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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 and UK Parliaments are in recess until 15 April 2024.

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Asylum Seekers (Mental Wellbeing)

Maggie Chapman (Green) [S6O-03287] To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to support the mental wellbeing of asylum seekers accommodated in hotels in Scotland.

Reply from the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport (Maree Todd): The Home Office is responsible for the provision of asylum accommodation and support and for the use of contingency hotels. The Scottish Government has consistently made it clear to the United Kingdom Government that hotels are not appropriate accommodation, and we continue to be concerned about the effect that

prolonged stays in hotels have on people's wellbeing.

People seeking asylum who are living in Scotland are entitled to access healthcare, including referral to mental health services. The Scottish Government funds a range of action to support mental health and wellbeing and that is available to anyone living in Scotland, regardless of their residence status.

Maggie Chapman: The minister will be aware of the overwhelming evidence of worsening mental health among hotel-accommodated asylum seekers. There have been at least five suicide attempts in the past few months. Asylum seekers do not feel safe; they feel as if they are in open prisons. *The Ferret* and the Scottish Refugee Council have identified a rise in far-right hostility and the fact that about 500 asylum seekers have to share bedrooms with strangers as being contributory factors to that. How can the Scottish Government and public agencies, including the national health service, mitigate the impacts of those measures and provide increased safety, reassurance and mental health support to people who are seeking asylum?

Reply from Maree Todd: We absolutely recognise that the circumstances and uncertainty that asylum seekers and refugees face are often distressing and can lead to increased risk of suicide. In implementing the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities suicide prevention strategy "Creating Hope Together", we are working hard to tackle the inequalities that can lead to suicide and are prioritising communities and groups—including asylum seekers and refugees—with a heightened risk of suicide.

We are engaging with public sector partners, including the NHS, to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our asylum seeker and refugee community. We are also connecting with existing projects that support asylum seekers and refugees, such as the Mental Health Foundation's elevate project. We also continue to fund Simon Community Scotland, which is doing excellent work in supporting asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds. This year, our partnership is delivering peer support for people living in Glasgow and is being developed to meet the specific needs of that community.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15790&i=134775#ScotParlOR>

The strategy referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-hope-together-scotlands-suicide-prevention-action-plan-2022-2025/>

Information about the Elevate Project, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/programmes/refugees/elevate>

UK Parliament Debate

People Granted Asylum: Government Support

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-03-26/debates/B04AB59D-BAA6-46BE-91A9-8E11F9A5A749/PeopleGrantedAsylumGovernmentSupport>

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

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum: Rwanda

Caroline Lucas (Green) [19033] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what form of immigration status people relocated to Rwanda under the voluntary

departures scheme will receive once in Rwanda; and whether that status will be (a) permanent or (b) time-limited.

Caroline Lucas (Green) [19034] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the agreement with Rwanda to host individuals relocated from the UK under the voluntary departures scheme was made; how many individuals can be relocated under that scheme; and if he will publish a Memorandum of Understanding relating to the scheme.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The option of voluntary relocation will be given to failed asylum seekers. It would be inappropriate to provide a running commentary on individual cases or numbers.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed for the voluntary relocation of individuals and will be published in due course.

People who voluntarily decide to relocate to Rwanda, if they are relocated, will be entitled to permanent residence in Rwanda.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/19033>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/19034>

Asylum: Rwanda

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [19626] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will publish details on the (a) level of financial and (b) other incentives his Department plans to offer to asylum seekers to encourage them to voluntarily relocate to Rwanda.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: Voluntary relocation to Rwanda builds on our already widely used voluntary returns scheme – details of this can be found at the following link:- [Voluntary and assisted departures.docx](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19626>

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

Visas: Personal Income

Colum Eastwood (SDLP) [19742] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the evidential basis is for increasing the minimum income requirement (MIR) to £38,700 for certain family and work visas; if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of increasing the MIR on those affected in (a) Derry City and Strabane and (b) other regions where average gross annual earnings are below the national average; and if he will ensure that the Government's planned impact assessment of increasing the MIR includes an equality impact assessment.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Analytical work has been undertaken across Government to support decision making in this process. A fact sheet and an initial assessment on the impact of the changes on immigration can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fact-sheet-on-net-migration-measures-further-detail>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/legal-migration-statement-estimated-immigration-impacts/legal-migration-statement-estimated-immigration-impacts-accessible>

A full Regulatory Impact Assessment on these changes has been developed and the Government will publish this alongside an Equality Impact Assessment on this change, both in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19742>

Visas: Skilled Workers

Deidre Brock (SNP) [19383] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Migration Advisory Committee's Rapid review of the Immigration Salary List, published on 23 February 2024, for what reason his Department has not implemented the recommendation on the use of the Immigration Salary List beyond the skilled worker route for asylum seekers.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: Replacing the Shortage Occupation List with the new Immigration Salary List will maintain the important principles that underpin our approach to permission to work and is in line with wider changes to the Immigration Rules.

Unrestricted access to employment could act as an incentive for more migrants to choose to come here illegally, with many making dangerous journeys across the Channel and supporting the business model of evil people smugglers, rather than claim asylum in the first safe country they reach.

The Government considers it important to distinguish between those who need protection and those seeking to work here who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. Aligning asylum seekers' permission to work with the Skilled Worker route could undermine the legal routes for those seeking to work in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/19383>

The Rapid Review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rapid-review-of-the-immigration-salary-list/rapid-review-of-the-immigration-salary-list-accessible>

Migrants: Health Services

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [19735] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing the immigration health surcharge for people who already (a) work and (b) pay taxes in the UK.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Government has no plans to remove the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) for temporary migrants who work and pay taxes in the UK.

It is right those granted temporary immigration permission for more than six months should contribute to the sustainability of our NHS. Having paid the IHS, temporary migrants can access the NHS as soon as they arrive in the UK and will only be charged for services that a permanent resident would also pay for, such as prescription charges in England.

