Georgia to the list of safe states to speed up the process of returning people who have travelled from those countries to the United Kingdom illegally. Clearly there is more work to be done, and we do not want to create any additional pull factor to the United Kingdom.

James Morris: In relation to the Rwanda policy, the Home Secretary was quoted as saying: “My frustration is that we have allowed the narrative to be created that this was the be-all and end-all” of Government policy. ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: When my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and I set out our comprehensive plan this time last year, it had many facets, one of which—an extremely important component of which—was our Rwanda plan, but that was not its only element, and we have worked intensively over the last 12 months on each and every other facet of that plan. ... is that plan working? Yes, it is. We can see that from the fact that we are almost the only country in Europe where the number of illegal entrants is falling. It has fallen by more than a third, compared to a 30% increase in the rest of Europe and almost a 100% increase in Italy.

None of that negates the importance of interjecting a further critical deterrent. That is the crucial element of the Rwanda scheme. ...

Alison Thewliss (SNP): Last week, a woman and a man died while attempting to cross the channel in a small boat; others in their group were hospitalised for hypothermia. Despite the clear risks, over 400 people in nine boats were detected crossing the channel in the past seven days. They clearly felt there was no other choice. The lack of safe and legal routes is putting people at risk. Will the Immigration Minister consider a humanitarian visa, as the Red Cross has recommended?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: All of us across the House abhor the deaths of individuals in the channel, and we are working closely with the French authorities to investigate the circumstances of those individuals’ deaths. But those individuals, like anyone seeking to cross the channel, are coming from a place of evident safety. They are departing from France. They are in absolutely no danger. They are in a country with a fully functioning asylum system of its own. There is no excuse for those people breaking into our country, putting themselves in the hands of people smugglers. We should be united in trying to deter that.

On the hon. Lady’s second question about safe and legal routes to the UK, she knows that we have issued more than half a million humanitarian visas since 2015—more than at any time in the history of this country. ...

Alison Thewliss: ... In the first nine months of 2023, a mere 279 Afghans arrived in the UK by safe and legal routes. For each one, 17 Afghans came across on small boats. Today, *The Independent* has laid out the story of a mother of four—an Afghan special forces soldier who served in a unit set up by Britain, trained and paid for by the British armed services—whose application under the Afghan relocations and assistance policy was denied, along with many others from commando force 333 and Afghan territorial force 444. Why is the Minister failing so many Afghans?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: We do not encourage anyone, whatever their circumstances, to come across illegally in a small boat. That is a criminal offence and it should not be encouraged. We have supported nearly 25,000 people to come from Afghanistan since the end of the war, which compares extremely favourably

to other European countries. We have issued more than half a million humanitarian visas, which is a record we should all be proud of. The Scottish National party always wants to make the UK out to be a small country, but that is not correct. The United Kingdom is a big-hearted country, and one of the world leading countries for resettlement

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-27/debates/878D52AA-C9EB-4512-A35E-EFB9B08A1A96/IllegalMigrationSmallBoats>

Students: Temporary Visas for Dependants

Wendy Chamberlain (Liberal Democrat) [900284] What assessment [the Minister] has made of the potential merits of providing temporary visas to the dependants of visiting students and academics when the dependants are living in conflict zones.

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick): There are a number of routes in the immigration rules allowing dependants to join family members in the United Kingdom. Where possible, people seeking to flee conflict zones should use those existing routes. In the past 12 months, we have allowed over 112,000 people to arrive under safe and legal routes, including over 6,000 family reunion cases.

Wendy Chamberlain: My constituent is on a student visa at St Andrews University. On 7 October, her five-year-old daughter was in northern Gaza staying with her grandmother. They have since had to flee south. We have had good engagement from the student policy team, but will the Minister meet me to discuss how we can reunify the family?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: I am very happy to look into the case with the hon. Lady. As a general rule, we believe migration should not be the first lever we pull in the event of humanitarian crises. We should be using the UK's diplomatic muscle, our overseas development aid, as the primary way in which the UK can have the greatest impact in the world, but there are always cases where we make exceptions.

Jonathan Gullis (Conservative): Last week's net migration figures were completely unacceptable ... Will he extend the closure of the student dependant route to students enrolled on a one-year research master's degree?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: First, we believe that the level of legal migration into this country is far too high. That has very profound impacts on access to public services, the productivity of our economy, and the ability of the UK to be a socially cohesive and united country. That is why we need to take action. We have already announced a specific policy with respect to dependants, which comes into force at the beginning of next year. We think it will have a substantive impact on the levels of net migration, but, as the Prime Minister said, we are keeping all options under review and will take further action as required.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-27/debates/1B5BA70B-D6A0-4791-8ADD-4D8132199AD3/StudentsTemporaryVisasForDependants>

Asylum Seeker Accommodation

Heather Wheeler (Conservative) [900285] What progress [the minister's] Department has made on moving asylum seekers from hotels into less costly accommodation.

Reply from the Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick): For the first time since the small boats crisis began, we are now closing asylum hotels, thanks to the good work done to reduce arrivals by more than a third; to the delivery of more appropriate forms of accommodation, such as on large disused military sites; and to better management of the existing permanent estate. I am pleased to report that the Home Office is making good progress on the first 50 hotels, which will exit by

the end of January. We will be bringing forward a further tranche shortly.

Heather Wheeler: ... can he please go further and give a more definite date for the start and completion of the decant of asylum seekers ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: When I first took this job, I was clear that the use of asylum hotels was completely unacceptable and that I would work with all in Government to ensure that we closed each and every one of them as quickly as possible. We are now in the process of closing those hotels. As I said in my opening remarks, the first 50 are closing seamlessly, so I expect to be in a position to announce the next set of hotel closures very soon.

Patrick Grady (SNP): Surely if asylum seekers had the right to work they would be able to pay for their own accommodation at little or no cost to the taxpayer.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: No, I completely disagree with the hon. Gentleman. It is extremely important that we reduce the pull factors to the United Kingdom. There are already plenty of reasons why economic migrants would want to make a life in the UK. Enabling them to work as soon as they arrive here would only exacerbate those problems.

Vicky Ford (Conservative): ... Will the Minister look again at the policy and ensure that when people with children of school age are placed in hotels, they are put in places where there are schools that have places?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: ... The Home Office is working with her local authority, and we have made a commitment that we will not place further young people, or families with young people, in that hotel if school places are not readily available. ...

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op): When asylum seekers requiring medical care are moved to a new location out of area, they go to the bottom of the waiting list, and as a result their health requirements are not met in a timely way. How will the Minister ensure that they do not slip back from receiving medical care that they urgently require?

Reply from Robert Jenrick: When moving asylum seekers from one form of accommodation to another, we make provision to ensure that there is support for those with the most serious medical conditions, but it is important that we are able to move individuals ... we are currently in the process of closing hotels. ...

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-27/debates/12AB9549-B295-4B0A-9390-8D2148FF4231/AsylumSeekerAccommodation>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Asylum: Rwanda

Diana Johnson (Labour) [2827] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Statement on Illegal Immigration on 15 November 2023, Official Report, column 649, whether he plans to lay the treaty with Rwanda on asylum processing before Parliament for 21 sitting days before ratification.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The treaties the Government wishes to ratify are subject to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRaG) 2010. As provided for under CRaG, Parliament has a statutory period of 21 days to scrutinise and potentially debate the treaty prior to ratification. We will set out further details in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/2827>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-15/debates/B5A7AB50-06A1-4504-8FCB-554338FB8FA7/IllegalImmigration#contribution-A9837C04-CA2C-42E2-A296-32A38CDA6885>

Asylum: Rwanda

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [3845] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Rwanda on the number of Home Office officials that will be sent to help Rwanda upgrade its asylum processing capabilities.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: We have been working at pace with the Government of Rwanda to help strengthen the operation of their asylum system. We will continue to progress this, in light of the Supreme Court judgment, and a range of options for further support are being considered. Conversations between governments remain confidential.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/3845>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Channel Migrants

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [3955] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2023 to Question 2433 on Undocumented Migrants: English Channel, how many and what proportion of irregular migrants who arrived in small boats since 2018 are (a) still and (b) no longer in the UK.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office publishes statistics on small boat arrivals to the UK in the '[Irregular migration to the UK statistics](#)' release. Data on whether arrivals are still in the UK or have left the UK is not published but some of the data in the '[Irregular Migration to the UK detailed datasets](#)' may provide an indication of these:

- Data on the number of arrivals is available in table Irr_D01.
- Data on initial decisions from asylum applications of small boat arrivals by asylum case outcome is available in table Irr_D03.
- Data on outcomes from NRM referrals of small boat arrivals by NRM case outcome is available in table Irr_D05.

