



MEMO is produced by the [Scottish Council of Jewish Communities \(SCoJeC\)](#) in partnership with [BEMIS – empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities](#). It provides an overview of information of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, including parliamentary activity at Holyrood and Westminster, new publications, consultations, forthcoming conferences, and news reports.

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Note that some weblinks, particularly of newspaper articles, are only valid for a short period of time, usually around a month, and that the Scottish and UK Parliament and Government websites have been redesigned, so that links published in previous issues of MEMO may no longer work. To find archive material on these websites, copy details from MEMO into the relevant search facility.

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The Scottish Parliament will be in recess from 23 December to 8 January, and the UK Parliament will be in recess from 20 December to 8 January. The next issue of MEMO will be published on 8 January 2024.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Debate

Human Rights of Asylum Seekers in Scotland

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15606&i=133159#ScotParlOR>

UK Parliament Debates

Second Reading debate, House of Commons: Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-12/debates/FA4DDF9F-19EF-4954-9BFA-6997E4A74E79/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-12/debates/FA4DDF9F-19EF-4954-9BFA-6997E4A74E79/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

Human Trafficking

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-14/debates/23121423000003/HomeAffairsCommittee>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Afghan Resettlement Update

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs (Jonny Mercer): In September this year, I notified Members of the House that on 31 August the Government had successfully ended the use of bridging hotels for thousands of legally resettled Afghans, and through the hard work and determination of central Government officials and local authorities, the vast majority of them are now in settled accommodation. Hotels were never designed to be a permanent solution either for the Afghans who risked their lives working for UK forces in Afghanistan or, indeed, for the British taxpayer. Ending the provision of bridging accommodation was the right thing to do for our Afghan friends, who can now get on with rebuilding their lives. The hotel exit plan required a considerable cross-Government effort and represented a significant national achievement, but our debt of gratitude to our Afghan partners is ongoing. We are now working to ensure that Afghans who are eligible for relocation via the Afghan relocations and assistance policy and the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme, and who remain overseas in Pakistan and other third countries, are moved over here at pace so they can start to rebuild their lives here in the United Kingdom.

On the current trajectory estimates, we expect to have welcomed around 3,500 arrivals by the end of 2023 across ACRS and ARAP, and wherever possible new arrivals will go straight into settled accommodation. For ARAP families, this will largely be into service family accommodation options, which have been made available by the Ministry of Defence across the country. The Ministry of Defence is also providing shorter-term transitional accommodation until movement into settled accommodation is possible. For ACRS arrivals, we are committed to bringing eligible persons over to the UK as fast as possible, and this week we will welcome 250 arrivals from Pakistan, with a further flight arriving next week. Some 70% of families manifested on these flights have been pre-matched into settled accommodation, but for a small number of this cohort transitional accommodation will be required.

The Government remain committed to ending the systemic use of hotels, and we do not plan to open new hotels to meet this increased demand. A small number of hotels with existing contracts will be extended for a limited time period to help accommodate ACRS arrivals who have yet to be matched to settled housing solutions in the United Kingdom. The Home Office has already undertaken initial engagement with local authorities in which those hotels are located, and it will continue to work closely with councils across the United Kingdom to ensure they are receiving the support they need to relocate Afghan families into settled accommodation as quickly as possible.

The Government recognise the challenges that local authorities face when it comes to resettling communities across the United Kingdom, and that is why we put in place a generous funding package of £285 million in March to help fund housing solutions and support councils to provide integration support to Afghan families. While the scale of the task is much smaller this time than it was in the summer, with the vast majority of arrivals

this year already pre-matched to settled accommodation, the Government will be matching the commitment we previously made to local authorities by offering a similar funding package of financial support for the resettlement of these new arrivals.

That includes wraparound funding of £28 per person per day, which is available to councils that are supporting households in transitional accommodation. In addition, local authorities will be able to draw on the flexible housing fund, which provides over £7,000 per Afghan individual to enable them to support move-ons, and that will be capped at £35,000 per household. Furthermore, funding will be provided to mitigate any additional pressures of homelessness from transitional accommodation, and there will be up to six months of wraparound funding for those in temporary accommodation. Where local authorities are supporting Afghan arrivals into settled accommodation, they can claim the integration tariff funding of £20,520 per person over the first three years towards resettlement and integration costs.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will continue to explore a range of accommodation options to ensure the use of transitional hotel accommodation is kept to an absolute minimum. ...

I want to reassure Afghan families who remain in Pakistan and other third countries, and who are eligible to come to the United Kingdom, that this Government will work night and day to bring them over as quickly and as safely as possible. ...

Steve McCabe (Labour): ... I pay tribute to all those involved in Operation Pitting, all those who served alongside our forces in Afghanistan, and all those who worked to assist them. I thank the Minister for, as he acknowledged, his first oral update on Afghan resettlement since September. Since then it has been confirmed that, unfortunately, Ministers have missed their target to clear the ARAP backlog. Thousands are still waiting in Pakistan. There is real concern that ARAP and ACRS applicants could be sent back to Afghanistan. Families are still awaiting permanent accommodation in the UK, and military sites, as we have heard, are being used as temporary housing. Just today, I understand that the Government have been fined £350,000 by the Information Commissioner's Office for a data breach concerning the ARAP scheme. It is hard to feel proud of our record in relation to those events. Britain's moral duty to assist these Afghans is felt most fiercely by the UK forces they served alongside. We as a nation gave a commitment to those who served with our forces that we would do right by them when they arrived on our shores.

I note the Minister's comments about the hotel exit plan. Will he confirm that zero Afghans have returned to bridging hotels since September, and that the contracts that he referred to as being "extended" are only for new arrivals? How many new arrivals have been placed in hotels since September? The Minister said in his previous statement that "some families have moved into temporary accommodation under local authority homelessness provision. That is less than 5% of the 24,600 people we have relocated from Afghanistan."—[\[Official Report, 19 September 2023; Vol. 737, c. 1254.\]](#)

That was still over 1,000 people registered as homeless. What is the figure now?

As the Minister mentioned, it has been reported that the Ministry of Defence has made available 700 service accommodation units for Afghans. Yesterday it was announced that the Government are now using Chickerell Camp near Weymouth to house Afghans who supported the UK. How many Afghans are currently in military accommodation, how many MOD sites are currently in use for that purpose, and for how long does the Minister expect Afghans to be accommodated in military housing?

The Minister for Armed Forces said on Monday: "There are around 2,000 people in Afghanistan who we need to move out and around 1,800 left in Pakistan who we need to bring in. In all, I would expect another 4,000 to 4,500 arrivals."—[\[Official Report, 11 December 2023; Vol. 742, c. 635.\]](#)

When does the Minister expect those people to arrive, and where will they be housed? Too much of this feels like a saga of failure. It cannot continue. Lives cannot remain in limbo, and Afghans cannot be put in danger from the Taliban. On behalf of our veterans and

members of the armed forces, who feel so strongly about this, we must fulfil our duty to them and provide a new and secure life in the UK.

Reply from Jonny Mercer: ... As of 8 December, 215 families remain in temporary accommodation, and as of a few days ago, around 1,826 ARAP-entitled personnel are still in Pakistan. That is obviously blending with the ACRS pathway. Indeed, a flight of 246 people is arriving today on the ACRS pathway and will be met by Home Office officials. As I said, 70% of those have been pre-matched to houses, and we are looking to accommodate the remainder and get them into settled accommodation as soon as possible.

The red lines remain the same: nobody has slept rough as a result of this policy. We are clearly juggling multiple different dynamics when it comes to getting people into this country, into temporary transit accommodation so that we do not delay the flow out of Pakistan or Afghanistan, and then into settled accommodation, which is where we all want these people to be. The numbers are changing every day, and I am more than happy to share what they will be. I do not want anybody to be in a hotel for a day longer than they want to be, whether in Pakistan or the United Kingdom. I am not really interested in what has happened before; we are where we are today.