Although some temporary migrants will pay tax and National Insurance contributions after they start work in the UK, they will not on average have made the same financial contribution to the NHS which most UK nationals and permanent residents have made, or will make, over the course of their working lives. It is an individual's immigration status, not their tax and National Insurance contributions, which governs their access to the NHS.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19735>

Migrants: Domestic Abuse

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [19998] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing migrant victims of domestic abuse to access support from (a) police and (b) statutory services.

Reply from Laura Farris: Victims are entitled to access services under the Victims Code regardless of their resident status, including support services. They are rightly able to access statutory services irrespective of their immigration status and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. As an example, the statutory guidance for the Duty to Provide Safe Accommodation under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act is clear that this provision is for all victims of domestic abuse, including migrant

survivors with insecure immigration status.

The government has kept the range of support under review and have made recent changes.

We allocated up to £5.6 million from April 2021 until March 2025 for the Support for Migrant Victim Scheme, which provides a support net for migrant victims of abuse with no recourse to public funds. And we have expanded access to the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) to partners of workers or students, giving 3 months recourse to public funds whilst they potentially apply for an appropriate immigration status or return to their country of origin if it is safe for them to do so.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-21/19998>

The Victims Code, referred to above, can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60620279d3bf7f5ceaca0d89/victims-code-2020.pdf>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation/delivery-of-support-to-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services>

Information about the Support for Migrant Victim Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://southallblacksisters.org.uk/our-services/sbs-no-recourse-fund/smv-scheme/>

Information about the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession, referred to above, can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e08f1d2f2b3b001c7cd78f/Migrant+Victims+of+Domestic+Abuse+Concession.pdf>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Migrant Workers: Domestic Service

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [19376] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the conclusions of the Independent Review of the Overseas Domestic Workers Visa by James Ewins, published on 16 December 2015, relating to protection of employment rights of migrant workers in private households, if he will (a) review and (b) reverse changes to the rules for that visa.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [19377] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when his Department last reviewed the potential risk of abuse and exploitation of migrant workers under the overseas domestic worker visa rules.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [19377] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Independent Review the Overseas Domestic Workers Visa by James Ewins, published on 16 December 2015, what the Government's policy is on the implementation of proposed changes in that review to the overseas domestic worker visa rules that have not yet been implemented.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office keeps immigration route policy under review, including that for the Overseas Domestic Worker route. We have introduced a number of reforms to the route for overseas domestic workers since 2015; designed to build on existing safeguards and in line with the broader immigration system. Employers of overseas domestic workers must act in accordance with UK employment law, and workers who find themselves a victim of modern slavery are protected by the National Referral Mechanism and may be eligible to apply for permission to stay as a domestic worker who is a victim of modern slavery.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/19376>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/19377>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/19378>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a806ecee5274a2e87db9c85/ODWV_Review_-_Final_Report_6_11_15_.pdf

The following two questions both received the same answer

Delivery Services: Undocumented Migrants

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [19761] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he is taking steps to regulate the use of rented profiles on food delivery apps.

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [19762] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has had discussions with representatives of food delivery companies on the use of rented profiles on food delivery apps.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The Government is engaging constructively with food delivery platforms, calling on them to end the use of unverified substitution. Unchecked account sharing places the public at risk, enables – and therefore encourages – illegal migration and leads to the exploitation of workers.

In November 2023, the Home Office secured agreement from the firms to strengthen their recruitment and on-boarding processes, in order to prevent unchecked sharing of accounts.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/food-delivery-companies-urged-to-end-unchecked-account-sharing>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19761>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19762>

Asylum: Age Assurance

John Hayes (Conservative) [19252] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of young asylum seekers have been identified as being over the age of 18 following (a) age verification and (b) identity checks in each of the last five years.

Reply from Tom Purslove: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on asylum applications by age is published in table Asy_D01 of the '[Asylum applications, decisions and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. The latest data relates to 2023.

Data on age disputes is published in table Asy_D05 of the '[Age disputes detailed dataset](#)'. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2023.

Information on how to use these datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of each workbook. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the '[summary tables](#)'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum applications by age and age disputes.

Please note that an age dispute could, for example, be resolved following: a Merton compliant age assessment; 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/2024-03-19/19252>

Asylum: Employment

Deidre Brock (SNP) [19083] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of replacing the Shortage Occupation

List with the Immigration Salary List on employment opportunities for asylum seekers who are eligible to work.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Secretary commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to carry out a rapid review of the new Immigration Salary List (ISL) ahead of the Spring Immigration Rules. Appendix Immigration Salary List can be found in the [Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules: HC 590](#) published on 14 March 2024. We will keep the list under review and the MAC will carry out a fuller review later in the year.

Replacing the new ISL will maintain the important principles that underpin our approach to permission to work by an individual's asylum claim still being outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. This includes the need to avoid creating perverse incentives for people to make dangerous journeys to the UK and to not undercut the resident labour market.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/19083>

The Rapid Review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rapid-review-of-the-immigration-salary-list/rapid-review-of-the-immigration-salary-list-accessible>

Detention Centres: Women

Ellie Reeves (Labour) [19666] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department is taking steps to reduce the number of vulnerable women held in immigration detention.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The Home Office are committed to ensuring the proper protection and treatment of women, including vulnerable women, in detention and will seek to facilitate voluntary return as an alternative to detention and enforced removal. Further information can be found in published operational guidance [DSO 06/2016 Women in the Detention Estate](#).

We fully accept that some groups of individuals can be at particular risk of harm in immigration detention. This is the basis of the adults at risk in immigration detention policy [DSO 08/2016 Management of adults at risk in immigration detention](#), which strengthens the presumption against detention for vulnerable individuals.

Women who are victims of torture, trafficking or sexual violence are all covered by the adults at risk in immigration detention policy. Anyone who falls within the scope of the policy is regarded as unsuitable for detention unless the specific immigration circumstances in their case are considered to outweigh the vulnerability issues.

Plans are in place to convert Derwentside immigration removal centre (IRC) from a female only centre, into a detained facility for men, reducing female capacity across the existing estate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19666>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Asylum Claims

Lord Dubs (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government how many asylum claims are currently waiting to be determined.