The Home Office also publishes statistics on the number of returns from the UK in table Ret_D01 of the '[Returns detailed datasets](#)', as part of the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. However, this data includes all returns, not just returns of small boat arrivals.

Official statistics published by the Home Office are kept under review in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#), taking into account a number of factors including user needs, as well as quality and availability of data.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/3955>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-17/2433>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [3742] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how long his Department expects to keep open the second stage of Pathway 3 referrals for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The resettlement of eligible Afghans remains a top priority for this government. As of September 2023, around 24,600 vulnerable people affected by the events in Afghanistan have been brought to safety. This

includes the first individuals to be relocated under Pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

In the second stage of Pathway 3, our commitment to work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans still stands. We are not able to open for referrals at this present time for the second stage of Pathway 3 but further information will be published in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/3742>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [3862] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the number of ARAP applications from former members of the (a) Afghan Territorial Force 444 and (b) Commando Force 333 units that have been approved since the scheme opened.

Reply from James Heapey: As of 28 November 2023, we have relocated 13,300 ARAP Eligible Principals (EPs) and their family members to safety in the UK under the ARAP scheme and have approximately 6,000 eligible persons and family members remaining to relocate to the UK. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of these figures by job role or specific unit.

Not all members of the Afghan Armed Forces, including specific units such as Afghan Territorial Force 444 and Commando Force 333, will automatically be eligible for ARAP. Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis on its own merits. However, we are prioritising finding remaining eligible applicants and relocating them as quickly as we can.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/3862>

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

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

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer: Ukraine

Refugees: Ukraine

Catherine West (Labour) [3307] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the potential implications for his Department's policies of the British Red Cross' report entitled Fearing, fleeing, facing the future: how people displaced by the conflict in Ukraine are finding safety in the UK, published on 24 February 2023.

Reply from Felicity Buchan: Homes for Ukraine hosts will continue to receive £500 a month as a 'thank you' for their ongoing support for their Ukrainian guests for a third year of sponsorship. We are also launching a £450 million third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund to help provide a new, permanent supply of accommodation for local communities.

The 'thank you' payments have been extended for a further year to reflect the continued generosity of sponsors in hosting guests from Ukraine over a longer period of time than anyone expected, and to ensure that those wishing to provide ongoing sanctuary can do so as the conflict continues.

More generally, government is increasing the Local Housing Allowance to cover the 30th percentile of local rents. This will help make housing costs more affordable for private renters in receipt of benefits. 1.6 million low-income households will be better off, with an average gain of £800 in 2024-25. Rates will be raised across

Great Britain in April 2024.

£120 million is also being made available across the UK, to help councils with Ukraine and homelessness pressures. Local authorities will be able to use some of this funding to support Ukrainian households who can no longer remain in sponsorship to help access settled accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-22/3307>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/-/media/documents/miscellaneous/fearing-fleeing-facing-the-future--how-people-displaced-by-the-conflict-in-ukraine-are-finding-safet.pdf>

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

British Nationality

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [2429] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people (a) were granted and (b) held UK citizenship in each year since 1993.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Since 2011, the Home Office has published data on the processing of applications for British citizenship on the Gov.uk website.

The link to the latest Migration Transparency Data can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/visas-and-citizenship-data-q2-2023

Data relating to earlier applications can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-data-tables#citizenship

There are no records of the number of people who are automatically British from birth and no data is held to show the number of people who hold UK citizenship each year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-17/2429>

British Nationality: Assessments

John Hayes (Conservative) [2463] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people sitting the UK citizenship test failed in each year since 2019.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The information on the number of tests taken in each quarter in relation to citizenship and settlement applications can be found within the Visas and citizenship data on gov.uk here:

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

The latest transparency data was published on 23 November 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-20/2463>

British Nationality and Visas: Fees and Charges

Dan Carden (Labour) [3062] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will take steps to reduce the cost of application fees for (a) visas and (b) citizenship.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office keeps fees for immigration and nationality applications under review. However, there are no plans to reduce fees for applications for visas or British Citizenship. It is the government's policy that those who use and benefit most from the immigration system should contribute towards the cost of operating it, reducing the burden on the UK taxpayer.

The Home Office provides exceptions to the need to pay application fees in a number of specific circumstances. These include affordability-based waivers for entry clearance and leave to remain on family and human rights grounds, and for

applications for children seeking to register as a British Citizen.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/3062>

Immigration: Families

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [3743] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been granted (a) permission to stay and (b) to join their families in the UK through the family reunion process in each year from 2018 to 2022.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office does not publish information on how many people have been granted permission to stay through the family reunion process, (in-country grants of leave to remain).

The Home Office publishes data on the number of Family Reunion visas granted, in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data covering the period January 2010 onwards are published in table FAM_D01 (with more detailed data in the Data – FAM_D01 tab) from [Family reunion visa grants detailed datasets, year ending September 2023](#). (Downloads new file).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/3743>

Visas: Sudan

Kerry McCarthy (Labour) [3158] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if his Department will take steps to support Sudanese nationals who were given six-month Leave Outside The Rules and whose visas are expiring to extend their leave to remain.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Where a person who has been given leave outside the rules but is unable to return home they should apply for an extension of leave. Further information about applying for an extension can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-extend-stay-in-the-uk-flrhro>

Each case will be assessed on its merits. If they are unable to afford the fee then a fee waiver application can be made. Details about fee waivers can be found at:

<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/fee-waiver>.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-22/3158>

Asylum: Employment

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [3863] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his oral contribution in response to the question from the hon. Member for Glasgow North of 27 November 2022, Official Report, what the evidential basis is for stating that allowing asylum seekers the right to work would increase the number travelling to the UK.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: A wide body of evidence points towards key pull factors to the UK including language, diaspora, presence of friends and family, economic opportunity, and availability of education. Any effects exerted by asylum policies and welfare systems on individual decision making around ultimate country of destination are much less well understood and difficult to isolate. That is why we have no plans to work provisions and are trebling the fines for illegal working.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/3863>

The UK Parliament did not sit on 27 November 2022 as it was a Sunday. The Minister did reply to a question on this subject from the MP for Glasgow North on 27 November 2023. That answer can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-27/debates/12AB9549-B295-4B0A-9390-8D2148FF4231/AsylumSeekerAccommodation#contribution-E0DF0DDDB-13B6-4895-878A-1E18C44E6D88>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum

Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat) [900305] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to reduce the backlog of asylum applications.

Bob Blackman (Conservative) [900293] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress he has made on reducing the backlog of asylum cases.

Jeff Smith (Labour) [900298] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate his Department has made of when the asylum backlog will be reduced to 2010 levels.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Provisional data indicates that between the end of November 2022 and October 2023 the legacy backlog reduced by 64% and we remain on track to clear the legacy backlog by the end of the year as per the Prime Minister's commitment last year.

We will continue the steps we are already taking to speed up asylum processing whilst maintaining the integrity of the system. This includes better performance management, overtime, and shorer, focussed interviews.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/900305>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/900293>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/900298>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Migrants: Palestinians

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [2361] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department provides support to Palestinian people living in the UK to (a) work and (b) study; and whether his Department provides support to Palestinian people resident in the UK to provide homes for family residing in (i) Gaza and (ii) the West Bank.

Refugees: Palestinians

Steven Bonnar (SNP) [2982] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a resettlement scheme for Palestinian refugees.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Since 2015, over half a million people were offered safe and legal routes into the UK. This includes over 28,600 individuals resettled to the UK under our global resettlement schemes. We continue to provide the most vulnerable refugees in need of protection a route to safety directly from regions of conflict and instability through these schemes, which include the UK Resettlement Scheme, Community Sponsorship and the Mandate Resettlement scheme. This represents one of the most generous resettlement offers in the UK's history. However, the U.K. only has finite capacity. We cannot provide a safe and legal route for every conflict in the world.