I am determined that we will see through our duty to this cohort—both ARAP and ACRS—and I will turn myself inside out until we get to the place where all entitled personnel are in settled accommodation in the United Kingdom, in line with our commitments.

James Gray (Conservative): It is a matter of honour and common human decency that we should give these people, who served us so well in Afghanistan, proper accommodation and a safe refuge here in the United Kingdom. I very much welcome the fact that the Minister is doing that for the remaining people in Pakistan and Afghanistan. I also welcome the fact that he has been clear that hotels are not the right place for these people to be housed, and I am proud that we in Wiltshire are making a significant amount of our empty military accommodation available to them, including 40 in my own constituency, but also a large number across the county. That is a good use for empty military accommodation and I hope it will work extremely well.

Will the Minister make representations to his colleagues in the Home Office that the strength of feeling against the use of hotels for these people stands in some contrast to the Wiltshire golf club hotel, not one mile away from Lyneham, where those people will be housed, which is crammed to the doors with 120 other asylum seekers and refugees of one kind or another? The Home Office must take steps to do what the Minister has done by removing those people from unsuitable hotel accommodation and into decent, permanent accommodation.

Reply from Jonny Mercer: ... The operating box that I am within is the Afghan cohort, both ACRS and ARAP-entitled personnel. Those in the Home Office are dealing with the wider migration issue, and I will let them write to my hon. Friend and answer those points in due course.

Alison Thewliss (SNP): Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in August 2021, and it should be a source of shame and embarrassment to this Government that we are still talking about bringing people to safety over two years later. A marker of the failure of the ACRS and the ARAP schemes is that it is known that there are 17 Afghans in every small boat in the channel for every one who has come over on those schemes. When the Government talk about small boats, they know that it is a result of their own failure to deal with and to support Afghans, to whom he says—and I agree—we owe a significant debt of gratitude.

Can I ask the Minister about his conversations with his counterparts in Pakistan, because it seems very much as if the Government are watching as Pakistan sends people back into the hands of the Taliban? I would like to know what those conversations are. The message going out that he will bring people in Pakistan as quickly and safely as possible

will ring hollow to the many constituents who are still in touch with me and desperately afraid for friends and family who are in hiding in Pakistan, waiting for a chap at the door. I will return to the case of those people who are perhaps owed a debt of gratitude in the schemes and who have not been successful in applying. The case of the Triples has been called a “disgrace” by General Sir Richard Barrons, because: “It reflects that either we’re duplicitous as a nation or incompetent.” Which of those does the Minister think he is? On access to services, the Minister talks about £28 a person a day. That will barely cover the cost of an interpreter, never mind anything else that people who have experienced such trauma may require. It is just not appropriate at all. On the accommodation side of things, I agree that hotel accommodation is never appropriate for the long term, but I have visited the former Napier barracks, which are also extremely poor quality and not suitable for long-term accommodation, particularly in the depths of winter. How long will people be held in that accommodation before they can move on to something more suitable? What support services will be put in place, because I have found them to be completely inadequate? ...

Reply from Jonny Mercer: ... When it comes to conversations with Pakistan, I am clear and have had assurances—as have the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Staff—that these individuals will not be deported back to Pakistan. ...

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

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-13/debates/46879841-9123-4D69-B504-96B66B66B503/AfghanResettlementUpdate>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [5611] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to offer a right of appeal to an independent judge for Afghan citizens refused protection under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy Scheme.

Reply from James Heapey: As set out in HMG policy on gov.uk, if an individual application under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy Scheme is found ineligible, the individual has the right to seek a review of that decision within 90 days if they believe the decision was not in accordance with the policy, and/or if they can supply new evidence to support their case that was not available when the decision was made. There are no plans to offer a further right of appeal to an independent judge.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5611>

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

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

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey (Labour) [4340] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many military bases are being used to house Afghans; and how many Afghans are housed in each base.

Reply from James Heapey: Three military bases at MOD Garats Hay, MOD Synnerton, and MOD Nesscliffe are being used as transitional accommodation for ARAP-eligible Afghans before they move into settled accommodation. At the time of writing, there are 190 Afghans in Garats Hay, 100 in Swynnerton, and 216 in Nesscliffe.

As these sites are used as transitional accommodation, these numbers will fluctuate

and there will not be a consistent figure.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-29/4340>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Ukraine

Immigration: Ukraine

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [5607] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make it his policy to (a) extend the leave to remain and (b) offer a route to indefinite leave to remain status for individuals on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We are mindful that permission will start to expire, for the first arrivals under our Ukrainian schemes, from March 2025, and their need for certainty beyond that point to help them to plan ahead, for example if remaining in the UK, entering into rental agreements and living here independently.

In line with the situation in Ukraine, working closely with the Ukrainian Government, as well as our international counterparts, we keep the need for a possible extension of sanctuary in the UK, beyond March 2025, under consistent review.

The UK Government stands with Ukraine and firmly believes that Ukraine will be safe again. When it's safe to do so, Ukraine will need the repatriation of its citizens to help recover and rebuild their economy and infrastructure. Our approach therefore has been to provide 36 months sanctuary under our Ukraine visas which are temporary and do not lead to settlement or indefinite leave to remain.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5607>

Information about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

Refugees: Ukraine

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [5722] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the validity requirements for the Ukraine Extension Scheme set out in the Immigration Rules Appendix Ukraine Scheme, if he will amend the date by which applicants must have received permission to enter or stay in the UK from 16 November 2023 to May 2024.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Ukraine Extension Scheme was established in March 2022 to enable Ukrainian nationals and their close family members already in the UK, with permission (or where that permission has recently expired), to remain in the UK. To qualify for permission under the UES a customer must either hold permission to be in the UK on or between 18 March 2022 and 16 November 2023 or have previously held permission to be in the UK which expired on or after 1 January 2022. Those who have been granted permission by 16 November 2023 will have until 16 May 2024 to submit an application under the UES.

We are keeping the need for a possible extension of permission to remain for those here on our Ukraine schemes under consistent review in line with the ongoing conflict.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5722>

Information about the Ukraine Extension Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-stay-in-the-uk-under-the-ukraine-extension-scheme>

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

Visas: Families

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru) [5396] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what his Department's policy is on the applicability of the minimum income of £38,700 for family visas for people (a) with and (b) already applying for such a visa from Spring 2024.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government will set out any transitional provisions associated with the increase in the minimum income requirement in due course. Any applications already submitted will be considered in line with the existing policy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-05/5396>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Visas: Families

Sarah Champion (Labour) [5540] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his proposal to increase the income thresholds for spousal visas would apply to renewals of existing visas.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [5544] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his oral contribution of 4 December 2023, Official Report, column 41, if he will make it his policy to apply the existing minimum income requirement of £18,600 for family visas to people already in the UK on a family visa and who seek further or indefinite leave to remain.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The revised minimum income requirement will be implemented in spring 2024.

The Government will set out any transitional provisions associated with the increase in the minimum income requirement in due course.

Any applications already submitted will be considered in line with the existing policy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5540>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5544>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration#contribution-AF98D5D6-1DE5-482B-A62E-9ABF5DEFFD19>

Visas: Families

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [5947] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of raising the earnings threshold for family visas to on the human rights of (a) UK citizens and (b) foreign partners of UK citizens.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The family Immigration Rules contain a provision for exceptional circumstances, including a breach of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, where there would be unjustifiably harsh consequences for the applicant, their partner, a relevant child, or another family member, if their application were to be refused.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/5947>

Visas: Families

Sam Tarry (Labour) [5719] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications for spousal visas were sponsored by a person earning less than £38,700 in the last 12 months.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The number and proportion of applications for spousal visas which were sponsored by a person earning less than £38,700 in the last 12 months does not form part of any current transparency data or migration statistics and is not published.

