



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.

Contents

[Immigration and Asylum](#)

[Equality](#)

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

[Other Scottish Parliament and Government](#)

[Other UK Parliament and Government](#)

[Cost of Living](#)

[Other News](#)

[Bills in Progress](#)

[Consultations](#)

[Job Opportunities](#)

[Funding Opportunities](#)

[Events, Conferences, and Training](#)

[Useful Links](#)

[Back issues](#)

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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Immigration and Asylum

UK Parliament Debates

Asylum: UK-Rwanda Agreement

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-01-22/debates/92EF95E2-A3DA-47BD-9603-A862C4AF9052/AsylumUK-RwandaAgreement>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-01-22/debates/A400338B-24DF-418F-8726-FA55EF555D98/AsylumUK-RwandaAgreement>

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

Asylum: Rwanda

Rachel Maclean (Conservative) [9629] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the grounds for appeal were of each of the asylum seekers due to be removed to Rwanda on 14 June 2022.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: We are unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases however, some of the individuals referred to did issue judicial review claims and the grounds of these claims can be found in the published court judgments.

The court judgments can be found at the following links:

Divisional Court (19 December 2022): [AAA v SSHD Rwanda judgment.pdf](#)

Court of Appeal (29 June 2023): [AAA-v-SSHD summary](#)

Supreme Court (15 November 2023): [R \(on the application of AAA \(Syria\) and others\) \(Respondents/Cross Appellants\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \(Appellant/Cross Respondent\)](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/9629>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

Steve McCabe (Labour) [10367] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghans are accommodated in (a) camps and (b) other sites operated by his Department.

Reply from James Heapey: As of 18 January 2024, our records show 775 Afghans eligible for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme (principal applicants and family members) are accommodated in reception sites at Ministry of Defence (MOD) camps. A further 850 ARAP Eligible Afghans (principal applicants and family members) are in transitional Service Family Accommodation at other MOD sites.

These sites provide short-term accommodation for individuals and their families prior to onwards movement into settled accommodation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10367>

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>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Steve McCabe (Labour) [10362] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any Afghan refugees were (a) placed in and (b) returned to bridging hotels in the period since September 2023.

Steve McCabe (Labour) [10363] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many new arrivals from Afghanistan have been placed in bridging hotels since September 2023.

Steve McCabe (Labour) [10364] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from Afghanistan are living in bridging hotels.

Steve McCabe (Labour) [10365] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what is the (a) earliest date and (b) longest continuous period that anyone from Afghanistan has been accommodated in a bridging hotel.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK has made an ambitious and generous

commitment to help at-risk people in Afghanistan and, so far, we have brought around 24,600 people to safety, including thousands of people eligible for our Afghan schemes. We continue to honour our commitments to bring eligible Afghans to the UK.

As of 31 August 2023, we successfully ended the use of bridging hotels for legally resettled Afghans, with the overwhelming majority of those being resettled now having moved into settled accommodation. We have now provided these Afghans with the homes they need to begin the next chapter of their life in the UK, fully integrate, find employment and provide their children with stability.

Whilst we cannot confirm the longest length of stay in bridging accommodation, our statistics show that the earliest record of an Afghan in bridging accommodation was in the second quarter of 2021.

The Home Office publish data on Afghan resettlement in the [Immigration System Statistics release](#). In table Asy_D02 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets, you can view the number of Afghans resettled, by when they arrived in the UK (quarterly breakdowns) and what type of accommodation they were recorded in as of the date of the data extraction (currently the data is as of 30 September 2023). The next Immigration Statistics are due for release around 22 February 2024.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10362>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10363>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10364>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10365>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Ukraine

Visas: Ukraine

Sarah Dyke (Liberal Democrat) [9973] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will take steps to extend visas issued under the Ukraine Extension Scheme beyond the initial three-year period.

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. As a result, we actively keep the Ukraine schemes 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-16/9973>

Information about the Ukraine Extension Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-information-for-ukrainians-in-the-uk-british-nationals-and-their-family-members/immigration-information-for-ukrainians-in-the-uk-british-nationals-and-their-family-members>

Refugees: Homelessness

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [9600 To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he plans to take to help (a) Afghan and (b) Ukrainian refugees avoid homelessness in winter 2023-24.

Reply from Felicity Buchan: The Government has welcomed nearly 200,000

Ukrainians through the Homes for Ukraine scheme and has provided £1.1 billion to councils through a tariff for each arrival in their area to support guests and sponsors. As set out previously, this funding was specifically designed to include support for LAs in the event that some sponsorships broke down. Most guests have, however, not needed to reply on homelessness support services. This year councils across the UK have been allocated £150 million to help prevent homelessness for Ukrainian households and others at risk of homelessness, with an additional £120 million available next year.

The vast majority of Afghans who were in bridging hotels have been supported to move into settled accommodation. We have provided a £35 million package for local authorities to increase support available to Afghans and help overcome the specific barriers in accessing the housing system, including £7,100 per person in flexible housing fund to help households into settled accommodation. There is also £9,150 per household available to local authorities for homelessness costs, and up to 6 months wraparound funding of £28 per person per day for those in temporary accommodation.