Reply from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Sharpe of Epsom): My Lords, at the end of December 2023, there were 95,252 cases in the asylum system, 28% fewer than at the end of December 2022. Claims lodged on or after 28 June 2022 and before 7 March 2023, when the Illegal Migration Bill was introduced, are being prioritised now that the legacy backlog has been cleared. We continue to review and improve processes to accelerate decision-making while maintaining the integrity of the system.

Lord Dubs: My Lords, when do the Government expect to process the claims of the 55,000 or more people who arrived since March 2023, especially the 22,000 or so who arrived between March 2023 and July 2023, who are not covered by the possibility of being sent to Rwanda?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, those who arrive illegally and fall into scope of the Act will be banned from obtaining any form of lawful immigration status in the UK. So, since 7 March 2023, anyone who has arrived illegally may be unable to obtain settlement or citizenship or re-enter the UK using a lawful migration route. As we bring more of the powers of the Act into force, those who have arrived illegally will also be unable to obtain any form of temporary permission to stay in the UK, other than in very limited circumstances.

Baroness Eaton (Conservative): My Lords, in considering measures for sustainably managing waiting times for asylum claims, does my noble friend agree that a balanced approach, which effectively deters economic migrants while prioritising the timely processing of genuine asylum seekers, is essential for maintaining the integrity and efficiency of the asylum system?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My noble friend makes a very good point. On the subject of productivity and the processing of claims, the decision output has increased significantly over the past 24 months. In fact, it has more than tripled as we have worked to deliver commitments to process the legacy backlog. For example, in November 2023, the average per decision-maker was about 7.89 initial decisions. The year before, that number was more like 2.6—so efficiency is very much improving.

Baroness Butler-Sloss (Crossbench): My Lords, how many of those already denied asylum are still in the country?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I cannot answer that question in its entirety, but I can say that the number of complex legacy cases that remain has declined from about 4,500 to 3,900. Some of those are still in the country, but I do not know precisely how many.

Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the Oxford criminology department's report, *The Criminalisation of People Arriving to the UK on "Small Boats"*, has said: "There is no evidence that these prosecutions will have the 'deterrent' effect ... Rather than minimising harm to people crossing the Channel, this report has highlighted the significant human impact of the current prosecution strategy". Will the Government review this report in light of what is happening at the moment?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Well, I will certainly commit to read it, but I wonder how on earth it can arrive at a conclusion that they will have no deterrent effect. The Bill has not been operationalised or indeed passed yet.

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): My Lords, the Minister will know about the concern expressed last week from all quarters of your Lordships' House about the position of Afghans who had supported our servicemen or translators while they did honourable duty in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Defence said it was going to review their cases. Can the Minister give us any idea how long it is going to take for those to be resolved?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I have to say to the noble Lord that his question is best directed to the MoD, but he will know that it is also an ongoing discussion we are still having in the context of the Bill.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (Labour): My Lords, can the Minister update the House on returns agreements with safe countries? In particular, I am thinking of Egypt, as well as other safe Middle Eastern countries.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Again, I am afraid that is rather outside this department's remit, but I will endeavour to find out the current status and come back to the noble Lord.

Lord Lilley (Conservative): Can my noble friend the Minister explain why British courts

and tribunals grant asylum to 75% of those who make applications here on first application, whereas French courts grant asylum to only 25% of those making asylum applications on first application? Given that they are both applying the same international laws and agreements, are the French being unduly harsh or the British unduly lenient?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I suspect it is not a particularly binary answer. Obviously, some of the cases we are looking at will involve people from Afghanistan, as the noble Lord will be aware, and we probably had rather more involvement in that particular situation than the French did. I would imagine it depends very much on the circumstances before the courts, but I cannot really answer the question.

Lord Watts (Labour): My Lords, the Minister claims some credit for starting to deal with the backlog. What have the Government been doing for 13 years to make that backlog?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Minister does not claim any credit at all for removing the backlog, but I applaud the department for having done so. The situation, as the noble Lord will be aware, has changed very dramatically in the world over the last 13 years.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour): My Lords, the sacked chief inspector has expressed concern that clearing the legacy backlog at all costs has led to perverse outcomes. This includes a soaring in the number of claims deemed to have been withdrawn but counted as outcomes without proper quality assurance, which he declared was not acceptable. Will the Government now publish data showing the reasons for this big increase in the number of claims deemed to be withdrawn, as called for by the British Red Cross?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I remind the House that the previous inspector was let go because he broke the terms of his contract, so I would argue that he has been somewhat discredited. Withdrawals can happen for a number of reasons, for example where somebody has already left the UK before their claim was concluded or where they fail to comply with the asylum process. There is a large number of reasons why withdrawals are made.

Lord Sahota (Labour): My Lords, India was recently designated a safe country, along with Georgia, Albania and other countries. How many claims have been processed for India and what was the reason for designating India as a safe country?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: ... I do not have those statistics.

Lord Laming (Crossbench): My Lords, how many of these asylum seekers are children and what happens to them if their claims fail?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, there were 3,412 asylum applications from unaccompanied children in the year ending December 2023. That was 41% fewer than in 2022. They make up about 5% of total asylum applications. Of those, 2,446 were aged 16 or 17. Noble Lords will be aware that there are commitments in the Bill going through the House, and in the treaty, that unaccompanied asylum seekers will not be removed to Rwanda.

The Lord Bishop of Oxford: My Lords, the National Audit Office published a report on 20 March expressing the view that government plans to relocate asylum seekers from hotels to larger sites are actually proving more expensive than the hotel accommodation. Is this affecting the Government's long-term strategy for offering safe accommodation?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, the Government's long-term strategy is a current subject of discussion via various other Bills. We will be closing all our hotels; we will have closed more than 100 by the end of March. Clearly, having hotels occupied by migrants is not optimal, and of course that goes to inform long-term strategic thinking.

Lord Stirrup (Crossbench): What progress is being made on police co-operation across Europe to target people traffickers, not just at the point of the channel but across the entire continent?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, there has been a considerable amount of progress. In March 2023, we signed a deal with France which, as noble Lords will be aware, has more than doubled the number of French personnel deployed across northern France. Most recently, we signed a working agreement with Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. This long-term framework will provide the UK with access to new levers and intelligence to make our and the EU's borders safer and more secure—as well as emphasising a shared commitment to close co-operation to tackle these organised crime gangs. ...