There are no plans to introduce bespoke arrangements for people arriving from the region, and we are not considering establishing a separate route for Palestinians to come to the UK. Immediate family members of British citizens, and those settled in the UK, who wish to come and live in the UK and do not have a current UK visa, can apply under one of the existing family visa routes. The UK's efforts are focussed on ensuring aid reaches those who need it most. The Prime Minister announced on Monday 23 October that the UK will provide a further £20 million of humanitarian aid for civilians. This latest funding is in addition to the £10 million of aid announced by the Prime Minister last week.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-16/2361>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/2982>

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

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/611cd056d3bf7f63b45df0ed/Resettlement Policy Guidance 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/611cd056d3bf7f63b45df0ed/Resettlement_Policy_Guidance_2021.pdf)

The announcements referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-announces-10m-humanitarian-aid-for-civilians-in-occupied-palestinian-territories>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-10-23/debates/018D96AB-5D91-48D7-9809-19A03E54125A/IsraelAndGaza#contribution-61483896-20C4-4BA0-AC5E-163033573EB4>

Asylum: Palestinians

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [900304] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make it his policy to fast-track asylum applications for Palestinians in the UK.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: All asylum claims admitted to the UK asylum system, including those from Palestinians are given careful consideration.

Asylum claims are prioritised in line with published policy, rather than in response to international incidents, including those who have waited the longest or those with acute vulnerabilities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/900304>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Sarah Owen (Labour) [2986] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to ensure people living in asylum accommodation have culturally-appropriate food.

Sarah Owen (Labour) [2987] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to ensure people living in asylum accommodation can access places of worship.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Food options are provided which cater for special dietary, cultural or religious requirements, including additional food or meals as required to meet the nutritional needs of asylum seekers for whom three daily meals may be insufficient.

As our cohort are of mixed religions and faiths, we offer facilities on-site via a dedicated mixed faith prayers and reflection area as well as facilities to pray. If asylum seekers wish to visit a place of worship, we will of course assist them to do this by co-ordinating logistics and helping them to navigate their way through any public transport arrangements or suitable alternatives.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/2986>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/2987>

Asylum: Bibby Stockholm

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op) [3640] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is his Department's policy that victims of (a) torture, (b) modern slavery and (c) trafficking will be housed on the Bibby Stockholm.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office assesses an individual's suitability to reside at Portland and will only accommodate single adult males who are considered suitable to reside there. Guidance on the suitability criteria used can be found here: [Allocation of accommodation](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-24/3640>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Deportation

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [2430] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who had not been refused entry at ports were subject to (a) enforced, (b) facilitated and (c) voluntary deportations in each year between 1993 and 2005

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [2432] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of asylum claims resulted in (a) asylum being granted, (b) permission to stay for other reasons, (c) refusal, (d) withdrawal in each year since 1993; and how many and what proportion of those claims are still pending.

Asylum: Deportation

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [2431] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who had previously sought asylum in the UK were subject to (a) enforced and (b) voluntary deportation each year between 1993 and 2010.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office publishes data on returns and asylum in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

Annual data going back to 2004 for enforced and voluntary returns by return type and back to 2010 for enforced and voluntary asylum-related returns are published in tables Ret_01 and Ret_05 of the '[Returns summary tables](#)'. Unfortunately, data going back to 1993 is not available.

Data going back to 2001 on initial decisions for asylum applications by case outcome and going back to 2010 on asylum applications awaiting a decision are published in tables Asy_D02 and Asy_D03 of the '[Asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'.

Earlier data on Returns can be found in '[List of tables](#)' of the year ending June 2019 statistical release.

Earlier data on Asylum applications and decisions from 1993 to 2010 can be found in table as_01 and as_02 in the old table formats, available at: [Asylum data tables, volume 1](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-17/2430>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-17/2432>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-17/2431>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Net Migration

Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench): To ask His Majesty's Government why net migration rose to 745,000 in 2022, according to data published by the Office for National Statistics on 23 November; and what plans they have to reduce it.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, the increase in net migration since 2021 reflects a number of important factors including the introduction of our humanitarian routes, such as the Ukrainian and British national (overseas) schemes, and an increase in non-EU students and workers. Earlier this year we introduced measures to tackle the substantial rise in students bringing dependants to the UK, and the Government will announce details of further measures to reduce net migration in due course.

Lord Green of Deddington: ... It may help the House to consider the last two years of net migration because that comes to a total of 1.2 million people, and the significance of that is that it is the population of Birmingham. When you think about that, of course you think about the enormous expenditure there will be on infrastructure, hospitals and so on

in return for a large number of immigrants, many of whom are relatively low paid. The impact on housing, schools, medical services ...

My question is to ask His Majesty's Government why net migration rose to 745,000 in 2022, according to data published by the Office for National Statistics on 23 November; and what plans they have to reduce it.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... there are well-understood reasons why net migration is high at present. Global events such as the world's recovery from Covid-19, the war in Ukraine, the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and the national security law in Hong Kong, along with policy changes introduced as part of the new immigration system and the end of EU freedom of movement, have all had an impact on migration. On 23 May the Government acted decisively by announcing a package of measures to reform the student route. We are working on further measures to prevent exploitation and manipulation of the visa system, including clamping down on those who take advantage of the flexibility of the immigration system, and we will announce details of these measures in due course.

Lord Dubs (Labour): My Lords, will the Minister confirm that asylum seekers coming across the channel by boat are probably between 5% and 7% of the total figure? Is the hostile attention given to asylum seekers not totally disproportionate in relation to inward migration?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... these asylum seekers are illegal migrants. They arrive here by methods that facilitate the activities of criminal gangs, they place their own lives and the lives of others at risk while they are in the English Channel, they impose themselves on the generosity of the British taxpayer, and they are jumping the queue of legal migrants. I think there are principles at stake.

Lord Farmer (Conservative): My Lords, last week it was reported that the Government will likely breach their own welfare spending cap for the fourth time since introduction. Some 18% of Manchester is on out-of-work benefits, 20% of Birmingham, Glasgow and Liverpool, 23% of Middlesbrough and 25% of Blackpool. Where mass migration facilitates and is even required by this, porous borders are not progressive. What are the Government doing to get native Britons working again?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... The Government are encouraging all sectors to adapt, to make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers ...

Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, in 2021 international students added £42 billion to the UK economy through their fees, living costs and the NHS levy for them and their dependants. Why do this Government constantly portray them as a drain on the UK and why are they proposing to reduce their numbers, rather than recognising their direct contribution to our economy, communities and universities?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I do not think that is what the Government are doing. Students are short-term, temporary migrants who leave at the end of their studies. We know from previous research that many also stay in the UK beyond their studies. In keeping with the UN definition of long-term migration, the Office for National Statistics has stated that it will continue to include students in its net migration statistics, and the Home Office supports that position. On the changes I referred to earlier, we should certainly welcome students here; however, we are taking steps to tackle the number of dependants who come with them. That is not inconsistent.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Crossbench): ... does the Minister recognise that the higher education sector is one of the major invisible exports that we have in this country, one in which we are truly world leading? Great care has to be taken not to damage that. Will he therefore say whether the Government have considered ways in which fee-paying students can be taken out of this equation, which is becoming so difficult to solve?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... The ONS is operationally independent of government—its work is overseen by the UK Statistics Authority—so any decision

around that methodology would be for the ONS. Its definition of a long-term migrant aligns with the UN definition and is anyone who comes to the UK for 12 months or more. Students who remain in the UK for less than 12 months will not, at present, be counted in the ONS estimates. However, I am happy to associate myself with the noble Lord's remarks about how higher education is a massive export industry for this country. Of course, it delivers enormous soft power benefits too.

Lord Coaker (Labour): My Lords, how has it come to the point at which net migration is three times the level of 2019, when the Government promised to reduce it? It has taken four years for the Government to come up with any sort of plan, but we do not know what it is because members of the Cabinet are fighting among themselves about what it should be. Can I make one suggestion? Do the Government agree with us that the unfair wage discount, allowing overseas recruits to be paid 20% less than the going rate, should be ended and replaced with proper training and fair pay in the UK?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The noble Lord is referring to the shortage occupation list. The Migration Advisory Committee is clear that immigration can be a sensible solution to occupations that are in shortage, at least in the short term, but the Government believe that no occupation should be on the list for ever. Sectors must therefore present a realistic strategy to end their reliance on migration before such jobs can be added to the list, and compelling evidence that they should remain. We asked the Migration Advisory Committee, as part of its recent review, to consider whether the discounts should be stopped. The Government are considering the recommendations of that review and will respond in due course.

Lord Johnson of Marylebone (Conservative): My Lords, can my noble friend the Minister assure me that ... there is no plan to axe the graduate route for international students?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... I have already been very clear that there are no plans to affect the student graduate route. These measures are specifically targeted at dependants.

Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the Minister suggested that people coming on boats are illegal by definition. If somebody from Afghanistan who has an ARAP number arrives in the UK that way because it is the only way they can come here, would the Home Office not give them the asylum to which they are entitled?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: It is a very different question if they have an ARAP number. Why would they be leaving France, which is a safe country, to come here on a boat? That makes no sense.