At Autumn Statement we announced £450 million for a third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund which follows the first two rounds of £750 million.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/9600>

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

Immigration: Personal Income

Alistair Strathern (Labour) [11230] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the net migration measures announced in December 2023, whether changes to the minimum income thresholds will apply to people who are already on the 10 year route to settlement.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The ten year route to settlement as a spouse is for those who cannot meet the core requirements of the family rules in Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules, but who have exceptional circumstances.

Those on the ten year route to settlement are able to switch back to the five year route to shorten their route to settlement, if they believe they are able to meet all of the core requirements. In such circumstances, applicants would be required to meet the new level of the Minimum Income Requirement in place at the time they make their application.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-23/11230>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

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

Overseas Students: Developing Countries

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [10482] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the news stories entitled Changes to student visa route will reduce net migration, published on 23 May 2023, and Home Secretary unveils plan to cut net migration, published on 4 December 2023, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of changes to international student visas on the (a) number and (b) experience of people from developing countries coming to the UK to study.

Reply from Robert Halfon: The government believes in a fair and robust migration policy, while maintaining the UK's place as a top destination for the best and brightest students from around the world. The department remains committed to

the ambitions set out in the government's International Education Strategy to host 600,000 international students per year and to increase the value of our education exports to £35 billion per year, both by 2030.

The changes announced on 4 December 2023 strike the right balance between acting decisively on migration while protecting the UK's position as a world-leader in higher education (HE).

The department expects the UK to remain a highly attractive study destination. The UK has four universities in the top ten, and 17 in the top 100. The UK has a highly sought after HE experience, which is respected by students across the globe. The department is hugely proud to have met its international student recruitment ambition two years running.

The department continues to work closely with the Home Office, Department for Business and Trade, and other government departments to assess the impact of these changes on HE providers.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10482>

The news stories referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-student-visa-route-will-reduce-net-migration>
and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-unveils-plan-to-cut-net-migration>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

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

Visas: Palestinians

Geraint Davies (Independent) [10582] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a Palestinian Visa scheme based upon the Ukraine Visa scheme that allows those with family in the UK to be given safe passage.

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.

We recognise that some people impacted by the events in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories may wish to join family in the UK. The Government is working with authorities across the region to facilitate the repatriation of British citizens and their family members who already hold permission to come to the UK.

There are currently no plans to introduce bespoke arrangements for people arriving from the region who do not hold permission to come to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-19/10582>

Asylum

John Hayes (Conservative) [9395] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Legacy backlog cleared as plan to stop the boats delivers, published on 2 January 2024, how many of the 112,000 were granted permanent right to remain in the UK.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The Home Office published data on initial decisions made on asylum cases on 2 January 2024 as part of the [Statistics relating to Illegal Migration ad-hoc release](#). The [Additional statistics relating to Illegal Migration \(December 2023\)](#) release notes that "Of the 112,138 initial asylum decisions [between 1 January and 28 December 2023], 77,019 were substantive decisions Please note that this data is provisional in table Asy_D02 of [the Asylum, Applications, Decisions and Resettlement detailed datasets](#) as part of the [Immigration System Statistics quarterly release](#)."

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/9395>

The press release referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/legacy-backlog-cleared-as-plan-to-stop-the-boats-delivers>

Refugees: Housing

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [9599] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Government policies on housing stability for refugees.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: A number of policies and mitigations are in place for those refugees who are destitute and require housing support. Individuals who are granted asylum remain on asylum support for 28 days from when they receive their Biometric Residence Permit. This enables individuals to make the necessary arrangements for their onward support and accommodation. We also have our contractor, Migrant Help, available to provide advice and support to help them access the labour market and housing support. Our accommodation providers also notify local authorities before an individual departs asylum accommodation, to ensure any emergency housing can be put in place for those with priority need.

We are working closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure the process for individuals moving on is clear. Furthermore, we have a number of integration measures in place, which refugees may be able to access.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/9599>

Asylum: Hotels

Charlotte Nichols (Labour) [9955] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people awaiting a decision on an asylum application are accommodated in hotels in the UK as of 16 January 2023.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on applications awaiting an initial decision is published in table Asy_D03 of the '[Asylum applications, decisions and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'.

Separately, data on asylum seekers in receipt of support, including those accommodated in hotels, is published in table Asy_D09 of the '[Asylum support](#)' detailed datasets. Asy_D09 will also include those on support who have already had a decision.

The latest data relates to 30 September 2023. The data shows a snapshot as at the last day of the quarter. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of each workbook.

More recent provisional data on the number of applications awaiting an initial decision can be found in table IMB_02 of the '[Statistics relating to Illegal Migration](#)' publication. The latest data relates to 28 December 2023. This data is not directly comparable with that published in the Immigration Systems Statistics as it will contain some duplicates.

Finalised data on applications awaiting a decision and asylum seekers in hotel accommodation as of 31 December 2023 is due to be published on 29 February 2024.

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/2024-01-16/9955>

Asylum: Hotels

Gregory Campbell (SDLP) [10598] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hotels are in use as asylum seeker accommodation as of 19 January 2024.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: As a result of the range of measures we have implemented to stop the boats, reform the management of the asylum accommodation estate and the delivery of alternative forms of accommodation sites, we are now able to stop the procurement of new asylum hotels and begin the first phase of hotel exits. 50 hotels are due to be closed by the end of January and many more in the coming months.