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (Green): My Lords, a Member on the Benches opposite recently said that Rwanda was safe as long as one did not oppose the Government. Is that the way that this Government are going—so we are all safe as long as we do not oppose them?

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I point the noble Baroness to Scotland, where of course the Green Party is propping up the SNP Government. Are we safe there?

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-03-25/debates/A843C3C3-86A1-4592-99A7-1D62A1DB0329/AsylumClaims>

The Oxford University report referred to above can be read at

https://blogs.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/No%20such%20thing%20as%20justice%20here_for%20publication.pdf

The National Audit Office report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/investigation-into-asylum-accommodation.pdf>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Visas: Palestinians

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL3250] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of calls for a Palestinian visa or Gaza family scheme to enable Palestinians in Gaza to be reunited with relatives in the UK and access temporary sanctuary.

Reply from Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The UK Government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that it is able to respond appropriately. 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.

British citizens and those with settled status in the UK, together with their foreign national dependants, (spouse, unmarried/civil partner, child under 18), 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 our refugee family reunion policy, provided they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country of origin to seek protection.

There are additional safe and legal routes for people to come to the UK should they wish to join family members here, work or study. They would need to meet the requirements of the relevant Immigration Rule under which they were applying to qualify for a visa.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-13/hl3250>

UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights

Evidence session: Human Rights of Asylum Seekers in the UK

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/14333/html/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Dan Carden (Labour) [575] Immigration changes for carers and Ukrainians – That this House is concerned that the latest Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules, HC 556, which will prevent overseas care workers from bringing their dependants to the UK and makes substantial changes to the Ukraine schemes, will have a negative impact on migrant families; notes in particular that the changes will likely force carers into acquiescing to exploitative conditions at work or plunge them into destitution; recognises the importance of family members to carers often carrying out low-paid but crucial work in the UK's social care sector; further notes with concern the lack of opportunity for the abrupt changes to the Ukraine schemes to have been scrutinised properly within the usual 21-day period before implementation; further recognises the stress and harm that the changes will cause by separating Ukrainian families, particularly where one or more family members are left behind in Ukraine; also notes the harm that will be caused by no longer permitting Ukrainian nationals to sponsor family members under the Homes for Ukraine scheme; and calls on the Home Office to properly tackle migrant worker exploitation and urgently reconsider its changes to the Ukraine schemes.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62072>

Press Release

Scotland's Migration Service launched

<https://www.gov.scot/news/scotlands-migration-service-launched/>

New Publications

House of Commons Library Briefing: Migration statistics

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06077/SN06077.pdf>

Immigration downgrading: new evidence from UK panel data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigrant-downgrading-new-evidence-from-uk-panel-data/immigration-downgrading-new-evidence-from-uk-panel-data-accessible>

Global Talent visa evaluation: Wave 2 report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-talent-visa-evaluation-wave-2-report/global-talent-visa-evaluation-wave-2-report>

An inspection of the immigration system as it relates to the social care sector (August 2023 to November 2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6602a6b765ca2fa78e7da854/An_inspection_of_the_immigration_system_as_it_relates_to_the_social_care_sector_August_2023_to_November_2023.pdf

The Home Office response to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report: An inspection of the immigration system as it relates to

the social care sector

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-an-inspection-of-the-immigration-system-as-it-relates-to-the-social-care-sector/the-home-office-response-to-the-independent-chief-inspector-of-borders-and-immigrations-report-an-inspection-of-the-immigration-system-as-it-relates>

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>

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>

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

UN calls on Rishi Sunak to scrap Rwanda plan

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rwanda-united-nations-human-rights-committee-rishi-sunak-uk-government-mps-b2520224.html>

Fresh blow for Rwanda deportation plan as report shows extreme poverty and hunger

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/mar/28/fresh-blow-for-rwanda-deportation-plan-as-report-shows-extreme-poverty-and-hunger>

News: Channel Migrants

Record numbers of migrants cross Channel in 2024

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4nq66lm57zo>

Sixty migrants land in Dover without life jackets

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sixty-migrants-land-in-dover-without-life-jackets-j2j38ltlm>

Home Office launches 'stop the boats' ad campaign in Vietnam

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68653368>

Home Office launches social media campaign in Vietnam to deter illegal migrants

<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/uk-immigration-vietnam-home-office-b2518083.html>

News: Afghanistan

East Camp: South Wales military complex to be used to house Afghan escapees

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-68694674>

Afghans who worked for Britain given temporary homes in Welsh military camp

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghans-taliban-homes-uk-settle-b2520806.html>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

James Cleverly issues Easter warning on asylum seekers to church leaders

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/abdul-ezedi-james-cleverly-churches-b2521113.html>

Churches should not allow asylum seekers to exploit system, says Cleverly

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/03/30/james-cleverly-churches-asylum-seekers-exploit-system/>

Ex-immigration minister Robert Jenrick proposes migrant crime data is published

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-68697796>

Robert Jenrick calls for nationality data scheme to prevent UK 'importing crime'

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/mar/30/robert-jenrick-nationality-visa-asylum-status-data-crime-bill-amendment>

Tory MPs call for migrant crime 'league tables' based on nationality

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nationality-crime-league-table-robert-jenrick-b2521111.html>

Care worker migrant surge 'should have been obvious', says ex-borders inspector

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68668548>

Say one thing, do another? The government's record rise in net migration

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-68626430>

Q&A: What is the New Scots strategy and what's next?