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-29/debates/1B5AFE5A-41C8-42BD-B783-DBA150B728E9/NetMigration>

Windrush Generation

Lord Davies of Brixton (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government what were the reasons for the Home Office's decision to disband the dedicated team responsible for their Windrush policy; and what assessment they have made of the likelihood that this decision will undermine their commitments to the Windrush Generation.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, given the significant progress made since 2020, our Windrush lessons learned response has now been embedded into everyday activities. It is our assessment that an embedded approach will better sustain the improvements made so far, and thereby our commitments to the Windrush generation and their descendants. The dedicated Windrush compensation and documentation teams remain in place and there are no plans to close either scheme.

Lord Davies of Brixton: ... there is a serious lack of trust in the Government's intentions. The people I speak to have no faith in the Government's commitment to implement the policy. Can he give me any idea of what steps he thinks are appropriate in order to restore that level of trust? Might I suggest, in particular, an increase in resources to those delivering the compensation from the Home Office and also in a high commission, so that they see their task as assisting people to get the compensation to which they are entitled?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I mentioned the *Windrush Lessons Learned Review*. The Home Office has implemented the majority of the 30 recommendations made in the 2020 report. Key changes include implementing a new ethical decision-making model, new training for caseworkers, a Permanent Secretary-chaired strategic race board and new forms of scrutiny. As for the compensation scheme to which the noble Lord referred, he will be very pleased to know that the time to allocate a claim for substantive casework consideration has dropped from 18 months to under five months and work is continuing apace on that.

Baroness Benjamin (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, there is a growing suspicion that the compensation scheme that has been implemented was designed to fail. Procedural delays have meant that only 12.8% of the estimated 11,500 eligible claimants have been compensated. As we have heard, applicants report a growing fear and mistrust of the Home Office, which was responsible for this historic injustice. Many are experiencing trauma as a result of their interactions with the Home Office, so can the Minister explain what steps have been taken to create a replacement policy that is independent, transparent, fair and will include access to legal aid and a right of appeal to an independent tribunal? How soon can this policy be implemented to deal with this Home Office scandal?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, the compensation scheme was designed to be as clear and simple as possible so that people do not need legal assistance to make a claim. In 2021 and 2022, in response to feedback from and indeed in consultation with stakeholders, we published redesigned claim forms. The new forms are longer but are easier to complete because they include more targeted and closed questions to help people understand and provide the key information that we need from them. The claim forms now have a crystal mark from the Plain English Campaign, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring the scheme is accessible. As the noble Baroness will be aware, the scheme is also subject to independent scrutiny.

Lord Bailey of Paddington (Conservative): My Lords, having spoken to many people from my community, which was heavily impacted by this scandal, there has been some understanding that there would be an end to looking at how the compensation was going to be trotted out. Can the Minister give some solace to people who had difficulty in claiming this that it is still a political priority? We hope that is embedded in the Home Office as a tactic, but we need it to be a political priority for this Government.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: As I said in my earlier answer, and as stated by the former Home Secretary following the final meeting of the Windrush working group, we are proud of what has been achieved so far but our commitment does not end here. We will continue with unwavering focus to see further improvements so that all those affected receive compensation. I hope it will reassure my noble friend to know that, in its last meeting, there were productive discussions on topics such as an update on future engagement and outreach with the Windrush community. Since February 2023, the Windrush compensation scheme engagement team has attended more than 19 events nationwide, including in the West Midlands, Bristol, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and London. I hope that gives my noble friend some of the reassurance he seeks.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, how many have actually received compensation, how many are waiting for compensation and how many have died while

waiting for it? What is the time estimate for clearing the backlog?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, as of September 2023, over £71 million has been paid across 1,932 claims. Over 75% of claims have received a final decision. As I mentioned in an earlier answer, the time to allocate a claim for substantive casework consideration has dropped from 18 months to under five months. To be clear, that five-month period includes all essential eligibility checks and a preliminary assessment to make an initial payment of £10,000 wherever possible. I will have to write to the noble Lord on his more detailed questions.

Lord Morse (Crossbench): My Lords, let me make the Minister aware as he considers his future actions that, over my time in charge of the National Audit Office, this was the most shameful set of events I looked at—out of quite a considerable number. It is important to apply that sense of obligation and, frankly, shame at how government performed at that time. This needs to be completed. Those who feel concern should feel that their concerns have been very fully met and carried through until this is thoroughly finished. There is no glory in anything else. In fact, there is no glory in this whole matter at all.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... What happened in the Windrush scandal and to its victims was an outrage. It should not have happened and unreserved apologies have rightly been made by successive Home Secretaries. I have tried to outline the work being done in a couple of answers. I should also say that there is no cap or time limit on the compensation—it will continue until all claims are met. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-28/debates/3A2BE7FB-6F51-4D33-9A83-B03C11BBD783/WindrushGeneration>

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

The Lessons Learned Review referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e74984fd3bf7f4684279faa/6.5577_HO_Windrush_Lessons_Learned_Review_WEB_v2.pdf

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

Asylum: Rwanda

Lord Browne of Ladyton (Labour) [HL340] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to (1) the remarks by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 10 May (HL Deb col 1922), and (2) the Supreme Court's decision on the government's Rwanda policy, what methodology they used in designating Rwanda as a safe country for the offshore processing of asylum claims.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We undertook an analysis of a wide range of publicly available evidence from a variety of reliable sources about Rwanda's asylum system and human rights situation. The information was carefully selected in accordance with internationally established country-of-origin information research methods.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-15/hl340>

The remarks referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-05-10/debates/FC2D65CD-6FC8-42EA-AB0E-F460E02CF2D0/IllegalMigrationBill#contribution-54052C60-53E9-403E-B12E-3415FAD59DF0>

The Supreme Court decision referred to above can be read at

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2023/745.html>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Helic (Conservative) [HL216] To ask His Majesty's Government how many refugees have been resettled in the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme via (1) Pathway 1, (2) Pathway 2, and (3) Pathway 3; and for each pathway, how many of those have been resettled (a) in total, (b) between January to July 2023, and (c) since July 2023.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The UK has made an ambitious and generous commitment to help at-risk people in Afghanistan and, so far, we have brought around 24,600 people to safety, including thousands of people eligible for our Afghan schemes. We continue to honour our commitments to bring eligible Afghans to the UK.

The data published within: immigration system statistics release (year ending June 2023, published 24 August 2023) provides a breakdown of arrivals by quarter. The number of individuals resettled under the schemes is as follows: 9,676 individuals under ACRS Pathway 1, 66 individuals under ACRS Pathway 2 and 41 individuals under ACRS Pathway 3.

Afghan Operational data is viewable at: [Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data](#)

Afghan operational data is released quarterly with the next publication due around the 23 November 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/hl216>

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

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Baroness Helic (Conservative) [HL217] To ask His Majesty's Government how many people are currently waiting for decisions on eligibility under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme; and how many people approved for resettlement in the UK under the scheme are currently awaiting resettlement.

Baroness Helic (Conservative) [HL218] To ask His Majesty's Government how many Afghans awaiting resettlement in the UK or decisions on eligibility under (1) the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, and (2) the Afghan Citizens Refugee Scheme, are currently in Pakistan; and what steps they are taking to ensure that they are not deported back to Afghanistan.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We will continue to honour our commitment to bring eligible Afghans to the UK and plans are underway to relocate these families as soon as possible.

There is no publicly available data on the number of individuals currently awaiting resettlement from Afghanistan and third countries such as Pakistan, including those awaiting a decision on eligibility.

Afghans in third countries including in Pakistan who are eligible for resettlement to the UK continue to be supported by the UK Government, and flights from Pakistan to the UK continue to take place.

The UK Government is aware of recent announcements made by the Government of Pakistan regarding Afghans being illegally present in Pakistan. We have engaged intensively with the Government of Pakistan to secure assurances that none of those eligible under Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will be subject to deportation while they await relocation to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/hl217>

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: Biometric Residence Permits

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL348] To ask His Majesty's Government whether there are mechanisms available to extend the move-on period for an individual where the issuing of a biometric residence permit is significantly delayed following a letter granting refugee status.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Following the service of an asylum decision, an individual continues to be an asylum seeker for the purpose of asylum support until the end of the relevant prescribed period, also known as the 'grace period' or 'move on period'. This period is 28 calendar days from when an individual is notified of a decision to accept their asylum claim and grant them leave. This period remains as 28 days and there are no plans to change this. Individuals are notified of this period in their grant letter.