Data on the number of supported asylum seekers in accommodation (including in contingency hotels and other contingency accommodation) is published in table Asy_D11 here: [Asylum and resettlement datasets](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-19/10598>

Refugees: Homelessness

Catherine West (Labour) [10212] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has made an estimate of the number of new refugees who become homeless after leaving asylum accommodation.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

All individuals who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim are eligible to receive support and accommodation for at least 28 days from when their decision is served.

We offer move on support through Migrant Help or their partner organisation to assist all newly granted refugees to integrate into society and to mitigate the risk of homelessness. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-17/10212>

Refugees: Homelessness

Catherine West (Labour) [10209] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2023 to Question 6818 on Refugees: homelessness, what support his Department is providing to local authorities to reduce the risk of homelessness for new refugees.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: There are no plans to extend the move on period beyond the 28-day period set out in legislation. All individuals who are granted leave should currently be receiving a minimum of 28 days on asylum support after they have been issued a Biometric Residence Permit.

We are working with our partners, including local authorities, to provide timely notification of key events that impact them. Additionally, we are working with our Strategic Migration Partnerships to facilitate regional sessions with councils and to share data.

Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

We continue to work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-17/10209>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-12-13/6818>

Asylum: Homelessness

Chi Onwurah (Labour) [9819] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of notices given to asylum seekers to

leave accommodation provided by his Department on trends in the level of demand for local government homelessness services.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (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.

We are working with our partners, including local authorities, to provide timely notification of key events that impact them. We are working with our Strategic Migration Partnerships to facilitate regional sessions with councils and to share data.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-16/9819>

Asylum: Employment

Deidre Brock (SNP) [9538] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research Discussion Paper No. 549 entitled The Economic and Social Impacts of Lifting Work Restrictions on People Seeking Asylum, published on 25 June 2023, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allowing asylum seekers to work.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Asylum seekers who have had their claim outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own, are allowed to work. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List. This is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

We are aware that the National Institute of Economic and Social Research published analysis on 25 June 2023, which set out the estimated fiscal impact to the UK should there be a relaxation of the policy. It is the Home Office assessment that any analysis in this area is dependent on making assumptions from limited evidence and will therefore produce uncertain results.

Whilst we keep all policies under review, there are no immediate plans to change the existing policy. It is important that we distinguish between individuals who need protection and those seeking to work here who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. The Government has always been clear that asylum seekers do not need to make perilous journeys in order to seek employment in the UK. Those in need of protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

Unrestricted access to employment could act as an incentive for more migrants to choose to come here illegally; leading to further dangerous journeys across the Channel and supporting the business model of people smugglers, rather than claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. This could also undermine the legal routes for those seeking to work in the UK under the Points Based System. These routes include Skilled Worker, Global Talent, and Health and Care routes, which are supporting UK businesses to recruit workers with the skills and talent they need from around the world.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/9538>

Human Trafficking: Prosecutions

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [9450] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been prosecuted under human trafficking laws in each year since 2010.

Reply from Gareth Bacon: The Ministry of Justice publishes information on the number of defendants prosecuted for offences under human trafficking laws, from 2010 to 2022, in the [Outcomes by Offence data tool: December 2022](#), and from

year ending June 2011 to the year ending June 2023, in the [Outcomes by Offence data tool: June 2023](#):

Offences under sections 2(1), 4 and 30(1) and 30(3) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 can be found using following HO codes:

- 03608 - Conspire to arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation
- 03610 - Commit offence other than kidnapping or false imprisonment with intent to commit human trafficking offence
- 03611 - Commit offence of kidnapping or false imprisonment with intention of committing human trafficking offence
- 03612 - Breach a slavery and trafficking risk or prevention order
- Offences under sections 57, 58, 59, 59A(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 & Offences under sections 4 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 can be found by using following offences:
- 72 Human trafficking for sexual exploitation
- 78.1 Human trafficking for non-sexual exploitation

These can be accessed by navigating to the 'Prosecutions and convictions' tab and using the HO Offence Code and Offence filters to select the above offences in the Outcomes by Offence data tool.

In 2015, the UK Government introduced the world-leading Modern Slavery Act, giving law enforcement agencies the tools to tackle trafficking, including maximum life sentences for perpetrators and enhanced protection for victims.

Since the Modern Slavery Act was passed in 2015, we have seen significant law enforcement activity focused on modern slavery, which has led to an increase in the number of live police modern slavery investigations.

This has also led to an increase in the number of prosecutions brought and convictions secured.

Measures under the Nationality and Borders Act came into force in 2023 which have helped clarify our obligations to providing support for victims of modern slavery.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/9450>

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

Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill: Northern Ireland Protocol
Baroness Hoey (Non-affiliated) [HL1569] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill on the continuing application of the provisions in Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (Rights of individuals).