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/scotland-refugees-asylum-scottish-government-cosla/>

Census 2022: New figures show migration is helping to sustain the Scottish population

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/census-2022-new-figures-show-migration-is-helping-to-sustain-the-scottish-population-4570174>

Wicklow camp lined up for asylum seekers despite villagers' protests

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/wicklow-camp-lined-up-for-asylum-seekers-despite-villagers-protests-8n69nnh3v>

Immigration tribunals are becoming a threat to the Home Office's authority

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/27/immigration-tribunals-are-becoming-a-threat/>

Free bus travel for refugees scheme scrapped

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c6pm117dde5o>

TOP

Community Relations

Press Releases

First Minister First Minister @HumzaYousaf was honoured to host an Interfaith Iftar meal at Bute House. The evening was spent sharing and valuing Scotland's diverse religious

traditions and further strengthening bonds across our communities. [plus photos]
<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1773445781321617909>

Humza Yousaf It was a real honour hosting our diverse faith communities in Bute House for iftar. In the face of rising hatred and tensions, it is crucial that we work to bring communities together. I thanked those present for the enormous contribution our faith communities make to Scotland.

<https://twitter.com/HumzaYousaf/status/1773464995843494060>

InterfaithScot Honoured to be present at this historic Interfaith Iftar in Bute House at invitation of @ScotGovFM. First time the Islamic call for prayer made within its walls - beautiful! @MuslimScot @SCoJeC @EdinInterfaith @scotgov #iftar #interfaith [plus video]

<https://twitter.com/InterfaithScot/status/1773637807564636651>

TOP

Equality

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Ethnicity Pay Gap

Monica Lennon (Labour) [S6W-26163] To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to help reduce the ethnicity pay gap.

Reply from Gillian Martin: The Scottish Government remains committed to addressing labour market inequalities for racialised minorities. Our Anti-Racist Employment Strategy published in December 2022 supports and encourages employers to address these inequalities. It provides guidance on improving data as well as recruitment, retention and progression practices to improve the representation and experience of racialised minority staff.

The strategy further sets out a series of actions for the Scottish Government, including developing an anti-racism workplace training framework; supporting employers in their use of positive action measures; and continuing to engage with public sector leadership on recruitment and representation, data and on understanding institutional racism. The Scottish Government is also currently reviewing the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland with a view to improving the Scottish Specific Duties, including data reporting on ethnicity. We have consulted on proposals which include extending the existing gender pay gap reporting duty to ethnicity and disability, with listed public authorities required to make more evidence-based decisions on the information they publish.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-26163>

The Strategy referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-anti-racist-employment-strategy/>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

Anneliese Dodds (Labour) [19447] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of the recommendation on ethnicity pay gap reporting in paragraph 35 of the guide entitled

Considering Social Factors in Pension Scheme Investments, published by Taskforce on Social Factors in October 2023.

Reply from Maria Caulfield: The Government published guidance in April 2023 which sets out how employers can measure, report on, and address any unfair ethnicity pay gaps within their workforce. This was an action from our ambitious Inclusive Britain strategy, published in March 2022.

We have no plans to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay reporting. Instead, we want to encourage and support those employers who want to use ethnicity pay reporting to improve transparency and build trust among their employees.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/19447>

Considering Social Factors in Pension Scheme Investments, referred to above, can be read at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e72c6d7bc3290adab8c22a/considering-social-factors-in-pension-scheme-investments-guide.pdf>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

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

Prisons: Travellers

Ruth Cadbury (Labour) [19893] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of the adequacy of the treatment of (a) Romani, (b) Roma and (c) Irish Traveller people in the prison estate.

Reply from Edward Argar: His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) pursues an evidence-based approach to improving treatment and outcomes for prisoners, people on probation and children in our care from Romani, Roma, and Traveller Communities.

The HMPPS Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Strategy, first produced in May 2023, was drawn up, and continues to be developed, in consultation with Third Sector partners. It is informed by a range of internal and external reports and data. The strategy is implemented via a comprehensive action plan, which targets key areas for development, including data improvement, family interactions and health inequalities.

Some specific examples of activity include the further expansion of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) Forums in prisons. Forums are being regularly held in several establishments across the prison estate, providing a supportive platform for communications and helping to respond to local needs. Staff awareness continues to be improved, with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller specific information embedded into various guides across the organisation, improving the capability of staff to respond to individuals' needs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-21/19893>

The Strategy referred to above is not currently available online.

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups

Lord Shinkwin (Conservative) [HL3187] To ask His Majesty's Government what was the ethnicity pay gap for (1) people of Bangladeshi heritage, (2) people of Pakistani heritage, and (3) people of African Caribbean heritage, for each of the past five years.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The most recent data available on UK ethnicity pay gaps is for 2022. The adjusted pay gaps for the most recent 5 years (2018 to 2022) for the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Caribbean ethnic groups are provided below. A positive percentage value for the ethnicity pay gap means that the relevant ethnic group earns less than the white reference group.

Adjusted Ethnicity Pay Gaps	Bangladeshi	Pakistani	Caribbean
2022	UK born 8.3% Non UK born 17.4%	UK born estimate considered unreliable (-2.0%) Non UK born 14.1%	UK born 3.3% Non UK born 4.7%
2021	UK born 18.3% Non UK born 20.4%	UK born 9.5% Non UK born 11.9%	UK born 8.0% Non UK born 10.5%
2020	UK born 3.5% Non UK born 22.6%	UK born 12.1% Non UK born 20.8%	UK born 4.2% Non UK born estimate considered unreliable (3.7%)
2019	UK born 7.0% Non UK born 20.6%	UK born 3.2% Non UK born 16.0%	UK born 6.3% Non UK born 11.9%
2018	UK born 9.7% Non UK born 28.7%	UK born 6.1% Non UK born 14.7%	UK born 7.5% Non UK born 9.4%

Adjusted pay gaps account for a variety of pay determining characteristics such as occupation, age, sex and geographical region. These figures are split into UK and non-UK born as we do not have the overall adjusted pay gap available for these specific ethnic groups. Further data on ethnicity pay gaps is available from the ONS website at

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

Closing ethnicity pay gaps requires much wider shifts in society. Our ambitious Inclusive Britain strategy, published in March 2022, set out 74 bold actions to tackle entrenched ethnic disparities in employment, education, health and criminal justice. This includes our comprehensive guidance for employers on ethnicity pay reporting, published last April, which set out best practice on measuring, analysing and reporting ethnicity pay gaps. We also launched an Inclusion at Work Panel last year aimed at helping employers achieve fairness and inclusion in the workplace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-11/hl3187>

The Inclusive Britain Strategy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62321381e90e070edcb8d97c/Inclusive-Britain-government-response-to-the-Commission-on-Race-and-Ethnic-Disparities.pdf>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

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

News

Equality Act claims under the Simple Procedure court process in Scotland

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality-act-claims-under-simple-procedure-court-process-scotland>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Hate Incidents (Recording)

Douglas Ross (Conservative): ... My colleague Murdo Fraser was the subject of a

spurious complaint about a social media post that was critical of the Scottish National Party Government. He discovered that Police Scotland had recorded the complaint against him as a non-crime hate incident. No crime was committed, but he is now on the police record as a perceived offender in a supposed hate incident, despite never having been charged, tried, convicted or even informed that the police had a file on him. How can it be right that innocent people are put on the police record when they have done nothing wrong?