The transparency data does, however, include a range of processing data and the latest data can be found at: [Migration transparency data](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5719>

Visas: Skilled Workers

Stuart C McDonald (SNP) [5543] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his oral contribution of 4 December 2023, Official Report, column 41, on what evidential basis his Department decided to set a minimum salary threshold for skilled worker visas at £38,700; whether his Department held discussions with (a) the Migration Advisory Committee and (b) relevant stakeholders before changing the minimum salary threshold for skilled worker visas; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of setting a lower threshold.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government engages regularly with the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) and business sectors through a number of advisory groups when developing its policies. The Government will be engaging with the MAC and business on aspects of the package in due course. Careful analysis has been undertaken to support decision making in this process and a Regulatory Impact Assessment will be developed in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5543>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration#contribution-AF98D5D6-1DE5-482B-A62E-9ABF5DEFFD19>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Visas: Care Workers

Diana Johnson (Labour) [5553] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas were granted to associated dependants of care workers who were under the age of 18 in the year ending September 2023.

Visas: Skilled Workers

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [5591] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) people and (b) dependents came to the UK on a skilled worker visa with a salary of less than less than £26,200 in each of the last five years.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of work routes applications granted are published in table Vis_D02 of the [Entry clearance visas applications and outcomes detailed dataset](#). The Home Office does not publish the information on the salary of work routes, however a Regulatory Impact Assessment will be developed in due course.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

The latest data relates up to, and including, 2023 Q3 (July to September).

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5553>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5591>

Visas: Care Workers

Diana Johnson (Labour) [5550] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

whether his Department has made a comparative assessment of the potential impact of the ban on overseas care workers bringing their dependents to the UK on (a) women and (b) men.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The policy proposals do not directly discriminate against people on the basis of the protected characteristics. There may be some indirect impacts. We consider the measures to be proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aims of managing immigration, attracting high-skilled individuals, controlling our borders and protecting the UK taxpayer.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5550>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Visas: Care Workers

Diana Johnson (Labour) [5554] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of (a) care workers and (b) senior care workers issued a health and care worker visa were (i) female and (ii) male in each of the last five years.

Migrant Workers: Skilled Workers

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [5585] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people came to the UK as skilled workers by salary in the last 12 months.

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [5586] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people came to the UK on all work routes by salary in the last 12 months.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on sponsored work visas by occupation in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on grants of visas are published in table 'Occ_D02' of the [sponsored work visas by occupation and industry dataset](#). Selecting '6145 – Care workers and home carers' and '6146 – Senior care workers' from the occupation filter will output data on care workers and senior care workers respectively. Selecting 'Skilled Worker – Health and Care' will also output data on health and care worker visas. Nationality and time frames can also be filtered.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. Data is from January 2021 up to the end of September 2023.

We are unable to provide a gender breakdown in the published dataset.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5554>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5585>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5586>

Visas: Care Workers and Health Professions

Sam Tarry (Labour) [5720] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of health and care worker visa holders have dependents in the UK.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on health and care worker visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the outcomes of health and care visa worker visa applications are published in table 'Vis_D02' of the [detailed entry clearance visas dataset](#).

Selecting 'Skilled Worker – Health and Care' from the visa type subgroup filter and 'Dependant' from the applicant type filter will output data on the dependants of health and care worker visa holders. Nationality and time frames can also be filtered.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates up to the end of September 2023.

To calculate the proportion of dependants of health and care worker visa holders, divide dependents by total applicants in a given time period.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5720>

Visas: Ministers of Religion

Sam Tarry (Labour) [5718] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his oral statement of 4 December 2023 on Legal Migration, Official Report, columns 41-43, whether he plans for the T2 Minister of Religion visa to be subject to the proposed increase in the skilled worker earnings salary threshold.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The T2 Minister of Religion route does not have a salary threshold. Workers must receive pay and conditions at least equal to those given to settled workers in the same role and be compliant with, or exempt from, the national minimum wage. There are no plans to make any changes at this time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5718>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration#contribution-AF98D5D6-1DE5-482B-A62E-9ABF5DEFFD19>

Visas: Overseas Students

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [5988] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will publish a breakdown by country of origin of the number of overseas students each higher education institution in England sponsored visas for in each year since 2010.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on Certificates of acceptance for Studies (CAS) in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on CAS used in applications for visas and extensions by nationality are published in table 'CAS_02' of the [Study Sponsorship \(Confirmation of acceptances for Studies\)](#) dataset. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates from 2010 up to the end of September 2023.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/5988>

Visas: Gaza

Deidre Brock (SNP) [5031] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will take steps to help ensure that the child dependants of UK residents who are in Gaza are able to apply for the UK visas to which they are entitled in the context of the closure of visa application centres.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK Government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that it is able to respond appropriately.

British citizens and their foreign national dependants (spouse, unmarried/civil partner, child under 18), may come to the UK provided they have valid travel documents and existing permission to enter or remain in the UK; or are non-visa nationals.

Individuals including child dependants of UK residents who do not meet these criteria will have to make a visa application, and enrol their biometrics at a visa application centre(VAC) / biometric enrolment location in a nearby country. VACs in nearby countries are operating as normal but applicants should only travel if it is safe to do so.

Specific locations and operating hours can be found at the following website for UK Visa Application Centre | TLScontact

<https://pos.tlscontact.com/default/palestine>

Visas: Gaza

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru) [5799] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a family reunification visa scheme for people in Gaza.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that it is able to respond appropriately.

British citizens and those with settled status in the UK, together with their foreign national dependants may come to the UK provided that they have valid travel documents, and existing permission to enter or remain in the UK; or are non-visa nationals. They must also pass appropriate security checks.

The government allows individuals with protection status in the UK to sponsor their partner or children to stay with or join them here through their refugee family reunion policy, provided they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country of origin to seek protection. Appendix FM of the Immigration Rules also provides a route to enter the UK as the parent of a child who is in the UK.

Individuals who do not meet these criteria should apply for a visa to enable them to enter the UK in the normal way.

The Home Office has not considered establishing a separate resettlement route for Palestinians to come to the UK. Since 2015, over half a million people have been offered safe and legal routes into the UK. Our approach is considered in the round, rather than on a crisis-by-crisis basis.

UKVI is working closely with the FCDO in supporting family members of British nationals evacuated from Gaza who require a visa, signposting the necessary steps and expediting appointments at the Visa Application Centre.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/5799>

Foreign Nationals: Secondary Education

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [4968] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate her Department has made of the annual cost of educating a non-English speaking child in secondary schools.

Reply from Damian Hinds: Schools have autonomy over how they use their budgets, as they are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), as well as the type of support they need. Pupils with EAL, and who have started in the state-funded school system in England within the last three years, attract additional funding to their school through the EAL factor in the schools National Funding Formula (NFF). In the 2024/25 financial year, 1.1% (£484 million) of the total funding in the NFF will be allocated through the EAL factor (for both primary and secondary pupils). For secondary school pupils specifically, total EAL funding for 2024/25 is £141 million, with the EAL factor set at £1,585 per eligible secondary pupil.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/4968>

Migrants: Health Services

Geraint Davies (Independent) [5736] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the draft Immigration (Health Charge) Amendment Order 2023, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed increase to the immigration health surcharge on affected people's ability to access health and care services.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: An Impact Assessment and an Equality Impact Assessment were both published alongside the draft Order.