Confirmation of the exact date an individual's support and accommodation is due to end is issued in a 'notice to quit' (NTQ) or 'notice to vacate' (NTV) letter. This will either be at least 7 days from when the notice is issued, or the date on which the grace period comes to an end, whichever is the longest in date. A NTQ will only usually be issued once a person has been issued a biometric residence permit (BRP).

This means that individuals who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim are eligible to support and accommodation for at least 28 days from when their decision is served and that support usually will not end unless an individual has been issued with a BRP.

It's important to note that individuals do not need to wait for their BRP to make a claim for benefits and are encouraged to do so as early as possible if they require them.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-15/hl348>

Asylum: Hotels

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL349] To ask His Majesty's Government whether any individual is responsible for carrying out a full risk assessment when implementing sharing of hotel rooms for asylum seekers to ensure vulnerable residents are safeguarded; and if so, who.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Our asylum accommodation service providers are responsible for ensuring that all accommodation complies with the standards and provisions set out in [Schedule 2 of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts \(AASC\)](#).

The sharing of rooms in Initial Accommodation (IA) is not new and we work with local authorities and their partners to minimise the impact on health and local services of any increases to occupancy within individual sites. All representation will be considered by the Home Office prior to any new asylum seekers being routed to additionally available beds.

When implementing room sharing, our providers will discuss the move with each

individual and will encourage them to raise any safeguarding, medical or other issues which would mean room sharing is not appropriate. All personal circumstances will be considered before deciding if room sharing is suitable.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-15/hl349>

Detention Centres

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL347] To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are planning to update (1) the Detention Centre Rules 2001, and (2) the Adults at Risk Policy; and if so, when and whether there will be a consultation on the changes proposed.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: As set out by Lord Murray during the passage of the Illegal Migration Bill through parliament, the Home Office will be updating the Adults at risk in immigration detention policy to work with provisions in the Illegal Migration Act. Amendments to the statutory guidance will be laid before parliament by statutory instrument.

A separate, broader review of the Adults at risk policy is also currently being undertaken and includes reviewing Rule 34 and Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001.

The Home Office values engagement with key stakeholders when developing its policies and is currently giving thought to how and with whom the engagement process will be undertaken in reviewing these important safeguarding measures.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-15/hl347>

The current version of the Detention Centre Rules, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2001/238/contents/made>

The current version of the Adults at Risk Policy, referred to above, can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64425cd122ef3b000f66f66f/Adults_at_risk_in_immigration_detention_GOV.pdf

Immigration: Detainees

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL346] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking over the immigration detention estate to ensure the use of force is continually monitored and recorded for all detainees, and particularly vulnerable adults and children.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: We will accept nothing but the highest standards from companies employed to manage the immigration removal estate. Published guidance Detention Services Order 07/2016, and the training received by detainee custody officers (DCOs) makes it clear that physical force and restraint equipment must only be used as a last resort, and for the shortest possible time, and physical force will be used only after a thorough risk assessment and in consideration of each individual's personal circumstances. Where restraints are used, they must be removed at the earliest opportunity.

The Home Office reviews all reports resulting from a use of force in detention to identify trends, ensure that techniques are used proportionally, are justified, and are only used for the minimum period required.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-15/hl346>

Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL350] To ask His Majesty's Government what are the long-term plans for the use of Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Derwentside immigration removal centre (IRC) which is currently a women only centre, will be converted into a detained facility for men in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-15/hl350>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Caroline Lucas (Green) [103] Rwanda asylum scheme and the UK's legal obligations

– That this House celebrates the role the United Kingdom has played in helping to shape the international rules based order, including its contribution to the drafting and early ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in the aftermath of the horrors of WWII; notes the recent judgment of the Supreme Court that the UK could breach its obligations under the ECHR, and other international law such as the Refugee Convention, UN Convention Against Torture, UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as domestic law, by sending refugees to Rwanda; rejects in principle the use of emergency legislation to ride roughshod over the judgment of the UK's highest domestic court; further notes such a move would contravene the rule of law and undermine the separation of powers fundamental to UK democracy; considers any legislative proposals to disapply the Human Rights Act (HRA) and ECHR, and restrict judicial review and other legal safeguards would violate the principle of universality that rights belong to all; further considers that a country's safety is determined by the facts on the ground not by the passing of legislation or the signing of a treaty; acknowledges the positive role the ECHR and HRA play in the protection of human rights; and calls upon the Government to abandon its cruel, immoral and unworkable Rwanda plan and to re-establish the UK's good standing as a member of the ECHR and international community.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61574>

Press Release

Haulage boss jailed seven years for his role in people-smuggling network linked to Essex lorry deaths

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/haulage-boss-jailed-seven-years-his-role-people-smuggling-network-linked-essex-lorry>

New Publications

Letter from Robert Jenrick MP to Diana Johnson MP regarding interim arrangements for individuals applying for further permission to remain on the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route who cannot afford to pay their extension application fees

<https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2023-0911/Hong.pdf>

Ukrainian nationals resettled in the UK - student support eligibility criteria: equality impact assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/applying-relevant-date-provision-student-support-eligibility-criteria-ukrainian-nationals-resettled-uk-equality-impact-assessment/>

Updated: 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>

Updated: Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by country, upper and lower tier local authority

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

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Sunak set to push for hard-line Rwanda law to secure deportations

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/12/01/sunak-full-fat-rwanda-law-deportations-before-election/>

Rishi Sunak: Rwanda plan 'crucial' to solving migrant crisis

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rishi-sunak-rwanda-plan-crucial-to-solving-migrant-crisis-fp0kg6zw2>

Rwanda scheme can save billions of pounds, claims Rishi Sunak

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67588407>

Rishi Sunak 'mulling hard-line Rwanda plan' to get planes off the ground

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-cleverly-rwanda-asylum-b2457264.html>

More countries ready to follow Rwanda and join our migrant scheme, James Cleverly says

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/11/28/rwanda-uk-immigration-asylum-record-migration-home-office/>

James Cleverly says other countries lining up to strike Rwanda-style deals – if it works

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-migration-james-cleverly-asylum-b2455309.html>

Cleverly ready to strike further Rwanda-style deportation deals

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cleverly-ready-to-strike-further-rwanda-style-deportation-deals-z9b68dhfk>

Ditching human rights laws 'will add to Rwanda deportation delays'

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ditching-human-rights-laws-will-add-to-rwanda-deportation-delays-vplst83c9>

Rwandan support for migrant deal at risk, ministers warned

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rwanda-relations-pushed-to-limit-as-deportation-scheme-stalls-f0fx58mx7>

'No plan B' if Rwanda scheme fails, Home Office admits

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/11/29/rwanda-migrants-deportation-no-plan-b-says-home-office/>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Scottish independence: Points-based immigration system could be introduced in independent Scotland, say ministers

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-independence-points-based-immigration-system-could-be-introduced-in-independent-scotland-say-ministers-4397220>

Labour says it 'won't set arbitrary target' on migration

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67536932>

Rishi Sunak accused of breaking deal to curb migration

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/westminster/23951014.rishi-sunak-accused-breaking-deal-curb-migration/>

Rishi Sunak could avoid immigration backlash if he stopped pretending more arrivals is bad

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/rishi-sunak-could-avoid-immigration-backlash-if-he-stopped-pretending-more-arrivals-is-bad-4422800>

Kemi Badenoch backs Braverman's stance on migrant salaries

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/11/27/kemi-badenoch-raising-salary-threshold-migrant-workers/>

It's not 'far right' to want curbs on immigration

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/its-not-far-right-to-want-curbs-on-immigration-h28v25lpv>

Patel and Braverman accused of secret policy to deny trafficking victims leave to remain

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/01/patel-and-braverman-accused-of-denying-trafficking-victims-leave-to-remain-in-uk>

Asylum seekers: Home Office says more than 17,000 are missing

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67567401>

We don't know where 17,000 rejected asylum seekers are, says Home Office deputy

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/11/29/home-office-do-not-know-where-17000-asylum-seekers-are/>

Home Office 'loses' 17,000 people whose asylum claims were withdrawn

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/29/home-office-loses-17000-asylum-seekers-registered-in-britain>

Number of homeless refugees in Glasgow quadruples in ten months

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23960479.number-homeless-refugees-glasgow-quadruples-ten-months/>

Number of homeless refugees in Glasgow doubles amid asylum backlog

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/nov/29/homeless-refugees-glasgow-asylum-london-housing>

Fears rise for LGBTQ asylum seekers over Home Office hotel room-sharing push

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/01/fears-mount-lgbtq-asylum-seekers-uk-ramp-up-hotel-room-sharing>

Home Secretary told to end indefinite asylum detention

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23951748.home-secretary-told-end-indefinite-asylum-detention/>

Scots health chiefs warning on social unrest over refugee homes crisis

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23947285.scots-health-chiefs-warning-social-unrest-refugee-homes-crisis/>

Essex lorry deaths: Caolan Gormley guilty of trafficking offence

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-67543598>

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Young Offender Institutions: Ethnic Groups

Janet Daby (Labour) [2643] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many ethnic minority staff were recruited to positions in the youth secure estate in each reporting year since 2010.