Reply from the First Minister (Humza Yousaf): ... It is important that, when we talk about hate, hatred, hate crime or, indeed, the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, we do so in a way that is not just considered but ensures that we stick to the facts.

First, we should remember that the recording of non-crime hate incidents came as a direct result of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. It was contained in recommendations 12 to 17 of the Macpherson report. The recording of non-crime incidents has been around for many years.

Secondly, as well as having been around for many years, the recording of non-crime incidents is done for other incidents that do not meet a criminal threshold, such as domestic abuse incidents. I do not know whether Douglas Ross is suggesting that domestic abuse incidents should not be recorded if they do not meet a criminal threshold, or whether his views apply only in relation to hate crime. Thirdly, I will be clear: the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 is not yet in force, and nothing within it changes how hate crime or, indeed, a non-crime hate incident is recorded. I will make that point by quoting Professor James Chalmers ... He says that the recording of non-crime hate incidents "is a long-standing feature of police practice. Communicating clearly just how little the Act changes is essential to avoid both undue fears about its impact and any attempts to abuse it."

Lastly ... notwithstanding what I have quoted, Police Scotland made it clear last year, and again recently because of press inquiries, that it will review how non-crime hate incidents are recorded, in cognisance of the changes that have been made in England and Wales. ... There is far too much hatred in our society. We all accept that and we should all come together to help to tackle it. ...

Douglas Ross: We all have a zero-tolerance approach to hatred in society, but my question ... was whether innocent people should have a police record when they have done nothing wrong. ...

[Humza Yousaf] said previously that the issue is about monitoring and about gathering data, but what will the value of that data be if, as we now see, individuals can put forward multiple complaints with little or no substance to them and data about those will be stored and recorded in the way that has been the case with Murdo Fraser?

That unacceptable incident is just the tip of the iceberg. The SNP's hate crime act will come into force in just a few days' time and could lead to more such cases. The controversial new law is ripe for abuse. In a letter to this Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents said that some individuals will "seek to weaponise the new legislation and associated police investigation."

Does Humza Yousaf agree with some of the most senior police officers in Scotland, and does he accept that this law could be weaponised?

Reply from the First Minister: ... On the issue of non-crime hate incidents, their impact and effect, and the purpose of their recording, I refer Douglas Ross to the chief constable, who was very clear at the Scottish Police Authority board meeting last week about the value of the recording of hate incidents. She said that: "on recording and reporting hate incidents, they can and do give us a sense, initially, of community tensions. So they are useful to us in terms of engaging with communities, engaging with different groups in communities and being able to

understand where there is potential for tensions to be raised.”

There is an understanding of the reasons and rationale why hate incidents are recorded. That is precisely why the Macpherson report recommended them in the first place around 25 years ago.

In relation to the hate crime act, we of course take seriously what is said by the Scottish Police Federation, ASPS and any other representative organisation that represents police officers.

However, it is incumbent on me to say that this act and the new offences in relation to stirring up are hugely important. Those stirring-up offences have existed in relation to racial hatred since 1986. We are simply extending those protections to other marginalised groups.

It is important for Douglas Ross to be honest and tell members in the chamber and the people of Scotland who it is that he thinks are not deserving of those protections, in the same way that I have been protected because of my race since 1986.

Douglas Ross: The problem is that people will not be protected if the police cannot do their job. We have had warnings, week after week, from officers on the front line, the Police Federation and now the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents. The line at the top of its letterhead says: “representing the operational leaders of the police service in Scotland”.

It is giving as stark a warning as possible to this SNP Government that the act is flawed. It is not going to do what MSPs who supported it wanted it to do. Those warnings are being ignored by Humza Yousaf.

Let us see whether he will also ignore others. Katharina Kasper is the chair of the Scottish Police Authority’s complaints and conduct committee. She said that an investigation itself “can become a punishment which may have a chilling effect on the freedom of expression.” ... one of his most senior SNP MPs, Joanna Cherry KC? ... said: “for many, the process will be the punishment. Being under police investigation will be stressful, costly, damaging to reputations and could lead to problems in the workplace.”

The police should not be dispatched to people’s doors to check their thinking. Does the First Minister not recognise the chilling effect that his law will have on free speech?

Reply from the First Minister: These issues were rehearsed last week, but I emphasise and reiterate to Douglas Ross that explicit protections for freedom of expression and freedom of speech are, of course, in the bill. In fact, there is a triple-lock protection, because, first, there is explicit reference in the bill to freedom of expression. That was a matter of compromise between the Government and members of the Opposition, which was a good example of how we do legislation in this Parliament. There is also, of course, a reasonable person defence in the legislation, and our legislation has to comply with the European convention on human rights and its important articles in relation to freedom of expression.

I have absolute faith in the police’s ability to weed out vexatious complaints. Unfortunately, they have to deal with vexatious complaints across a whole range of legal matters and right across the legal landscape. I have absolute faith in the police’s ability to address those issues in ways that are appropriate.

I go back to the central point that stirring-up offences are not new. They have existed since 1986—so for most of my entire life—therefore I have absolute confidence in Police Scotland’s ability to police new stirring-up offences in ways that are appropriate.