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Bill will apply in full in Northern Ireland in the same way it does in the rest of the UK. This is also set out on the face of the Bill reflecting that immigration policy is a UK-wide matter. There is nothing in the Windsor Framework that affects that. The rights chapter of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement does not affect any clause within the Bill in any way.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/hl1569>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Afghanistan

Visas: Afghanistan

Baroness Coussins (Crossbench) [HL1408] To ask His Majesty's Government whether

visas for relocation to the UK under (1) the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, and (2) the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme, include a date of issue.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Vignettes that are issued under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) include a date of issue.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-10/hl1408>

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

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

Visas: Afghanistan

Baroness Coussins (Crossbench) [HL1409] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 18 December 2023 (HL Deb col 2048), on what date they announced that housing in the UK need not be secured before a visa for relocation to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy or Afghan citizens resettlement scheme can be issued.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: On 8 November 2023, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs gave an oral statement to the House of Commons stating that those eligible under ACRS and ARAP no longer needed to be matched to suitable accommodation prior to their arrival.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-10/hl1409>

The reply referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2023-12-18/debates/43F36A7C-811F-4323-BD69-C01A74D451B4/PakistanAfghansEligibleForResettlementInUK#contribution-5EADEDF4-A955-4A4E-9567-738372F41A6A>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-08/debates/8430816D-AF3C-411B-889E-AF45ABBFF2A5/PakistanEvacuationOfAfghans#contribution-2F561D03-AD54-43AE-B11E-2A147D52AA99>

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

Asylum: Bibby Stockholm

The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford [HL1507] To ask His Majesty's Government on how many occasions an asylum seeker has been given fewer than five days' notice before a transfer to the Bibby Stockholm.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: All asylum seekers are given 7 days' notice of a move to the Bibby Stockholm and within this have 5 working days to submit any representations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-11/hl1507>

Asylum: Bibby Stockholm

The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford [HL1508] To ask His Majesty's Government what risk assessments are carried out when facilitating room-sharing on the Bibby Stockholm, and at what intervals this is repeated after the outset of an asylum seeker's relocation to the vessel.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The welfare of asylum seekers is our utmost

priority. The Home Office ensures that accommodation provided is adequate and regularly reevaluates to ensure it meets the regulatory standards.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-11/hl1508>

New Publications

UK-Rwanda treaty: provision of an asylum report: Government Response to the Home Affairs Committee's second report

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43028/documents/214011/default/>

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/>

House of Lords Library Briefing: Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2024-0002/LLN-2024-0002.pdf>

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>

Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme in Scotland: statistics – January 2024

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-in-scotland-statistics-january-2024/>

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

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

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Rwanda asylum scheme: Peers vote against approving Rwanda treaty

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-68059862>

Blow for Sunak as Rwanda plan suffers first defeat from Lords voting to delay treaty

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-rwanda-bill-vote-b2482896.html>

Treaty does not make Rwanda safe place for asylum, bishop tells Lords

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/22/treaty-rwanda-not-safe-bishop-gloucester-lords/>

Rwanda flights: Britain reminded of obligation to obey ECHR orders

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/25/rwanda-flights-britain-reminded-of-obligation-to-obey-echr-orders>

No 10 shrugs off Lords attempt to delay Rwanda Bill

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/23/rwanda-flights-not-stopped-house-of-lords-downing-street/>

European court president warns over Rwanda rulings

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68093940>

Fresh Rwanda blow as European court says Sunak plan breaks international law

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-echr-rishi-sunak-migrants-b2484682.html>

Europe's top judge sets up Rwanda showdown with Sunak

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/01/25/rwanda-policy-rishi-sunak-migration-echr-illegal/>

Rishi Sunak rejects ECHR claim that Rwanda plan breaks law

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rwanda-bill-plan-rishi-sunak-international-law-echr-2g8215p6b>

Rwanda increasingly frustrated over migrant flights delay

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rishi-sunak-insists-lords-vote-wont-stop-rwanda-migrant-flights-w95th3jzz>

Why the government's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is hanging by a thread

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/politics-explained/rwanda-bill-asylum-seekers-echr-b2484776.html>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Home Office U-turns on rights of EU citizens who were in UK pre-Brexit

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/19/home-office-to-allow-eu-citizens-who-missed-residency-deadline-to-stay-in-uk>

Boost immigration instead of cutting taxes, Sunak told by Treasury officials

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/01/23/boost-immigration-cutting-taxes-rishi-sunak-treasury/>

'Inhumane' Home Office denying visas to children of migrant health workers

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/20/inhumane-home-office-denying-visas-to-children-of-migrant-health-workers>

Hundreds of child refugees wrongly sent to adult detention centres by Home Office

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/refugees-children-adults-detention-identified-age-b2482828.html?r=43077>

Home Office resumes asylum hotel evictions despite freezing weather

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/jan/18/home-office-resumes-asylum-hotel-evictions-despite-freezing-weather>

Four Rwandans 'granted refugee status in UK over fears of persecution'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-plan-refugees-sunak-kigali-b2486070.html>

Home Office U-turns on policy to restrict help for trafficking victims

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/24/home-office-u-turns-policy-help-trafficking-victims-braverman-rights>

Arts Open: new opportunity for refugee artists

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/arts-open-refugee-festival-scotland/>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Pupils: Ethnic Groups

Neil O'Brien (Conservative) [9631] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average height was for state school pupils in (a) reception and (b) year six in each academic year since 2005-06 in England; what the average height was for state school pupils in each ethnic group in those academic years in that period; and how many state school pupils were in each ethnic group in those academic years in that period.