Payment of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) is a mandatory visa

requirement. It is paid by migrants applying to come to the UK for more than six months, and those who are already in the UK applying to extend their stay. Payment of the IHS entitles migrants to access the NHS on broadly the same basis as a permanent UK resident for the duration of their visa, from the date their visa is granted.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/5736>

The Draft Order referred to above can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/9780348252637>

The Impact Assessment referred to above can be read at

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukia/2023/138/pdfs/ukia_20230138_en.pdf

The Equality Impact Assessment referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-health-surcharge-ihs-equality-impact-assessment-2023/immigration-health-surcharge-equality-impact-assessment-2023-accessible>

Migrants: Health Services

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [5937] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much money was received from the immigration health surcharge in (a) 2019 and (b) 2022.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) income data is published annually in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts.

Please note that the IHS figure is made up of two lines, one listed as Retained Income, the other as Consolidated Funds. The IHS amounts for financial years 2019/20 and 2022/23 are available online at:

Page 152 for 2019-20 financial year:

[Home Office annual report and accounts 2019 - 2020](#)

Page 247 for the 2022-23 financial year

[Home Office ARA 22-23 Final](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-08/5937>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Migrants: Health Services and Housing

Sarah Owen (Labour) [5046] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that asylum seekers given leave to remain have adequate support to access (a) housing and (b) health services.

Migrants: Temporary Accommodation

Sarah Owen (Labour) [5047] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that local authorities have adequate (a) funding and (b) support to house asylum seekers who are granted leave to remain.

Migrants: Finance

Sarah Owen (Labour) [5048] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment his Department has made of the financial impact on local authorities of supporting asylum seekers who are granted leave to remain.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: All 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.

We offer move on support to all individuals through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. Newly recognised refugees are entitled to housing assistance from their local authority and are treated as a priority need if they have children or are considered vulnerable. 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.

We are ensuring our cross government partners, such as the (DWP) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. We are also working with DLUHC to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/5046>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/5047>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/5048>

Childcare: Migrant Workers

Kim Johnston (Labour) [5701] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the eligibility criteria for the extended 30 hours childcare offer for three and four year-olds to migrant parents with any immigration status who are resident in the UK, have the right to work and who work the requisite number of hours.

Reply from David Johnston: This government is making the largest investment in childcare in England's history. By the 2027/28 financial year, the government will expect to be spending in excess of £8 billion every year on free hours and early education. It will provide hard working parents 30 hours of free childcare per week (38 weeks per year) for children aged 9 months to until they start school. This represents the single biggest investment in childcare in England ever.

The department does not hold data on the numbers of 3- and 4-year-old children who are not eligible for 30 hours because their parents have no recourse to public funds, and what proportion of those children have British citizenship.

The expanded working parent entitlement, which will be rolled out in phases from April 2024, will be available to working parents who meet the eligibility criteria. These will be the same as the current 30 hours offer for 3- and 4-year-olds.

The free childcare entitlements for the children of working parents are not within the definition of 'public funds' in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or the Immigration Rules. However, there are requirements in the Childcare (Free of Charge for Working Parents) (England) Regulations 2022 for the parent, or one of the parents, not to be subject to immigration control. This means that where both parents have no recourse to public funds, they will not be eligible for the entitlements. However, if there are two parents and just one of them is subject to immigration control the family will still be eligible for the entitlements, provided they meet the other conditions.

Parents with no recourse to public funds are, however, able to access the 15 hours free early education entitlement available for all 3 and 4-year-olds and, if eligible, 15 hours free early education for disadvantaged 2-year-olds. In September 2022, the department extended eligibility for the 2-year-old entitlement to disadvantaged families who have no recourse to public funds. This is because these entitlements are intended to support children's development and help prepare them for school.

The government has no current plans to extend the free childcare entitlements offer for working parents to families with no recourse to public funds.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5701>

Migrants: Childcare

Kim Johnson (Labour) [5704] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of families with no recourse to public funds who are unable to access the 30 hours extended childcare offer for three- and four-year-olds.

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

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

<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-from-daniel-shaw-to-ed-humpherson-parliamentary-question-response/>

To note, 30 hours' free childcare is not considered a 'public fund' for immigration purposes. However, the eligibility criteria, as set by the Department for Education, requires at least one parent to have permission to access public funds, which means it may not be available to all families.

Parents with NRPF are able to access the 15 hours' free early education entitlement available for all three- and four-year-olds regardless of their family circumstances and, if eligible, 15 hours free early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds. These 15-hour entitlements primarily benefit the child and their educational development and outcomes. While there are some benefits to parents in reduced childcare fees, this is not the main purpose of these entitlements. The 30 hours' free childcare entitlement is primarily focused on supporting the parent(s) into work.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5704>

Childcare

Kim Johnson (Labour) [5702] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken to communicate with (a) schools and (b) local authorities about the expansion of eligibility for the disadvantaged two-year-old offer to include families affected with no recourse to public funds.

Reply from David Johnston: The department consulted on extending eligibility for the 15 hour early education entitlement for 2-year-olds between 25 March 2022 and 20 May 2022. The department published its response on 25 August 2022 alongside guidance, including a sample application form, for local authorities which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-la-and-early-years-provider-guide>

In addition, the eligibility criteria have been updated on GOV.UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5702>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Homelessness

Kim Johnson (Labour) [5028] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her Department's move-on period for asylum seekers to find new accommodation after being granted refugee status on trends in the level of homelessness.

Refugees

Kim Johnson (Labour) [5029] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her Department's move-on

period for asylum seekers to find new accommodation after being granted refugee status on the number of refugees.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: An individual remains eligible for asylum support for a prescribed period from the day they are notified of the decision on their asylum claim. Where someone is given notice that their asylum claim has been granted, their appeal has been allowed or their asylum claim has been refused but they have been given leave to enter or remain, the prescribed period in legislation is 28 days. There has been no change to the prescribed period.

Individuals should make plans to move on from asylum support as quickly as possible. We offer support through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. Newly recognised refugees are entitled to housing assistance from their local authority and are treated as a priority need if they have children or are considered vulnerable. 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. We are ensuring our cross government partners, such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. We are also working with DLUHC to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/5028>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/5029>

Refugees: Homelessness

Caroline Lucas (Green) [4990] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will respond to the concerns raised by the Local Government Association in its press release entitled Thousands of refugees could be on the streets for Christmas without urgent government action, published on 28 November 2023.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We are ensuring our cross government partners, such as the (DWP) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. We are also working with DLUHC to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

The communications will be sent out shortly to all local authorities. The Home Office have decided that the last date for evictions this year will be 22 December. The Home Office will still be processing discontinuations throughout, but anything that falls on the 23 December through to and including 02 January 2024 will have their end of grace period moved to 03 January 2024 when evictions will recommence.

This covers the whole festive period and the additional bank holiday in Scotland.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/4990>

The press release referred to above can be read at

<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/thousands-refugees-could-be-streets-christmas-without-urgent-government-action>

Asylum

Alyn Smith (SNP) [5653] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Oral Statement of 4 December 2023 on Legal Migration, Official Report, column 41, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the proposals announced in that Statement on the visa status of (a) Ukrainian refugees and (b) others who have claimed asylum in the UK.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Our Points Based System enables the Government to prioritise the skills and talent we need to help our economy grow and support our NHS, while encouraging investment in, and protecting, our own resident workforce. In arriving at this package of measures, we have been mindful of the need to balance the impacts on economic growth and the needs of the labour market.

The Ukraine schemes are temporary visa schemes, all those who are granted permission to remain in the UK under them are provided 36 months leave, given access to benefits, healthcare and are able to work.