I say again to Douglas Ross that his party, the Conservatives, supported the extension of stirring-up offences for England and Wales at Westminster. If they are okay to protect people in England and Wales, why are they not okay to protect people here in Scotland? If Douglas Ross believes in a zero-tolerance approach, and if he believes that someone who is Jewish, elderly, gay or disabled should be

protected from behaviour that is threatening, abusive or intended to stir up hatred, why is he opposing the legislation? From my point of view, it certainly looks as though it is just for the sake of opposition. ...

Douglas Ross: Humza Yousaf can see absolutely no flaw in the legislation that he took through the Parliament, despite the overwhelming evidence that we are getting from front-line officers and many others. The hate crime act will come into force on April fool's day, but it is no joke. The Scottish Conservatives opposed it when it was passed and we still do.

The act is so flawed that, whatever its intentions, it is likely to create more division. Overworked and underresourced police officers will be forced to deal with hundreds of malicious complaints. Humza Yousaf's law could be weaponised against people with opposing views. Police investigations will tarnish the names of innocent people and could silence them. That law is overreach by the Scottish National Party. How long will it take before the hate crime act goes the same way as the legislation on named persons, offensive behaviour at football matches and gender recognition reform and every other flawed Scottish National Party law?

Reply from the First Minister: Not only am I proud of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021; the entire Parliament should be proud of it. Every single political party came together to support that act, except the Scottish Conservatives. Why should members be proud of it? They should be proud of it because it was supported by a number of groups that represent some of the most marginalised people in our communities. The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities stated: "We ... strongly support both the introduction of this new offence"—that is, the stirring-up offence—"and its application across all protected characteristics."

Why is that important? It is important because Lord Bracadale, who led the independent review that helped us to develop the hate crime act, said: "Stirring up of hatred may lead to violence or public disorder. It may incite people to commit offences such as assault". He called such conduct "morally wrong", and he was absolutely right to do so.

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 contains provisions that protect people's right to freedom of expression. However, it also ensures that Scotland, the Parliament and this country send a message to people who are often the targets of hatred that we truly have a zero-tolerance approach. That is something that I am very proud of indeed.

To read this question and answer session in full see

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15790&i=134780#ScotParIOR>

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, referred to above, can be read at
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2021/14/contents>

The Macpherson Report, referred to above, can be read at
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c2af540f0b645ba3c7202/4262.pdf>

The letter from the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents referred to above can be read at
<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/committees/criminal-justice-committee/correspondence/2024/hate-crime-and-public-order-act-asps-response-20-march-2024.pdf>

The Bracadale Review, referred to above, can be read at
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-review-hate-crime-legislation-scotland-final-report/>

Scottish Parliament Motion

John Mason (SNP) [S6M-12649] International Day for the Elimination of Racial – That

the Parliament welcomes the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, observed annually on 21 March, which aims to confront racism and promote equality worldwide; recognises that the theme for 2024 focuses on acknowledging, achieving justice for, and fostering development for individuals of African descent; understands that the day's origins stem from the tragic events of the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, and that the day serves as a solemn reminder of what it sees as the ongoing battle against racial discrimination; considers that everyone should strive towards a more inclusive and equitable society for all, and thanks all those who have taken part in some way in this international day.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-12649>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Muslims: Safety

Sarah Owen (Labour) [19480] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Department's news story of 11 March 2024 entitled Government commits more funding to protect UK Muslims, what the eligibility criteria for applications for that funding will be; how bids for funding will be (a) assessed and (b) decided upon; and which Government department will be responsible for providing that funding.

Reply from Tom Tugendhat: In light of increased reports of anti-Muslim hatred following the start of the Israel/Hamas conflict, an additional £4.9 million was made available in October for protective security at mosques and Muslim faith schools, bringing total funding available for 2023/24 to £29.4 million. The Government has confirmed that this level of funding will now be maintained annually through to 2027/28.

Mosques and Muslim faith community centres can register for protective security measures through the Home Office's Protective Security for Mosques Scheme on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The scheme provides physical protective security measures, such as CCTV, intruder alarms and secure perimeter fencing. Due diligence checks are carried out by the Home Office; for example, to confirm that applicants are eligible registered charities. Following approval, applicants receive a site survey to assess the most suitable security measures for their site, which are funded by the Home Office and installed by the Department's delivery partner. Security officer services will also become available through the scheme later this year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-19/19480>

The news story referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-commits-more-funding-to-protect-uk-muslims>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Schools: Bullying

Baroness Sherlock (Labour) [HL3183] To ask His Majesty's Government what data they collect on the religious identity of children who are bullied in schools.

Reply from Baroness Barran: The department does not hold information on the religious identity of children that are bullied in schools.

The 'National behaviour survey' publishes data on a number of behaviour related topics, including bullying. The latest report, based on data from 2021/22, stated that 3% of those surveyed, who said they had been bullied, said it was due to their religion or belief. The 'National behaviour survey' can be found here:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64809defb32b9e0012a963ce/Natio>

[nal Behaviour Survey academic year 2021 to 22 report.pdf](#)

The department is providing over £3 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2024, to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. This includes projects targeting bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate-related bullying.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-11/hl3183>

New Publication

Preventing and combating racism and intolerance in and through education

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-factsheet-on-education-24032024-en/1680af07a7>

News

Humza Yousaf's hate crime law could be his very own poll tax epitaph

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/humza-yousafs-hate-crime-law-could-be-his-very-own-poll-tax-epitaph-brian-monteith-4567016>

No Hate Crime Act arrests are necessary for this new law to have a frightening effect on free speech

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/no-hate-crime-act-arrests-are-necessary-for-this-new-law-to-have-a-frightening-effect-on-free-speech-john-mclellan-4569145>

Communication essential to avoid 'undue fears' over Hate Crime Act

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/professor-james-chalmers-communication-essential-to-avoid-undue-fears-over-hate-crime-act-4569579>

Hate Crime: Questions over Police Scotland's recording of hate crimes

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24219468.hate-crime-questions-police-scotlands-recording-hate-crimes/>

Humza Yousaf's Hate Crime Act will see barely trained police officers make fundamental decisions about free speech