Reply from Edward Argar: The headcount of staff who declared that they were from an ethnic minority background and who joined the Youth Custody Estate is given in the table below.

Table 1 - Headcount of new joiners in Youth Custody Service prisons, by ethnicity, as at 31 March since 2010, and latest position as at 30 September 2023

| 12 months to: | Ethnic Minority | White | Unknown | Total |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 31/3/10 | 7 | 35 | 14 | 56 |
| 31/3/11 | 7 | 72 | 27 | 106 |
| 31/3/12 | 5 | 34 | 9 | 48 |
| 31/3/13 | ~ | ~ | 55 | 68 |
| 31/3/14 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| 31/3/15 | 12 | 76 | 63 | 151 |
| 31/3/16 | 15 | 102 | 111 | 228 |
| 31/3/17 | 11 | 59 | 57 | 127 |
| 31/3/18 | ~ | ~ | 305 | 310 |
| 31/3/19 | 23 | 92 | 375 | 490 |
| 31/3/20 | 9 | 27 | 67 | 103 |
| 31/3/21 | 9 | 30 | 121 | 160 |
| 31/3/22 | 30 | 96 | 164 | 290 |
| 31/3/23 | 39 | 103 | 199 | 341 |
| 30/9/23 | 66 | 193 | 164 | 423 |

Notes

1. The Youth Custody Service (YCS), created in April 2017 to oversee day-to-day management of the under 18s young people's estate. Youth Custody Estate includes the following prisons: Cookham Wood, Feltham, Werrington, Wetherby and Medway Secure Training Centre (which closed in March 2020)
2. Ethnicity is a self-declared field and is optional to complete.
3. Unknown includes those who hadn't declared their ethnicity as well as those who responded 'Prefer Not To Say'.
4. Joiners are new recruits to HMPPS and figures do not include internal movements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-20/2643>

Young Offender Institutions: Ethnic Groups

Janet Daby (Labour) [2644] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the attrition

rate was for ethnic minority staff in the youth secure estate in each reporting year since 2010.

Reply from Edward Argar: The leaving rates of staff who declared their ethnicity and who work in prisons currently part of the Youth Custody Service are given in the table below.

In late 2021, HM Prison Service launched a retention tool kit to help Governors to tackle the main drivers of attrition in their prisons. We are using the data from this and enhanced exit interviews to better understand why employees are leaving.

HM Prison Service made a significant investment in pay for prison staff through the 2023/24 pay awards. This delivered an increase in base pay of at least 4% for all staff between bands 2 to 11, alongside further targeted pay rises for our lowest paid staff of up to £2,500 which we hope will help in reducing leaving rates.

Since April 2022, HM Prison Service have invested in several new initiatives to improve the experience of our new joiners and increase retention of our employees. These include a new peer-to-peer learning scheme, the introduction of mentors for new staff, a supervision pilot in two prisons, and new leadership training in prisons facing retention challenges.

Table 1: Underlying leaving rate of permanent staff in Youth Custody Estate, by declared ethnicity, for 12 months to 31 March each year since 2010, and latest position as at 30 September 2023

| 12 Months to | Ethnic minority leavers | Ethnic minority average staff in post | Ethnic minority leaving rate |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 31/3/10 | 5 | 162 | 3.10% |
| 31/3/11 | 9 | 165 | 5.40% |
| 31/3/12 | 6 | 160 | 3.80% |
| 31/3/13 | 6 | 159 | 3.80% |
| 31/3/14 | 8 | 148 | 5.40% |
| 31/3/15 | 16 | 136 | 11.70% |
| 31/3/16 | 5 | 131 | 3.80% |
| 31/3/17 | 14 | 138 | 10.10% |
| 31/3/18 | 11 | 136 | 8.10% |
| 31/3/19 | 6 | 157 | 3.80% |
| 31/3/20 | 27 | 207 | 13.10% |
| 31/3/21 | 18 | 207 | 8.70% |
| 31/3/22 | 22 | 216 | 10.20% |
| 31/3/23 | 49 | 232 | 21.10% |
| 30/09/2023 ^(p) | 55 | 249 | 22.10% |

Notes

1. Leaving rates is calculated as number of leavers by ethnicity as a proportion of an average of all staff of that ethnicity, not all staff.
2. Ethnicity is a self-declared field and is optional to complete.
3. The leavers figures do not include voluntary early departure or redundancy.
4. Permanent staff are those with a permanent contract of employment with HMPPS.
5. The Youth Custody Service (YCS), created in April 2017 to oversee day-to-day management of young people up to 18 years of age in the young people's estate. Youth Custody Estate includes the following prisons: Cookham Wood, Feltham, Werrington, Wetherby and Medway Secure Training Centre (which closed in March 2020).
6. Internal transfers within HMPPS are not included.

^(p) Figures relating to current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change in future.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-20/2644>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Young Offender Institutions: Ethnic Groups

Janet Daby (Labour) [2647] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to improve the representation of ethnic minority personnel in senior leadership roles in the youth secure estate.

Janet Daby (Labour) [2648] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to help (a) ensure that ethnic minority staff are recruited to work in the youth secure estate in similar proportions to the country as a whole and (b) increase retention of ethnic minority staff in the youth secure estate.

Reply from Edward Argar: Following the Lammy Review, His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) made a public commitment that 14% of all new recruits will come from ethnic minority backgrounds. As of 30 June 2023, 19.2% of all Youth Custody Service staff who declared their ethnicity were from an ethnic minority background, up from 11.9% in 2010.

We are continuing to work towards increasing the recruitment of ethnic minority staff, so that their representation, including in senior leadership roles, matches that in the working population. Recruitment marketing is tailored to increase diversity in applications, targeting prisons where there is disparity between the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic workforce population and the regional working population. This enhanced recruitment approach means we are exceeding the past-Lammy Review target in the youth secure estate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-20/2647>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-20/2648>

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

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82009040f0b62305b91f49/lammy-review-final-report.pdf>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Ethnic Groups: Equal Pay

Lord Shinkwin (Conservative) [HL321] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 21 March 2022 where she stated that they reserve the right to introduce legislation for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting "at a future point, if and when the reporting tools are sufficiently developed, effective in driving positive change and accessible to more businesses" (HL Deb col 722), whether they still remain open to doing so.

Reply from Lord Gascoigne: The Government published guidance in April which sets out how employers can measure, report on, and address any unfair ethnicity pay gaps within their workforce. This was an action from our ambitious Inclusive Britain strategy, published in March 2022.

We have no plans to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay reporting. Instead, we want to encourage and support employers who want to use ethnicity pay reporting to improve transparency and build trust among their employees. We are engaging with employers and representative bodies to promote the new guidance. We will also seek case studies from those that are already reporting on their ethnicity pay data, so that others can benefit from their experience.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-14/hl321>

The remarks referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-21/debates/8D7D6F7C-DBE0-424E-89EB-B4E8FA75BFE1/CommissionOnRaceAndEthnicDisparities#contribution-43E26D22-988A-49E8-BA11-4A0CEDA79F83>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethnicity-pay-reporting-guidance-for-employers>

Inclusive Britain, referred to above, can be read at

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

New Publications

Ethnicity pay gaps, UK: 2012 to 2022

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2012to2022>

How trusts and schools narrow attainment gaps between ethnic groups: a preliminary investigation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65674b08312f40000de5d5d2/How_trusts_and_schools_narrow_attainment_gaps_between_ethnic_groups_a_preliminary_investigation_.pdf

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Prime Minister's Questions

Rehman Chishti (Conservative) [900406] The Government have rightly responded to the shocking and unacceptable rise in antisemitism, and we saw extra funding in the autumn statement. I note that 44% of religiously aggravated offences last year were against the Muslim community, yet in the autumn statement there was no funding to deal with Islamophobia. The Government's independent adviser on Islamophobia role has been left vacant for over one year. As the Prime Minister knows, we discussed these matters over a year ago, yet no action has taken place. Prime Minister, enough is enough with regards to tackling anti-Muslim hatred. Will the Government now finally take action?