Asylum seekers who are in the UK asylum system and have had their asylum claim outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own, are allowed to work in jobs on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL). The government will be commissioning the Migration Advisory Committee to advise on the future composition of the Immigration Salary List, the successor to the SOL.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5653>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-04/debates/921A08A2-F615-48F2-8C56-423A29556F9F/LegalMigration>

Asylum: Applications

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [4989] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the most common reason for rejecting an application for asylum was in each year since 2016.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the [Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#) [ND1]'. Data on outcomes of [ND2] asylum applications at initial decision, including refusals, is published in table Asy_D02 of the [Asylum applications, initial decisions and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2023. Please note that reason for refusal is not published but the data is broken down by type of refusal (e.g. third country refusal, certified refusal). Definitions of the types of refusals can be found in the 'Definitions' page of the workbook.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the [Research and statistics calendar](#) [ND3] '.

Please link to [immigration system statistics quarterly release](#) [ND1]

I believe this PQ relates to 'refusals' rather than 'withdrawals' of asylum applications. [ND2]

Please link to [immigration - Research and statistics](#) [ND3]

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-04/4989>

Immigration: Detainees

Richard Fuller (Conservative) [900635] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has had discussions with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the use of immigration detention for vulnerable women.

Reply from Laura Farris: Under Home Office detention policy, people will only be detained for a reasonable period.

The dignity and welfare of detained individuals is of the utmost importance and we

have policies and procedures in place to safeguard vulnerable people. Where detention is necessary, we take into account any vulnerability concerns, and ensure that appropriate support is provided.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-07/900635>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Refugees: Homelessness

Baroness Thornhill (Liberal Democrat): To ask His Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they will take to mitigate the prevalence of homelessness among refugees, and its impact on local authorities, over the Christmas period. ...

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, in line with the practice every year, individuals who have received a decision on their asylum claim will not be moved out of asylum accommodation over the Christmas period. For this year, the dates are 23 December to 2 January inclusive.

Baroness Thornhill: ... My concern was with recent Home Office data showing that around 90,000 outstanding decisions on older cases are forecast to be made before the end of December. Quite clearly, that would have a significant impact on certain councils, so will he please inform me, either now or in writing, what has happened in respect of that cohort? Does he agree that, with the demand for temporary accommodation at an all-time high, any increases are likely to overload the system and increase street homelessness? Will the Government consider increasing the notice time given to people in hotels from 28 days to 56 days, as in the Homelessness Reduction Act? Will there be a cessation over the Christmas period and in the colder weather so that plans can be put in place with the councils that are most impacted by this? Asylum distribution among councils is not equal; some councils are severely impacted.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... The Prime Minister committed in December 2022 to clear the historical asylum backlog by the end of this year. Those are the legacy cases, and provisional data to the end of November 2023 suggest that 80% of them have already been dealt with. It is nowhere near the figure that the noble Baroness suggested. I will write. I am reluctant to give provisional figures for obvious reasons—they still need to be verified.

On extending the 28-day move-on period, the asylum accommodation estate is under huge strain, as the House is well aware, so increasing the move-on period would exacerbate those pressures. There are currently no plans to extend the prescribed period of 28 days for how long individuals remain on asylum support once they have received the grant of asylum. We are engaging with the Department for Work and Pensions and DLUHC on ensuring individuals can move on from asylum support as smoothly as possible.

Lord Bird (Crossbench): My Lords, what are the Government doing about the increasing antagonism between UK people who are homeless and people who are refugees? We need to address this, because we do not want the outbreak of racism and all those other chauvinisms that are happening down at the bottom end of society.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I agree with the noble Lord; we absolutely do not want those. The Government work closely with police forces and other agencies to ensure that sort of thing does not happen.

Lord Dubs (Labour): My Lords, the Minister talked about a period over the Christmas holidays when refugees would not be thrown out on the streets. How many are going to be thrown out on the streets when that period is over?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, obviously, I cannot predict what that number will be, as those asylum cases are still being processed.

Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton (Conservative): My Lords, I declare an interest as someone who will be hosting a Ukrainian family for consecutive Christmases in our family home with my wife, and they are very welcome. It does, however, raise a medium-term problem: like many Ukrainian families, they came here on a three-year visa, and after 20 months, they are understandably thinking about what comes next. Our Ukrainians are happily settled here, working and contributing to the economy, and, if I am honest, probably do not want to go home, like many. President Zelensky desperately wants them to go home and contribute to the reconstruction of Ukraine. What will the approach of the Government to them be as they come towards the end of their three-year visa?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I commend my noble friend for his generosity in hosting the Ukrainian family and I associate myself with the remarks on how they are needed back in Ukraine—they will be needed when the reconstruction efforts in that country commence. Regarding what the Government are planning for the Ukrainian visa system, I do not have that information to hand but will come back to the House as and when it is available.

The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: My Lords, given what has already been said about the inadequate notice period, can the Minister give an assurance that no notice to vacate will be implemented when a severe weather emergency protocol has been announced?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I would take slight issue with the right reverend Prelate on whether the notice period is inadequate. I think that 28 days is more than enough, and there is huge pressure on our asylum system. As the House will be aware given that we talked about it the other day, the asylum and immigration system is costing this country £4 billion a year. However, ministerial agreement has been given to pause evictions for up to three days when a local authority has activated its severe weather emergency protocol due to poor weather conditions. This reduces the risks to life and enables the individual and/or local authority to find alternative accommodation arrangements.

Lord German (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the biometric residence permit gives successful asylum claimants access to public services, including, crucially, access to cash and funding for housing. What progress has the department made in bringing the notice to vacate closer to the time when it provides the permit? Bringing those closer together would give people the full time available to them to find appropriate housing because they would have the cash available. Without it, they cannot find the cash. I know the Government intended to make progress on this; what progress has been made in bringing those two dates together?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, the noble Lord is quite right. The move-on period is linked to when a biometric residence permit is issued and received because, as he points out, individuals generally require that BRP to access mainstream support—benefits, local authority housing, right to rent, bank accounts and so on. They are linked.

Lord Watts (Labour): My Lords, during the Covid crisis, a lot of homes were made available for homeless people. Why have the Government let that slip and gone backwards rather than forwards?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, Covid presented a very different set of challenges to those we face today. We are attempting to relieve the pressure on the enormously overburdened hotels, and all the rest of it, that are costing this country £8 million a day and £4 billion a year.

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, following on from my noble friend's question, the Minister is correct that the Government are trying to align the permit period but, once a permit is received, it takes at least another five weeks before universal credit and housing benefit applications can be dealt with. Will the Minister go back to the department and look at the broader picture to align the two timescales so that people are not made homeless because they cannot claim those benefits?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I will take that up with DWP colleagues, as it sounds very much like it is for their department. I cannot answer the question.

Baroness Chakrabarti (Labour): My Lords, in the spirit of Christmas, will the Minister reflect on his answer to the right reverend Prelate that 28 days is “more than enough” for a recognised refugee about to be evicted, whose knowledge of English may be minimal, who may have children and who might have suffered trauma back home?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Yes, I think so, because the refugee will have been processed under a legacy asylum case and will therefore have been in that accommodation for a very long time—over a year. They would have had ample time to learn English and embed themselves to some extent into British society. An extra month is perfectly generous.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, some of those in Home Office asylum care will be under 18. How confident is the Minister that none of those under-18s will ever be made homeless and that they will find their way into some form of social care provided by local authorities?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Obviously, there have been a number of recent examples where things have gone wrong, but I am as confident as I can be that they have now been fixed. As has been said many times from this Dispatch Box, we are working carefully and closely with the local authorities concerned.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, this morning, I had the privilege of attending a fundraising effort by voluntary organisations, which help so much, especially at this time of year, with refugee problems. What acknowledgement do we give those many voluntary organisations and all the people involved for all the effort they give at this time of year to make refugees feel at home and able to enjoy Christmas?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The noble Lord raises a very good point. I am happy to add my congratulations, thanks and general appreciation to all those organisations involved in charitable activities of whatever sort at this time of year.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-12-13/debates/9A961BED-EF8F-442B-9A82-C3DDB699F966/RefugeesHomelessness>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Channel Migrants

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown (DUP) [HL670] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to stop dangerous and illegal Channel crossings and to ensure criminal gangs can no longer assist illegal immigration into the UK, and when they expect such crossings to end.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Government continues to work closely with domestic and international partners to reduce the incidence of these dangerous, illegal and unnecessary crossings, and to prosecute those who profit from them.