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/humza-yousafs-hate-crime-act-will-see-barely-trained-police-officers-make-fundamental-decisions-about-free-speech-susan-dalgety-4573942>

Hate Crime Act: Police Scotland must now show this poorly framed law really can be enforced in a 'proportionate' way

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/hate-crime-act-police-scotland-must-now-show-this-poorly-framed-law-really-can-be-enforced-in-a-proportionate-way-scotsman-comment-4573543>

All Humza Yousaf's Hate Crime Act will achieve is to stir up more hatred

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/columnists/2024/03/26/scotland-hate-crime-act-humza-yousaf-snp-trans-self-id/>

Humza Yousef 'dismissing stark police warnings about hate crime laws'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/28/humza-yousaf-accused-dismiss-warnings-police-hate-crime-law/>

What is the Scottish hate crime bill? The new law explained

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/snp-hate-crime-bill-new-law-rules-fdjflrt70>

Murdo Fraser accuses police of 'unlawful' behaviour after tweet recorded as 'hate incident'

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/murdo-fraser-accuses-police-of-unlawful-behaviour-after-tweet-recorded-as-hate-incident-4567214>

How I discovered I'd been secretly found guilty of 'hate' by Police Scotland – Murdo Fraser

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/how-i-discovered-id-been-secretly-found-guilty-of-hate-by-police-scotland-murdo-fraser-4568383>

'Disturbing' evidence of rural racism, says Countryfile's John Craven

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/22/john-craven-bbc-disturbing-evidence-racism-in-countryside/>

Top universities see five-fold surge in anti-Semitic incidents since Oct 7

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/29/top-universities-surge-anti-semitism-hamas/>

Not everything that happens to Muslims at work is down to religion, tribunal rules

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/25/not-everything-muslim-work-related-religion-tribunal-judge/>

Muslim doctor told to roll up sleeves loses discrimination case

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/muslim-doctor-told-to-roll-up-sleeves-loses-discrimination-case-zqpndczcv>

Marlon Thomas: Family suffering 'every day' after racist attack

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-68683094>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

New Publications

Marches, parades and static demonstrations: guidance

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/marches-parades-static-demonstrations-guidance/>

Building a New Scotland: Education and lifelong learning in an independent Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-new-scotland-education-lifelong-learning-independent-scotland/>

First Minister's Easter Message [video]

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1773651322857791926>

News

'Political mood has changed' on assisted dying - MSP

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-68645698>

Assisted dying: Could new Scottish bill bring legal suicide to the UK?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/assisted-dying-scotland-uk-bill-suicide-b2520509.html>

Scotland could be first UK country to allow terminally ill to seek assistance to die

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/28/scottish-parliament-to-debate-bill-on-assisted-dying/>

Bill tabled in Scotland could legalise assisted dying for terminally ill adults

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/mar/28/bill-scotland-could-make-assisted-dying-legal>

McArthur confident Parliament will back assisted dying legislation

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24218838.mcarthur-confident-parliament-will-back-assisted-dying-legislation/>

Could assisted dying be coming to Scotland?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-68674769>

Assisted dying bill 'dangerous' says Catholic Church

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24217810.assisted-dying-bill-dangerous-says-catholic-church/>

Douglas Ross will vote against assisted dying bill

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24219071.douglas-ross-will-vote-assisted-dying-bill/>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

Press Release

Prime Minister's Easter Message (video)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-prime-ministers-easter-message-2024>

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Cost of Living

Scottish Government Website

Help during the cost of living crisis

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

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

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

- Health and Wellbeing

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

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

News

Charity says one in four children living in poverty in Scotland

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24207450charity-says-one-four-children-living-poverty-scotland/>

Food inflation slows but households are still struggling

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/food-inflation-slows-but-households-are-still-struggling-lk32bg9mr>

Seven bills going up and one going down in April

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-68666795>

Number of Britons without savings jumps by more than one million in a year

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/savings-cost-living-poverty-latest-figures-b2517789.html>

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Other New Publication

UK Giving: Mapping Generosity Across the Country

https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-research/uk_giving_report_2024_final.pdf

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Other News

Guide to Running a Charity or Social Enterprise 2024

<https://tfn.scot/magazine/guide-to-running-a-charity-or-social-enterprise-2024/read>

Scots donated £1.1bn despite dwindling donor numbers

<https://tfn.scot/news/scots-donated-1-1bn-despite-dwindling-donor-numbers>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

**** Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Bill as introduced

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill/introduction/bill-as-introduced.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill/introduction/explanatory-notes-accessible.pdf>

Policy Memorandum

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill/introduction/policy-memorandum-accessible.pdf>

Financial Memorandum

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill/introduction/financial-memorandum-accessible.pdf>

Delegated Powers Memorandum

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill/introduction/delegated-powers-memorandum-accessible.pdf>

Statements on Legislative Competence

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill/introduction/legislative-competence-accessible.pdf>

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>

Family Visas (Minimum Income) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3684>

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

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

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

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

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

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

Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill

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

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>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

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

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

Disclosure Scotland fees: discounting, waivers and accredited bodies

(closing date 28 May 2024)

<https://consult.gov.scot/disclosure-scotland/fees-discounting-waivers-and-accredited-bodies/>

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

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/>

Faithful Welcome

Application deadline not stated

Faith in Community Scotland, and Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees funding of up to £500 to support Scotland's faith communities to welcome refugees and asylum seekers and enable them to be an integral part of community life, wherever they are coming from and whatever the reason. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/bdd5kr6n>

Cost-of-Living Support Scotland

Closing date: 21 August 2024

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

Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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>

Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals

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>

**** The issues and opportunities facing EU citizens in the UK**

11 May 2024 (Edinburgh, 2.00–5.00)

Citizens Rights Project conference to look at the experience of EU and other European citizens in the UK, and Scotland in particular, including continuing problems with the EU settlement scheme, experience in the job market and education, discrimination and social exclusion, and opportunities to participate in the democratic process in Scotland, UK, and Europe. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3trz8tw8>

No Recourse To Public Funds

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>

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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

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

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

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SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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



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



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

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