Reply from Damian Hinds: The department does not hold information about pupils' height. The Office for Health Improvement and Monitoring within the Department of Health and Social Care are responsible for carrying out the school height and weight checks. More information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-child-measurement-programme-operational-guidance/national-child-measurement-programme-2022-information-for-schools>

The attached spreadsheet contains information from the January school census on the number of pupils in England in reception and year six by ethnic group from the 2006/07 to 2022/23 academic years. The department does not hold data for 2005/06.

[9631 Data Table](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-15/9631>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Public Service Broadcasting: Equality

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL1484] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase (1) racial, and (2) gender, diversity in senior management positions in public service broadcasters other than the BBC.

Reply from Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: His Majesty's Government remains committed to ensuring that the broadcasting sector – including our public service broadcasters – is representative of the country in which we live, and offers equality of opportunity to people of all backgrounds.

Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom has a duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to employment in the broadcasting sector.

Responsibility for the appointment of senior managers sits with individual broadcasters. HM Government welcomes the work being done by them and other industry participants to improve diversity at senior levels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-10/hl1484>

New Publication

Statistics on Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65b22b781702b1000dcb126d/Statistics_on_Ethnicity_and_the_Criminal_Justice_System_2022.pdf

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Debate

Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15670&i=133695#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021

Annabelle Ewing (SNP) [S6W-24448] To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S6W-19193 by Siobhian Brown on 27 June 2023, regarding the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, when it plans to introduce the relevant commencement regulations.

Reply from Siobhian Brown: The Scottish Government continues to work closely with justice partners for the effective implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 ('the Act') and to ensure a 1 April 2024 commencement date. This is to provide enough time to allow justice partners to complete a number of key IT change programmes and for the delivery of a robust package of training and guidance for police officers prior to commencement.

In November 2023, we published the Hate Crime Strategy Delivery Plan which sets out our immediate actions to implement Scotland's Hate Crime Strategy. Activity includes improved support for victims, improving data and evidence on hate crime and developing effective approaches to preventing hate crime and promoting community cohesion. It will also support the implementation of the Act.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-24448>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-19193>

The Hate Crime Strategy Delivery Plan, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-strategy-delivery-plan/>

UK Parliament Debate

Holocaust Memorial Day

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-01-25/debates/AA595636-3E4E-4943-9849-85FC2512730A/HolocaustMemorialDay>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-01-25/debates/4DF50C6F-D23B-48B4-9133-276FC08CC763/HolocaustMemorialDay>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following four questions all received the same answer

Islamophobia

Afzal Khan (Labour) [10238] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to develop a definition of anti-Muslim hatred.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [10239] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what definition of anti-Muslim hatred his Department uses.

Afzal Khan (Labour) [10240] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what progress his Department is making on tackling Islamophobia.

Religious Hatred

Afzal Khan (Labour) [10241] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which (a) individuals and (b) organisations his Department is consulting on religious hatred.

Reply from Lee Rowley: Anti-Muslim hatred is abhorrent and has no place in our society. No one should ever be a victim of hatred because of their religion or belief and the Government continues to work with police and community partners to monitor and combat it. We have funded Tell MAMA, a service that supports victims of anti-Muslim hatred, with over £6 million since their inception in 2012.

In light of the rise in anti-Muslim hate incidents being reported, the Government has increased Tell MAMA's funding to £1 million this year. This funding will provide additional resource to the service they are providing to support victims of anti-Muslim hatred.

The department has given careful consideration to the use of language and definitions. The definition of Islamophobia as proposed by the APPG is not in line with the Equality Act 2010, which defines race in terms of colour, nationality and national or ethnic origins. The term anti-Muslim hatred is a more precise term which better reflects UK hate crime legislation.

The department is seeking the views and perspectives of domestic and international leaders and experts in this field to explore how religious hatred is experienced by British communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-17/10238>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-17/10239>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-17/10240>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-17/10241>

Information about the APPG proposed definition of islamophobia, referred to above, can be read at

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf>

Army Foundation College: Racially Aggravated Offences

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [10339] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many complaints of racially aggravated abuse at the Army Foundation College have been registered on the Army's JPA system in the last five years.

Reply from Andrew Murrison: There have been 12 cases involving allegations of racially aggravated abuse at the Army Foundation College recorded on Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system between the years 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2023.

Please note that the figures provided are single Service estimates taken at a point in time, this data is not gathered for statistical purposes or subject to the same level of scrutiny as official statistics produced by Defence Statistics. The figures provided may therefore be subject to data quality issues affecting their accuracy.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-17/10339>

Press Releases

First Minister's message for Holocaust Memorial Day

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1751183373446353029>

Home Secretary's message for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1751191387863703644>

Holocaust Memorial Day reception 2024: Foreign Secretary's speech

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/holocaust-memorial-day-reception-2024-foreign-secretarys-speech>

Far-right organiser found guilty of intent to stir up racial hatred through distribution of stickers

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/far-right-organiser-found-guilty-intent-stir-racial-hatred-through-distribution-stickers>

New Publication

House of Lords Library Briefing: Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/holocaust-memorial-day-2024/>