Crossing attempts have decreased by a third this year, and large numbers of suspected facilitators have been arrested. Violence is now being increasingly employed by migrants and facilitators when crossing attempts are disrupted by French law enforcement, suggesting that these efforts are having an impact on criminals.

The Illegal Migration Act, enacted in July this year, marks a vital step forward in ending these crossings by removing the incentives for using these dangerous, illegal, and unnecessary routes.

A timescale for the ending of these crossings cannot currently be given, but in 2023 for the first time we have seen a reduction in arrivals.

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat) [HL731] To ask His Majesty's Government how many Afghans and their families have come to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy in the last two months, and how many they expect to arrive before 31 December.

Reply from the Earl of Minto: Over 1,500 ARAP Eligible Principals (EPs) and their family members have been relocated in the past two months. Many factors govern the flow of relocation, but we are endeavouring to bring as many eligible Afghans as possible to the UK, as quickly as possible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-29/hl731>

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

Afghanistan: Refugees

Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat) [HL729] To ask His Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of Afghans eligible to come to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy who are currently (1) still in Afghanistan, or (2) in Pakistan.

As of 30 November 2023, there are around 2,991 confirmed ARAP Eligible Principals (EPs) and their family members in Afghanistan, and 2,047 in Pakistan.

Reply from the Earl of Minto: These figures fluctuate as we continue to identify eligible individuals. We are committed to support the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families out of Afghanistan and Pakistan as quickly as possible. To date we have brought approximately 13,600 to safety in the UK under the ARAP scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-29/hl729>

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

Afghanistan: Refugees

Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat) [HL730] To ask His Majesty's Government what advice they are giving to those eligible to come to the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy who are currently in Pakistan and whose visas have expired or will shortly expire.

Reply from Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have received verbal assurances from the Government of Pakistan that Afghans supported in Pakistan under UK resettlement schemes will remain safe while they await relocation to the UK. We have suggested that eligible families take sensible precautions including when outside of their accommodation. We have also made them aware of how to respond if approached by the police, including providing contact details for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)/British High Commission. We have distributed letters to every eligible family to help ensure the Government of Pakistan are aware those individuals are under our protection.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-29/hl730>

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

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

Asylum: Age Assurance

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL679] To ask His Majesty's Government how many people who arrived in the UK claiming to be unaccompanied children seeking asylum, and who underwent a Merton compliant age assessment and were determined as a child, were then found to be an adult, for each year since 2016; and what percentage of the number of Merton compliant age assessment tests this constituted, broken down by year since 2016.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Home Office publishes data on asylum and resettlement in the 'Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release' on gov.uk. Data on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and age disputes are published in tables [Asy_D01](#) and [Asy_D05](#) of the 'Asylum and Resettlement detailed datasets'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of each of the workbooks. The latest data relates to Q3 2023. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar' on gov.uk.

Data on age disputes includes age disputes that may have been resolved by means other than following a Merton compliant age assessment such as: receipt of credible and clear documentary evidence of age; a judicial finding on age; following a determination by two Home Office officers that the person's physical appearance and demeanour very strongly suggests they are significantly over the age of 18; or, where the reasons for raising an age dispute no longer apply.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-28/hl679>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Children

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL633] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 23 November (HL192), of those unaccompanied children seeking asylum who are placed in hotels awaiting placement with a local authority who either have documents or do not require an age assessment, (1) how, and (2) when, their age is entered onto the operational databases referred to; when it is done so; and by whom its quality is assured.

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL634] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 23 November (HL192), of those unaccompanied children seeking asylum over the last two years who have had to be placed in a hotel whilst awaiting to be placed with a local authority, what percentage either (1) had documents, or (2) did not require an age assessment.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Many of those arriving in the UK who claim to be children, often do not have clear evidence such as an original passport or identity document to back this up.

In the absence of documentary evidence, Home Office officials will treat a claimant as an adult if their physical appearance and demeanour very strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 years of age, in-line with the Home Office's published age assessment policy. This is carried out by two Home Office officials who independently assess whether a claimant is an adult.

The age provided through evidence or through the assessment carried out upon the person's entry to the UK is entered into Home Office systems within 24 hours

of their arrival in the UK.

A sample of data is quality assured as standard practice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/hl633>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/hl634>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-09/hl192>

Migrants: MOD Wethersfield

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL597] To ask His Majesty's Government how many general practitioners are stationed on site at MDP Wethersfield; and how regularly is this service accessible for migrants being housed at MDP Wethersfield.

Reply from Lrd Sharpe of Epsom: The site has on-site primary healthcare delivered throughout the day by a local healthcare provider during normal working hours Monday to Friday. The medical centre is open for 12 hours on arrival days.

This is run by healthcare professionals, a doctor, nurse practitioners, and health care assistants, who offer systematic health assessments and are able to prescribe medication.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/hl597>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [205] Rwanda Treaty – That the Agreement, done at Kigali on 5 December 2023, between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda for the Provision of an Asylum Partnership Agreement to Strengthen Shared International Commitments on the Protection of Refugees and Migrants (CP 994), a copy of which was laid before Parliament on 6 December 2023, should not be ratified.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61683>

The Agreement referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65705fd474693000d4888dc/CS_Rwanda_1.2023_UK_Rwanda_Agreement_Asylum_Partnership_Protection_Refugees_Migrants.pdf

Press Release

Asylum seekers' right to work

<https://www.gov.scot/news/asylum-seekers-right-to-work/>

New Publications

Asylum seekers - extending the right to work: evaluation, analysis, and policy options

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/extending-right-work-asylum-seekers-scotland-evaluation-analysis-policy-options/>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Changes to legal migration rules for family and work visas in 2024

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9920/>

Clarity on visas for displaced Ukrainian people: Scottish Government letter to UK Government

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/clarity-visas-displaced-ukrainian-people-letter-uk-government/>

Updated Guidance: Paying sponsors: Homes for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/paying-sponsors-homes-for-ukraine>

Updated Guidance: When you have sponsored for 6 months: Homes for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-you-have-sponsored-for-6-months-homes-for-ukraine>

Updated Guidance: Hosting someone already in the UK (rematching): Homes for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hosting-someone-already-in-the-uk-rematching-homes-for-ukraine>

Updated Guidance: Finding a new host (rematching): Homes for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/finding-a-new-host-rematching-homes-for-ukraine>

Updated Guidance: Ending your hosting arrangements, and helping your guest with their next steps: Homes for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ending-your-hosting-arrangements-and-helping-your-guest-with-their-next-steps-homes-for-ukraine>

Updated Guidance: Continuing to live with your host or rematching: Homes for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/continuing-to-live-with-your-host-or-rematching-homes-for-ukraine>

Updated Guidance: Living with your sponsor: Homes for Ukraine

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-with-your-sponsor-homes-for-ukraine>

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 Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data