The Prime Minister: We will not tolerate anti-Muslim hatred in any form, and expect it to be dealt with wherever it occurs. I actually recently met Tell MAMA, a service that provides support to victims of anti-Muslim hatred, which we have in fact supported with over £6 million of funding since its inception. We are in regular dialogue with it. We have also doubled the funding for protective security measures through the protective security for mosques scheme, and we will continue to do everything we can to keep our Muslim community safe.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-29/debates/688F915E-FFA6-4955-AAF9-977206771EC1/Engagements#contribution-2216EE8E-74D4-4E0D-80F9-E9813ADA2C93>

Topical Questions: Home Department

Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [900310] Is the Home Secretary doing enough to

reassure Jews that the United Kingdom is safe?

James Cleverly: My right hon. Friend asks an incredibly important question. I have made it very clear to the police forces of the UK that when members of a minority group in this country tell us that they are living in fear, we must take action. I am pleased that the policing response this weekend was more robust than on previous weekends—the police are clearly listening to the conversations we are having with them and I commend them for doing so. I have spoken with representatives of the Community Security Trust and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and I will be having a meeting with the Chief Rabbi to make it absolutely clear that the Jewish community in the UK has the right to feel safe and this Government will take action to ensure it is safe.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-27/debates/D877C93C-78F8-44C9-A004-030282D1EFF3/TopicalQuestions#contribution-21FF015E-6C5E-467F-AD4C-925309B54656>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following four questions all received the same answer

Islamophobia

Imran Hussain (Labour) [3468] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Autumn Statement 2023 on 22 November 2023, Official Report, column 326, what funding he provides to tackle Islamophobia in the UK.

Racial Discrimination

Imran Hussain (Labour) [3469] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Autumn Statement 2023 on 22 November 2023, Official Report, column 326, what funding he provides to tackle anti-black racism in the UK.

Imran Hussain (Labour) [3471] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Autumn Statement 2023 on 22 November 2023, Official Report, column 326, what funding he provides to tackle racism against ethnic minority communities in the UK.

Travellers

Imran Hussain (Labour) [3470] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Autumn Statement 2023 on 22 November 2023, Official Report, column 326, what funding he provides to tackle racism against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK.

Reply from Laura Trott: The Government is committed to the right of individuals to freely practise their religion. That is why in June 2023, building on the work of the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, the Security Minister pledged £24.5 million of funding in 2023-24 to protect mosques and Muslim faith schools through the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme, providing security measures like CCTV and intruder alarms. In light of the crisis in Israel and Gaza, the Home Secretary announced in October that the Government will grant an additional £3 million to the Community Security Trust to support Jewish communities in the UK. At the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that this would be extended to 2024-25. The Home Office has also increased available funding for the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme by 20%

The Government is also taking strides to combat ethnic discrimination and hate crime. Through the Online Safety Act 2023, we are compelling social media companies to tackle discriminatory content posted on their platforms. The Government also provides £300,000 in annual grant funding to the National Online Hate Crime Hub, which provides expert advice to police investigating hate crimes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-23/3468>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-23/3469>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-23/3471>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-23/3470>

The Autumn Statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-22/debates/82998B02-2E62-4E48-81C2-F2B8647C83CD/AutumnStatement#contribution-14592FE7-A50A-4173-A5F7-7F81BB84A440>

Information about the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

The announcement of additional funding to the CST, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-support-to-keep-british-jewish-communities-safe>

Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Dan Carden (Labour) [2961] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to tackle (a) antisemitism and (b) Islamophobia.

Reply from Lee Rowley: As set out previously, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred are abhorrent and have no place in our community. No one should be a victim of hatred because of who they are. Since the appalling terrorist attacks of 7 October in Israel we have seen a sharp increase in reported antisemitic incidents here in the UK. We have also seen a rise in anti-Muslim hatred and other racist and religiously motivated incidents.

The Government has announced an additional £3 million for the CST to provide additional security at Jewish schools, synagogues and other sites. Tell MAMA are our key partner working to monitor and support victims of anti-Muslim hatred and we have allocated over £6 million since 2012.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/2961>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-support-to-keep-british-jewish-communities-safe>

Jews and Muslims: Safety

Tobias Ellwood (Conservative) [2806] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the safety of (a) Jewish and (b) Muslim communities in the UK in the context of the war in Gaza.

Reply from Chris Philp: In response to the conflict and reports of increased incidents of antisemitism in the UK, the Prime Minister has announced additional funding of £3 million for the Community Security Trust (CST) to provide additional security at Jewish schools, synagogues and other Jewish community sites, bringing total funding for CST, through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, to £18 million in 2023/24. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement confirmed that protective security funding for the Jewish community will be maintained at £18 million in 2024/25.

Earlier this year, we established the Jewish Community Crime, Policing and Security Taskforce. The Taskforce, chaired by the Home Secretary, allows the Jewish community, represented by CST, to raise concerns with the Home Office, law enforcement and partners, and work together to understand and address the concerns of the Jewish community on safety and security issues. We continue to work closely with CST on how best to respond to live incidents that affect the Jewish communities in the UK.

The Prime Minister has made clear we stand with British Muslim communities. We

will not tolerate anti-Muslim hatred in any form and seek to stamp it out wherever it occurs. I can now confirm that additional funding of £4.9 million will also be made available to provide additional protective security at mosques and Muslim faith schools in light of increased reports of anti-Muslim hate incidents. This brings the total funding to £29.4 million for both 2023/24 and 2024/25. We have also extended the deadline for the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme and invite UK mosques and Muslim faith community centres to register for protective security measures by the end of December.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has also allocated over £6 million to Tell MAMA since their inception in 2012 for their vital work monitoring and supporting victims of anti-Muslim hatred.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-21/2806>

The announcements referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-support-to-keep-british-jewish-communities-safe>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2023/autumn-statement-2023-html>

Information about the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

Jews: Safety

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [2562] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to help ensure the safety of Jewish communities.

Reply from Tom Tugendhat: In March 2023, the Home Secretary announced the continuation of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant (JCPSG) and increased funding for 2023/24 by £1 million, to a total of £15 million. The JCPSG provides protective security measures (such as guarding, CCTV and alarm systems) at Jewish schools and other Jewish community sites. The Grant is managed on behalf of the Home Office by the Community Security Trust (CST).

In response to the conflict and reports of increased incidents of antisemitism in the UK, the Prime Minister has announced additional funding of £3 million for CST to provide additional security at Jewish schools, synagogues and other Jewish Community sites. This brings the total funding for CST in FY2023/24 to £18 million. Earlier this year, the Home Secretary established the Jewish Community Crime, Policing and Security Taskforce. The Taskforce allows the Jewish community, represented by the Community Security Trust, to raise concerns to the Home Office, law enforcement and partners, and work together to understand and address the concerns of the Jewish community on safety and security issues.

The government is also investing up to a further £7 million over the next three years for organisations like the Holocaust Educational Trust to help tackle antisemitism. This funding will ensure support is in place for schools and universities to understand, recognise, and deal with antisemitism effectively.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-20/2562>

The announcements referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-ramps-up-security-measures-to-protect-jewish-communities>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-support-to-keep-british-jewish-communities-safe>

Higher Education: Antisemitism

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [3190] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to tackle antisemitism in higher education.

Reply from Robert Halfon: The department is deeply concerned about the increase in antisemitic incidents on campuses since the horrific 7 October 2023 terrorist attacks against Israel. This government takes antisemitism extremely seriously. That is why on 22 November, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in his Autumn 2023 Statement an additional £7 million over 3 years to tackle antisemitism in education.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and I wrote to all schools, colleges and universities on 11 October, urging them to respond swiftly to hate-related incidents and actively reassure Jewish students that they can study without fear of harassment or intimidation. I wrote again to Vice Chancellors on 16 November, further emphasising the use of disciplinary measures against perpetrators and the importance of police engagement, as well as the suspension of student visas where the student is a foreign national. This was one of the key actions I set out in the five-point plan for tackling antisemitism in higher education, which was published on 5 November. Details of the plan can be found here:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>

On 21 November, the Secretary of State and I attended a round table hosted by the Union of Jewish Students, at University College London, where we heard directly about the impact of antisemitism on campus.