News

Sarwar: Inherent double standard exists in politicians' view of Muslims

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/humza-yousaf-muslims-scottish-labour-palestinian-gaza-b2483369.html>

Anti-Semitism didn't start with the Holocaust - sadly, it didn't end there either

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/26/anti-semitism-didnt-start-with-the-holocaust-didnt-end/>

West seems blind to this tide of antisemitism

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/west-seems-blind-to-this-tide-of-antisemitism-bh5lwwz02>

Nowhere is safe to be Jewish, says Maureen Lipman ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day

<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/maureen-lipman-antisemitism-holocaust-day-b2485257.html>

The police are fighting racism with more racism

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/24/the-police-are-fighting-racism-with-racism/>

Online slang bible uses 'grossly offensive' definition of anti-Semitism

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/23/online-slang-bible-grossly-offensive-anti-semitism-jews/>

Far-right organiser found guilty of spreading racial hatred

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/far-right-organiser-found-guilty-of-spreading-racial-hatred-dmrtz0vk>

TOP

Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Press Release

Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums

<https://www.gov.scot/news/empire-slavery-and-scotlands-museums/>

New Publication

Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums steering group recommendations: Scottish Government Response

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/empire-slavery-scotlands-museums-steering-group-recommendations-scottish-government-response/>

News

Gypsy-Traveller children trafficked out of Scotland

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24078561.gypsy-traveller-children-trafficked-scotland/>

TOP

Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following six questions all received the same answer

Sikhs: Threat to Life Notices

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10503] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to (a) assess and (b) ensure the safety of members of the Sikh community issued with Osman notices.

Sikhs: Safety

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10505] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has made an assessment of the potential risks to British Sikh activists of international incidents involving members of the Sikh community.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10507] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what processes are in place to evaluate the credibility of threats leading to the issuing of Osman warnings in the Sikh community.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10509] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to liaise with the Sikh community over safety concerns.

British Nationals Abroad: Politics and Government

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10506] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to help ensure the safety of British citizens involved in international political movements.

Threat to Life Notices

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10510] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will review the (a) support and (b) protection measures available to (i) individuals and (ii) families who have received Osman warnings.

Reply from Tom Tugendhat: The UK is proud of its diverse communities, and

British Sikhs contribute immensely to the strength of our society.

We continually assess potential threats in the UK, and take the protection of individuals' rights, freedoms, and safety in the UK seriously.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10503>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10505>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10507>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10509>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10506>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10510>

The following two questions both received the same answer

India: Sikhs

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10504] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on allegations of intimidation against British Sikhs by agents of the Indian government.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [10508] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of alleged foreign interventions targeting the British Sikh community on UK-India relations.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The UK Government takes the safety of individuals in the UK extremely seriously and we do everything we can to keep people safe and the country secure. Any attempts by foreign governments to coerce, intimidate, harass, or harm their critics overseas are unacceptable. We continually assess potential threats to individuals' rights, freedoms, and safety in the UK, and wherever we identify such threats, we use measures necessary to mitigate the risk to individuals. The UK Government has a broad and deep partnership with the Government of India. This enables us to discuss all elements of our relationship, including concerns where we have them.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10504>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-18/10508>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Female Domestic Homicides: Black, Asian and Ethnic-minority Overrepresentation

Baroness Gohir (Crossbench): To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether Black, Asian and minority ethnic women are overrepresented in female domestic homicides; and what steps they are taking to safeguard them. ...

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, domestic homicide is a horrific crime that disproportionately impacts women. The Home Office homicide index shows that 22% of the 249 female victims recorded between March 2020 and March 2022 were from minority-ethnic groups. These groups were overrepresented in domestic homicide data when compared to the 2021 census. Preventing domestic homicide is a key government priority, and we have set out commitments to reduce it in the *Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan*.

Baroness Gohir: My Lords, the Home Office funded a project in 2020 based in the vulnerability, knowledge and practice programme which confirmed that there is an overrepresentation of minority-ethnic women in domestic homicides rates—the rates may be higher because the police do not always record ethnicity data accurately. What follow-up has there been on that project? Will the Minister agree to holding a public consultation or an inquiry to uncover fully the contributing factors to safeguard black, Asian and minority-ethnic women and girls? Will he meet me to discuss that?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I am short on the detail of that specific programme, but in March 2022, we published the cross-government *Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan*, which invested more than £230 million in tackling this crime between 2022 and 2025. This includes more than £140 million for supporting victims and £81 million for tackling perpetrators. As regards the domestic homicide review, work is under way to review, improve and update the statutory guidance on that review. The consultation on that is about to open, so if any Peers are interested and would like to get involved, please let me know and I will be happy to supply the details.

Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, studies have shown that ethnic-minority survivors of domestic abuse are much less likely to have previously been known to the police than white victims, often because of a wish to protect their partner from police—rather than health interventions—because of institutional racism. What are the Government doing to ensure that all police are properly trained not to move to police intervention and to be able to signpost mental health support for all victims of domestic abuse?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... We understand the importance of specialist services in providing the tailored support that victims and survivors of domestic abuse need. The Home Office is providing funding of more than £2 million to the London Community Foundation, Peterborough Women's Aid, Diversity Matters North West and Sahara in Preston for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years through the VAWG support and specialist services fund. This forms part of a programme called By and For, which is the Government's commitment to provide specialist services that are led, designed and delivered by and for users and communities they aim to serve.