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

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

What is the Rwanda bill vote about? Ros Atkins explains

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-67687336>

Anti-immigration Rwanda bill is an almost inconceivable attack on human rights

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/anti-immigration-rwanda-bill-is-an-almost-inconceivable-attack-on-human-rights-christine-jardine-4439316>

Migrants could delay deportation to Rwanda by more than a year

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrants-could-delay-deportation-to-rwanda-by-more-than-a-year-sr0f367wp>

Rwanda Bill: Scottish Refugee Council urge MPs to reject legislation

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/rwanda-bill-house-commons-sunak-refugees/>

News: Channel Migrants

UK earmarks £700m for small boat arrivals until 2030

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67677933>

Home Office will spend £700m on small boats plan, contracts reveal

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/home-office-rwanda-small-boats-cost-b2462006.html>

Only 1% of small-boats migrants sent back since 2020

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/only-1-per-cent-of-small-boats-migrants-sent-back-since-2020-ssq7xcwtr>

Just 408 non-Albanian small boat migrants returned home since 2020

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67708047>

Channel migrants: One dead, another injured, says French coastguard

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67724914>

News: Ukraine

Fears for Ukrainian refugees in Scotland as support team 'disbanded'

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23988220.fears-ukrainian-refugees-scotland-support-team-disbanded/>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Rishi Sunak says migrants threaten to 'overwhelm' UK

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-migrants-overwhelm-uk-b2465290.html>

Rishi Sunak seeks to calm minimum income visa fears

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-67705178>

Is Rishi Sunak meeting his asylum pledge?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67637211>

Labour doesn't see immigration as a threat. It will soon

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/13/immigration-will-be-a-far-bigger-problem-for-labour/>

SNP to table plan to Home Office to allow asylum seekers to work

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/westminster/23992708.snp-table-plan-home-office-allow-asylum-seekers-work/>

Britain's immigration catastrophe is far worse than we've been led to believe

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/14/britains-immigration-catastrophe-worse-than-beleved/>

Securing our borders must be a priority

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2023/12/16/securing-our-borders-must-be-a-priority/>

Bibby Stockholm: Asylum seeker on board barge dies

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67692099>

Asylum seeker found dead on the Bibby Stockholm barge in suspected suicide

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bibby-stockholm-asylum-seeker-death-b2462557.html>

Asylum seeker dies on board Bibby Stockholm in suspected suicide

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/12/asylum-seeker-bibby-stockholm-died/>

Bibby Stockholm: MPs ask to inspect barge conditions after death

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-67727706>

Singapore activist due for Bibby Stockholm 'would rather die on street'

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/13/singapore-activist-due-for-bibby-stockholm-would-rather-die-on-street>

Human rights of migrants: they must be non-negotiable

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/12/the-guardian-view-on-the-human-rights-of-migrants-they-must-be-non-negotiable>

Migration rules UK: 'It feels like we're being continually punished', says family of new immigration rules

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/migration-rules-uk-it-feels-like-were-being-continually-punished-says-family-of-new-immigration-rules-4439490>

Why are foreigners like me being punished for falling in love with a Brit?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/foreign-spouse-uk-immigration-rules-james-cleverly-b2461836.html>

Fair Begins Here: it's time to make the asylum system work for everyone

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/fair-begins-here-refugee-campaign/>

Scottish Refugee Council: 2023: Key moments

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/2023-key-moments/>

UK Government urged to bring Glasgow refugee's family to Scotland after 10 years of separation

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2023/articles/uk-government-urged-to-bring-glasgow-refugees-family-to-scotland-after-10-years-of-separation>

Glasgow Refugee: 'My agonising wait for bring family from Sudan'

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23988509.glasgow-refugee-my-agonising-wait-bring-family-sudan/>

Hundreds of women and children trafficked to UK to shoplift

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-67687565>

TOP

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL781] To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the ethnicity pay gap data published by the Office for National Statistics on 29 November, what steps they are taking to combat ethnicity pay gaps in the UK.

Baroness Barran: The Government published guidance for employers on ethnicity pay reporting in April, which sets out best practice on measuring, analysing and reporting ethnicity pay gaps. Alongside this, we are supporting employers who wish to measure their pay gaps and are identifying examples of good practice.

We also launched an Inclusion at Work Panel earlier this year. The Panel, made up of academics and practitioners in business, will develop and disseminate resources that can help employers achieve fairness and inclusion in the workplace.

These actions are part of our ambitious Inclusive Britain strategy, published in March 2022, which set out 74 bold actions to tackle entrenched ethnic disparities in employment, education, health and criminal justice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-30/hl781>

The Office for National Statistics data referred to above can be read at

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

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>

Religious Freedom: Employment

Baroness Cox (Crossbench) [HL593] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to encourage (1) UK corporations, (2) and corporations which contract with the Government, to adopt Faith-and-Belief Friendly workplaces as part of Diversity and Inclusion standards.

Reply from Lord Offord of Garvel: To support employers to create faith and belief friendly workplaces, Acas has produced Guide on Religion or belief discrimination: key points for the workplace. This guide offers employers, managers, HR professionals, employees, employee/trade union representatives and job applicants a grounding in how to reduce the chance of religion or belief discrimination happening in the workplace, how it might still occur and how it should be dealt with if it does happen.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/hl593>

The Guide referred to above can be read at

<https://www.acas.org.uk/sites/default/files/inline-files/religion-belief-discrimination-guide.pdf>

HIV Infection: Ethnic Groups

Florence Eshalomi (Labour Co-op) [2038] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to provide effective HIV (a) testing, (b) treatment and (c) counselling services for the black community.

Reply from Andrea Leadsom: Since 2013, the Government has mandated local authorities in England to commission comprehensive open access to most sexual

health services, including free and confidential HIV testing, and provision of the HIV prevention drug PrEP through the Public Health Grant, funded at £3.4 billion overall in 2022-23. It is for individual local authorities to decide their spending priorities based on an assessment of local need and to commission the service lines that best suit their population.

NHS England are responsible for providing HIV treatment and care, which continues to have very high coverage and effectiveness across England. In 2022, among those with known treatment status, 98% received treatment, and 98% of those treated were virally suppressed.

The Government is committed to improving the quality of life for people living with HIV including within the black community. As part of the Government's HIV Action Plan, a Workforce Task and Finish group was established in 2023, which will explore innovative ways for the workforce to provide better support to people of all demographics, including mental health support. They will present their recommendations to the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group, who will agree how the advice will be taken forward.

As set out in the NHS England Roadmap, specialised HIV inpatient and outpatient services have been identified as key areas for greater integrated care systems (ICS) leadership by NHS England and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). This will allow local systems to simplify and strengthen HIV care pathways with other services through effective local partnerships, including psychosocial support and mental health and counselling services, for a more holistic approach to care.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-14/2038>

The HIV Action Plan referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-zero-the-hiv-action-plan-for-england-2022-to-2025>

The NHS England Roadmap, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/PAR1440-specialised-commissioning-roadmap-addendum-may-2022.pdf>

New Publication

House of Lords Library Briefing: Maternal mortality rates in the Black community

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/maternal-mortality-rates-in-the-black-community/>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Schools: Antisemitism

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [5215] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to tackle anti-semitism in schools.

Reply from Damian Hinds: The government unequivocally condemns the recent terrorist attacks by Hamas and stands in solidarity with Israel in its hour of need. Antisemitism has no place in our society.