The department continues to remind providers of their obligations under the Prevent duty, where they should be working to prevent people from being drawn into or supporting terrorism. Departmental officials have assessed evidence of antisemitism and racial hatred linked to incidents at English universities. There is an online 'Reporting Extremism' form where members of the public can raise concerns to the department directly. Where concerns have arisen, officials have reached out to the relevant universities to understand what actions they have taken, including reporting issues to the police where appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-22/3190>

The Autumn Statement, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2023/autumn-statement-2023-html>

The letter to schools, colleges and universities referred to above can be read at

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDFE/bulletins/3763f13>

The letter to Vice-Chancellors referred to above is not available online.

New Publications

“Take it seriously”: children’s experiences of racism within secondary schools [Wales]

https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CCfW-Spotlight-Report--Racism-in-Schools_231123.pdf

Online content moderation - Current challenges in detecting hate speech

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-online-content-moderation_en.pdf

News

As Tory party moves towards the far-right, it's time to talk about fascism

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/as-tory-party-moves-towards-the-far-right-its-time-to-talk-about-fascism-henry-mcleish-4425637>

Former Tory MP Bob Stewart to appeal against racial abuse conviction

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/nov/27/tory-mp-bob-stewart-appeal-against-racial-abuse-conviction>

Thousands march against antisemitism in London

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67537351>

Jewish BBC news staff defy ban to attend march against antisemitism

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/jewish-bbc-staff-london-march-antisemitism-5cbml79p5>

I was on the march against antisemitism — there was one thing missing

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/i-was-on-the-march-against-antisemitism-there-was-one-thing-missing-ft98l9hcs>

As an imam and a rabbi, we see the pain caused by war in the Middle East. We don't want that conflict in the UK

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/02/imam-rabbi-israel-palestine-war-middle-east-uk>

I have Muslim and Jewish family – I want to talk about antisemitism AND Islamophobia

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/anti-hate-vigil-antisemitism-islamaphobia-racism-jemima-goldsmith-b2456741.html>

The one group protecting Britain from anti-Jewish terror

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/11/27/the-one-group-protecting-britain-from-anti-jewish-terror/>

'We are capitulating to terrorism': Anger as Hanukkah celebration scrapped over vandalism fears

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/hanukkah-celebrations-cancelled-having-gaza-b2456088.html>

Barrister fined after doing Nazi salute in court

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-wiltshire-67555269>

TOP

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Scottish Parliament Motion

Sandesh Gulhane (Conservative) [S6M-11476] Edinburgh Diwali 2023 – That the Parliament congratulates Edinburgh Diwali, a registered charity, on organising and hosting the Diwali 2023 celebration in Edinburgh on 19 November 2023; understands that the charity is an initiative by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh to bring Diwali, the most famous Indian festival, to Edinburgh; recognises that Diwali celebrates the victory of good over evil

and light over darkness; commends Edinburgh Diwali for celebrating the festival in what it believes was a truly multicultural way, with participation and attendance by different communities in and around Edinburgh; notes that the Edinburgh Diwali Committee is made up of representatives from different faiths, from across different regions of India, who are settled in Edinburgh; further notes that the event included a parade, led by the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, including the Stockbridge Pipe Band and the Glencorse Pipe Band, with dancers from the Bihari dance group and from the Edinburgh Junoon Dance Society, followed by an eclectic mix of dance, drama, and music performances in Princes Street Gardens and culminated in a spectacular fireworks display; recognises that the event was free and open to all to enjoy, and congratulates Edinburgh Diwali on putting together a successful and vibrant celebration that attracted thousands of spectators.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11476>

Press Releases

Crime falls by more than half since 2008

<https://www.gov.scot/news/crime-falls-by-more-than-half-since-2008/>

First Minister's St Andrew's Day message

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1730210075074273454>

New Publications

Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2021/22

Main Findings

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-crime-justice-survey-2021-22-main-findings/>

Associated data tables

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-crime-justice-survey-2021-22-datasets/>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

Press Release

The Prime Minister's message for GURPURAB 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-prime-ministers-message-for-gurpurab-2023>

New Publication

Letter from Lord Sharpe of Epsom to Viscount Bridgeman regarding marriages conducted under Sharia Law

<https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2023-0902/Letter from Lord Sharpe-Marriages conducted under Sharia law.pdf>

TOP

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/>

Publication

House of Commons Library Briefing: Students and the rising cost of living

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9886/CBP-9886.pdf>

TOP

Other New Publications

Supreme Court: Wolverhampton City Council and others (Respondents) v London Gypsies and Travellers and others (Appellants)

Press Release

This appeal is about injunctions obtained by local authorities to prevent unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers. An injunction is a court order that requires the people to whom it is addressed to do, or not to do, a specified act. In this appeal, the Supreme Court is asked to decide whether the court has the power to grant injunctions against people who are unknown when an injunction is granted – in this case because the Gypsies and Travellers who might wish to camp on a particular site were not known in advance.

The Supreme Court judgement is that these injunctions are allowed but should only be granted where there is a compelling need to protect civil rights or to enforce law that is not adequately met by any other available remedies.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2022-0046-press-summary.pdf>

Full judgement

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2022-0046-judgment.pdf>

Court of Justice of the European Union: Wearing of religious symbols in the workplace: a public administration may decide to prohibit all of its employees from wearing such signs

Press release

<https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2023-11/cp230181en.pdf>

Full judgement

<https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=77366F7EF5084FC94DF287C080BF6977>

TOP

Other News

Employees can be banned from wearing headscarves, top EU court rules

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/eu-court-headscarves-banned-hijab-b2454762.html>

Government offices in EU can ban wearing of religious symbols, court rules

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/29/government-offices-in-eu-can-ban-wearing-of-religious-symbols-court-rules>

TOP

Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/police-ethics-conduct-and-scrutiny-scotland-bill>

UK Parliament

**** Asylum Application (Entry to the United Kingdom) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3530>

Bill as introduced

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/53177/documents/4072>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-29/debates/06BA3293-78A7-4ADD-A4F0-27FCBAD75868/AsylumApplication\(EntryToTheUnitedKingdom\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-29/debates/06BA3293-78A7-4ADD-A4F0-27FCBAD75868/AsylumApplication(EntryToTheUnitedKingdom)Bill(HL))

The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 [Draft]

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/9780348253191/contents>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents>

Workforce Information (Ethnicity) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3522>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated this week

Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Bill (closing date 8 December 2023)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/justice/police-ethics-conduct-and-scrutiny-bill/>

Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Bill (closing date 20 December 2023)

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/abortion-services-saz-bill/consult_view/

Democracy Matters (closing date 28 February 2024)

<https://consult.gov.scot/local-government-and-communities/democracy-matters/>

Your Police 2023-2024 (closing date 31 March 2023)

<https://consult.scotland.police.uk/strategy-insight-and-innovation/your-police-2023-2024/>

ITV/Tell MAMA survey on mosque safety in the UK (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/V7V5B6L>

TOP

Job Opportunities

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

TOP

Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Democracy Matters Community Engagement Fund 2023/24

Closing date: 26 January 2024

Scottish Government funding of up to £300 (possibility of higher funding to assist with accessibility) to support organisations and groups to host conversations and gather the views of people across Scotland on how we can create a system of inclusive local democracy. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/4ds8r9h2>

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

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/cost-of-living-support-fund>

TOP

Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

Exploring the Holocaust: UK-wide Residential Course

Application deadline 11 December 2023

9-13 February 2024 (Leicester)

Holocaust Educational Trust course for teachers and trainees to advance knowledge and inform classroom practice about the context of the Holocaust, Wartime persecution and murder, and Reactions to the Holocaust. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/46u8fdx7>

Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre School's Holocaust Memorial Day Event 2024

23 January 2024 (Glasgow, 10.00–1.30)

Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre event for secondary school pupils, providing an opportunity to hear people whose parents were survivors of the Holocaust, and who made a life in Scotland. For information see <https://sjhc.org.uk/news/hmd2024/>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

14 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course to find out about fundamental issues of housing, homelessness and welfare entitlements of EEA nationals and look at how service users might prepare themselves for an economy in recession and cost of living spiralling. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

15 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course explore how the asylum system works from the perspective of a claimant and the process involved in making a claim for asylum. The course also explores the journeys and barriers faced by both refugees and asylum seekers reaching and building a new life in Scotland and their respective entitlement to services. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

No Recourse To Public Funds

21 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

PAIH course to help frontline workers identify a tenant's current status, clarify what this means in terms of access to public funds and plan effective support where difficulties arise. For information see <https://www.paih.org/what-we-do/migrants-rights-courses>

TOP

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>

New Scots <https://newscots.scot/>

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>

TOP

SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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



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



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

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