Baroness Verma (Conservative): My Lords, does my noble friend agree that part of the issue for women from minority communities, particularly the south Asian community, is language, and that, before it gets to the stage that we hope it will not get to—homicide—those women should be able to report? Due to language barriers, they cannot. Will my noble friend look at ways of working with other departments to ensure that we can get English into communities? It may be through funding community groups, but the insistence should be that English is part of the programme. Secondly, will he look at how we do training within the Home Office—rolling it out to recognise the start of the need for intervention rather than waiting for it to become a big problem?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... It links into part of the question put to me by the noble Baroness, Lady Brinton, which I did not answer: about the police response to tackling domestic abuse. We have provided funding to support the rollout of the Domestic Abuse Matters training to police forces which have yet to deliver it, or which do not have their own specific domestic abuse training, to improve and ensure consistency in the police response to domestic abuse. I would imagine—I will check—that that includes the language barriers that my noble friend identifies. That programme has been completed by 34 police forces to date. Considerable work is also going on in building up the evidence base and, indeed, starting a library, which will help police forces to investigate these crimes.

Baroness Thornton (Labour): My Lords, the opening words of the briefing from Home Office-funded project referred to by the noble Baroness say: "The onus is too often placed

on survivors from minoritised ethnic groups to navigate a system that has not been designed to take account of their needs, rather than addressing structural barriers that prevent their access to support”.

I suspect that not much has changed since that briefing was written and published in 2022. By the time a woman becomes a victim of domestic homicide, the truth is that she may have been repeatedly failed by the system. How is the Casey report into the Met Police feeding into the Government’s programme, and what targets do the Government have to reduce domestic abuse and violence against women and girls? Of course, the Labour Party does have a target for if and when we are in government.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I have already gone through a number of the programmes that have been put in place, many of which started only in 2022. I do not think it is fair to characterise the Government as not treating this as a priority. As the noble Baroness will be aware, we made it a strategic policing priority alongside terrorism and other priorities only last year. It is worth mentioning at this point someone I have referenced many times from the Dispatch Box. Maggie Blyth, who is the VAWG lead at the NPCC, has recently been appointed as the new deputy CEO at the College of Policing. I think that is a very positive step forward from an enforcement perspective. I would also like to commend Louisa Rolfe, who is the domestic abuse lead at the NPCC. We are doing a great deal. A consultation is under way on the domestic homicide statutory guidance; I suggest that the noble Baroness participates.

The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: My Lords, after contacting the police to report domestic violence crimes, migrant women in the UK have often been reported to Immigration Enforcement. For this reason, those women often stay silent for longer. What are the Government doing to ensure that black, Asian and minority-ethnic women who are victims of domestic violence can report abuse without fear of detention or deportation?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The right reverend Prelate will be aware that, if they do, they are not subject to immigration action—a subject that has been talked about a number of times from the Dispatch Box.

Baroness Falkner of Margravine (Crossbench): My Lords, I declare an interest as the chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Minister will know that, in the Istanbul convention, which is the foundation of much of our statutory work in this area, Article 12.5 refers specifically to honour-based killings and violence. The Minister has indicated that a consultation is about to open in this area. Will the Article 12.5 requirement, which calls for the Government to have improved statutory definitions of honour-based violence, be part of that consultation?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I cannot answer the last part of the noble Baroness’s question, but I can say that last week we hosted at the Home Office GREVIO, the organisation looking at our compliance with Istanbul, and I think we had a very positive meeting. It was a privilege to be able to host them in the office and to go through much of the work that we have already done. I will try to come back in writing on the specific question that she asked.

Baroness Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the report by the Centre for Women’s Justice, which the Minister has probably seen, highlights a number of barriers faced by women, particularly from black and minority-ethnic communities, in reporting domestic violence and abuse. One of them—and there have been a number of high-profile cases of this—is that victims face criminalisation by counter-allegations. As they lack the ability to navigate the service and the relevant support, that often leads to devastating consequences.

Another issue is a fear of losing their children when social services get involved. The Minister mentioned police training, but specialist services and access to them are also important. The report says that cuts to those services have cost lives. I ask the Minister to comment on those issues and how best women can be supported to make sure that we

bring down the level of fatalities in this cohort of women.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... Obviously, I cannot comment on individual cases or indeed on the operational aspects of this. The criminal justice system will have to look at all those individual matters and judge them appropriately. What I can do is repeat what I have said about police training, which has now been rolled out to 34 forces. Obviously, there is more to do. The police force is being very well led in this area, as I have just highlighted. I will also say that the By and For programme to which I referred earlier supports services by and for those specifically affected. That makes perfect sense, and it should be as local as possible.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-01-22/debates/F7E8669F-D0C2-48B0-92CE-091B34A589B0/FemaleDomesticHomicidesBlackAsianAndEthnic-MinorityOverrepresentation>

The Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-domestic-abuse-plan/tackling-domestic-abuse-plan-command-paper-639-accessible-version>

The Casey Report, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/baroness-casey-review/update-march-2023/baroness-casey-review-march-2023a.pdf>

The Istanbul Convention, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=210>