The government is committed to ensuring that all schools and colleges prepare children for life in modern Britain. Every school and college should actively promote the shared values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect,

and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

The department has published guidance to support schools and colleges to monitor bullying incidents and evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

Where behaviour extends into antisemitism or other discriminatory bullying, the department expects schools to deal with it head on, in line with their behaviour policy.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and her Ministers visited a Jewish school to show her support and has written to school and college headteachers on 17 October 2023 to remind them of their relevant responsibilities, including the need to challenge intolerance and actively respond to discrimination, as well as outlining their duties under the Prevent programme. The department's Educate Against Hate website provides a range of resources and support to challenge discrimination and intolerance, and how to respond where you have concerns. This is available at:

<https://www.educateagainsthate.com/>

In the Autumn Statement, the government announced £7 million to support schools, colleges and universities to identify and tackle antisemitism. The department is preparing to issue an invitation for interested organisations to tender in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-05/5215>

The letter referred to above can be read at

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

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

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

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers

Islamophobia

Baroness Cox (Crossbench) [HL592] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent rise in Islamophobia (1) in Europe, and (2) globally; and what discussions they have had with EU counterparts to prevent Islamophobia.

Reply from Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all. We monitor the situation for religious and non-religious communities globally and work multilaterally and bilaterally to promote FoRB, including with our EU partners. The UK condemned the incidents of Quran burning in Europe earlier this year, recognising the deep hurt felt by Muslims across the world, and we unequivocally denounce hatred and incitement of violence on the basis of religion or belief. We are committed to both freedom of expression and FoRB and will continue to promote mutual respect between different communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/hl592>

Hate Crime: Ethnic Groups

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL636] To ask His Majesty's Government, following the demonstration against antisemitism which took place in London on 26 November, what steps they are taking to (1) combat hate crimes, and (2) ensure safety for minority communities.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: This Government is clear that all forms of

hate crime are completely unacceptable. We have a robust legislative framework and expect the police and CPS to fully investigate these abhorrent offences and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. We are supporting the police by providing them with the resources they need, including having recruited 20,000 additional police officers by March 2023. We expect the police to enforce the law where appropriate to protect communities and maintain public order.

In response to the spikes in antisemitic and anti-Muslim hatred across the UK as a result of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, we are providing the Community Security Trust (CST) with additional funding of £3 million to provide 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.

This level will be maintained for 2024/25. The Government is also providing £7 million over the next three years to ensure that more support is in place for schools and universities to tackle antisemitism. We have made £4.9 million available to provide additional protective security at mosques and Muslim faith schools, bringing the total funding to £29.4 million this year; this level of funding will also be maintained for 2024/25. In January 2023, the Department for Education invited headteachers of all DfE-registered Muslim faith schools to register for protective security measures: 116 Muslim faith schools have enrolled to date.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-27/hl636>

News

Tell MAMA saw more than a seven-fold increase in anti-Muslim cases since October 7

<https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-saw-more-than-a-seven-fold-increase-in-anti-muslim-cases-since-october-7/>

Antisemitic Incidents – 13 December Update

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/12/13/antisemitic-incidents-13-december-update>

UK Jews feel less safe since October 7 Hamas attack, poll finds

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/uk-jews-unsafe-britain-hamas-israel-war-antisemitism-25wckk6x2>

Man who plotted to murder Christian preacher in central London is jailed

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/man-who-plotted-murder-christian-preacher-central-london-jailed>

Hyde Park terror plotter Edward Little jailed for at least 16 years

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/hyde-park-christian-old-bailey-islam-westminster-abbey-b2464863.html>

Islamic extremist jailed for life over Hyde Park terror plot

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/edward-little-jailed-hyde-park-gun-attack-terror-plot-f0hcvqb97>

Website hack reveals dozens of neo-Nazis in Scotland

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23984590.website-hack-reveals-dozens-neo-nazis-scotland/>

City of Glasgow College: row over lecturer's 'Nazi' symbols

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23972315.city-glasgow-college-row-lecturers-nazi-symbols/>

Vandals destroy menorahs in 'targeted' Chanukkah attacks

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/vandals-destroy-menorahs-in-targeted-channukah-attacks-q9dwhwxf3>

Rastafarian soldier wins racism case against Army

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67697653>

'I lost everything because I talked about racism'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx71lzn10e9o>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Releas

Scottish Household Survey 2022 results published

<https://www.gov.scot/news/statistical-news-release-13/>

New Publication

Scottish Household Survey 2022: Key Findings

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2022-key-findings/>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Religious Buildings: Coronavirus

Edward Leigh (Conservative): [5468] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of closing places of worship during the covid-19 pandemic on people's (a) physical and (b) mental health; and if he will make a statement.

Reply from Simon Hoare: Freedom of religion or belief and the freedom to worship are fundamental human rights.

That is why the decision to close our Places of Worship, alongside all other places where people gathered, was made with great reluctance in the very earliest stages of the pandemic.

Recognising the importance of our Places of Worship to the spiritual, mental and physical health of our communities, we worked hard to ensure that they were able to reopen as soon as possible.

Gradual reopening began in June 2020 when it was clear how risks to worshippers could be minimised and our Places of Worship were able to remain open for worshippers throughout the remainder of the pandemic.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-06/5468>

New Publication

Sikh identity, England and Wales: Census 2021

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/sikhidentityenglandandwales/census2021>

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/>

News

Cost of living: Third of Scots go into debt to pay for food

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23980016.cost-living-third-scots-go-debt-pay-food/>

Shocking levels of 'deep poverty' in Scotland are a serious health issue

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/shocking-levels-of-deep-poverty-in-scotland-are-a-serious-health-issue-dr-gwenetta-curry-4441325>

Mortgage arrears to hit eight-year high as interest rates hammer households

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/property/mortgages/mortgage-arrears-hit-eight-year-high-landlords-hit-hard/>

Health alert as over 400,000 Scots living in cold damp homes

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/23988257.health-alert-400-000-scots-living-cold-damp-homes/>

Cost of living emergency 'evolving' as failures to tackle housing crisis 'starting to bite', say experts

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cost-living-housing-crisis-latest-b2464211.html>

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Other New Publication

Sabr, Silence and Struggles: Extended Family Abuse in Muslim and BME Communities in Scotland

<https://mwrc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/In-Law-Abuse-Report-FINAL-VAWG-Dec-2023.pdf>

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>

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2023/12/13/court-of-session-decision-on-the-use-of-section-35-of-the-scotland-act-1998-in-relation-to-the-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>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3627>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-11/debates/FF3793D0-C57B-4BD3-9ADB-378DD46959FC/FormerAfghanSpecialForcesDeportation#contribution-FE64300E-DE1A-41E4-96E2-75E539E732D7>

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

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

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3618/stages>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-11/debates/FF3793D0-C57B-4BD3-9ADB-378DD46959FC/FormerAfghanSpecialForcesDeportation#contribution-FE64300E-DE1A-41E4-96E2-75E539E732D7>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3649>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-11/debates/FF3793D0-C57B-4BD3-9ADB-378DD46959FC/FormerAfghanSpecialForcesDeportation#contribution-FE64300E-DE1A-41E4-96E2-75E539E732D7>

**** Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3540>

Second Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-12/debates/FA4DDF9F-19EF-4954-9BFA-6997E4A74E79/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-12/debates/FA4DDF9F-19EF-4954-9BFA-6997E4A74E79/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

Amendment Papers

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0038/amend/rwanda_rm_cwh_1213.pdf
and

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0038/amend/rwanda_rm_cwh_1215.pdf

Policy Statement

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0038/PolicyStatement.pdf>

Legal Position

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-of-rwanda-asylum-and-immigration-bill-2023-legal-position/safety-of-rwanda-asylum-and-immigration-act-2023-legal-position-accessible>

Equality Impact Assessment

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0038/Annex1EIA.pdf>

Economic Note

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0038/Annex2EconomicNote.pdf>

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>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

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>

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Job Opportunities

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

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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

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>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

** new or updated this week

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>

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Useful Links

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



*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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