TOP

Cost of Living

Scottish Government Website

Help during the cost of living crisis

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

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

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

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

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

Publication

Shock proof Breaking the cycle of winter energy crises

[https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Energy/FINAL%20-%20Shock%20proof%20breaking%20the%20cycle%20of%20energy%20crises%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Energy/FINAL%20-%20Shock%20proof%20breaking%20the%20cycle%20of%20energy%20crises%20(1).pdf)

News

1m more people living in poverty in UK as scale of crisis laid bare

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/poverty-dwp-martin-lewis-energy-bills-b2482531.html>

Bailiff referrals rise by 20% over council debts

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-68054306>

Two million could see energy cut off this winter, charity warns

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-68060452>

Shock Proof: Breaking the cycle of winter energy crises

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/our-work/policy/policy-research-topics/energy-policy-research-and-consultation-responses/energy-policy-research/shock-proof-breaking-the-cycle-of-winter-energy-crises1/>

Tens of thousands of disabled people sacrifice cooked meals to charge medical devices

<https://www.cas.org.uk/news/tens-thousands-disabled-people-sacrifice-cooked-meals-charge-medical-devices>

Plans to give UK citizens priority for social housing 'would increase homelessness'

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/jan/26/uk-citizens-priority-social-housing-homelessness>

TOP

Other News

Religion in schools is too important to marginalise

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/religion-in-schools-is-too-important-to-marginalise-2jpt2g70w>

TOP

Bills in Progress

** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

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

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

UK Parliament

Asylum Application (Entry to the United Kingdom) Bill

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

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

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

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>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

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

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

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

Joint Committee on Human Rights evidence session

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/14124/html/>

House of Lords Library Briefing

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2024-0002/LLN-2024-0002.pdf>

Immigration and Nationality Fees (Exemption for NHS Clinical Staff) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3660>

Scottish Law Officers (Devolution) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3665>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

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

Workforce Information (Ethnicity) Bill

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

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated this week

Health and Social Care Workforce – Help Us to Tackle Racism

(closing date 19 February 2024)

<https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/7K3359S>

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 2024)

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

Ending conversion practices in Scotland (closing date 2 April 2024)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-conversion-practices-scotland-scottish-government-consultation/>

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

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

TOP

Job Opportunities

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

TOP

Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Alwaleed Community Grant Scheme

Closing date: 11 March 2024

Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World funding of up to £5,000 for projects which engage with the following themes: Interfaith and intra-faith relations, Islam and the environment, Education and skills development, and Digital Islam. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/4atszf5m>

**** Ethnic Minority Development Fund**

Closing date: 15 April 2024

National Lottery Community Fund grants from £500 to £15,000 for projects run by ethnic minority-led third-sector organisations in Scotland that bring ethnic minority people together and build strong relationships across communities, help more ethnic minority people to be the best they can be, by supporting them as soon as possible, or improve places and spaces that matter to ethnic minority communities. For information see <https://cemvoscotland.org.uk/emdf/>

Cost-of-Living Support Scotland

Application deadline not stated

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

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

TOP

**** this week!**

Edinburgh Reads multi-access audiobook for Holocaust Memorial Day

22-31 January 2024 (online for all Edinburgh Libraries membership card holders)

Edinburgh Libraries will have an "Edinburgh Reads" unlimited access audiobook, "Night", by Elie Wiesel, available on their Libby platform (www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libby) to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/mttw68md>

**** this week!**

Police Scotland Police Officer - Ethnic Minorities Online Recruitment Event

1 February 2024 (online, 6.30–8.30)

The event will cover the operational duties of a police officer, the recruitment process, and the benefits of joining Police Scotland. Police Scotland is committed to increasing the number of officers and staff from under-represented groups. There are well documented barriers to some people applying to join the police service, and this event is intended to answer specific questions from people from diverse communities to make sure everyone has fair access. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/ypfwkzfd>

**** Tackling Sectarianism CPD for Youth Workers**

7 February 2024 (online, 1.00–3.00)

YouthLink Scotland training to provide youth workers with the tools they need to engage young people on the topic of sectarianism, prejudice and hate in Scotland. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/pmypydnz>

Pass the Mic Women of Colour Experts in Scotland

Apply by 10 February 2024

Programme runs from March to November 2024

The 2024 women of colour writers group is now open for applications. The programme includes allocation to a media partner (The Scotsman, The Courier, Press and Journal, The National, or The Herald), with payment of £100 for your article, and online development sessions with editors and guest speakers. For information see <http://tinyurl.com/mt9mkpc6>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

14 February 2024 (online, 10.00–12.30)

15 May 2024 (Glasgow, 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)

13 May 2024 (Glasgow, 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)

22 May 2024 (Glasgow (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>

How To Be a Political Commentator - Broadcast Media Training for Women of Colour

8 March 2024 (Glasgow. 10.30–5.30)

Pass the Mic and Women in Journalism Scotland are working together to host a media commentator training day exclusively for women of colour who are based in Scotland. The purpose of the day is to give you a chance to experience giving interviews on radio and TV. You will meet journalists and presenters, and lunch will be provided. For information see <https://passthemicscotland.org/2024/01/20/media-commentator-training/>

TOP

Useful Links

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services

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

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

TOP



*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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