



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

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

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**Due to the Jewish festival of Pesach,
the next issue of MEMO will be published on 6 May 2024.**

Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

UK Migration Rules (Seasonal Workforce)

Keith Brown (SNP) [S6F-03030] To ask the First Minister what impact the Scottish Government considers this month's changes to United Kingdom migration rules will have on the seasonal workforce in Scotland, as the soft fruit sector begins to prepare for the summer season.

Reply from the First Minister (Humza Yousaf): The United Kingdom Government's policies to reduce net migration are an example of decisions that are taken at Westminster that work directly against Scotland's vital national interest. Increasing the skilled worker visa threshold from £26,200 to £38,700 makes no

sense whatsoever for Scotland nor, I suspect, for many parts of the UK. It will limit labour migration in areas of Scotland that already face significant challenges around depopulation.

Although the increase in the salary threshold does not currently affect seasonal horticultural and poultry workers, migrant workers play a vital role across the breadth of our entire economy. These changes could cause irreparable damage to the food supply chain and to the sustainability of our rural economy. It is only with independence that we would have the ability to devise a humane, principled approach to migration that is needs based and delivers positive outcomes for Scotland's communities and public services and for our society more generally.

Keith Brown: Every day, we hear about the harm that Brexit is causing the Scottish economy, and indeed the UK economy, with the cost now estimated at £140 billion. I say that, but there is a conspiracy of silence among the unionist parties, which will not raise a word of concern or criticism about the effect that Brexit is having.

Today, I, along with other members of the Parliament's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee, visited an exporter, who said that it is "utterly exhausting" trying to deal with the new burdens that Brexit imposes. He talked about businesses that have gone bust overnight, and some that no longer export.

Scotland's rural industries in constituencies such as mine are bearing the brunt of Brexit. The new migration rules are just the latest in a long list of toxic Tory Westminster policies. A Labour Westminster Government would do nothing to change that; it would keep Scotland out of the European Union, out of the single market ... and without freedom of movement.

Does the First Minister agree that Scotland needs not a change of Government at Westminster, but the change that only independence can bring?

Reply from the First Minister: There is simply no doubt that Brexit is relentless.

The damage from Brexit has been relentless, as are the impacts that are being faced across the labour market as a result of Brexit.

New import controls that have come into effect have threatened to cause hikes in food prices once again. Of course, that is on top of the Conservatives' mishandling of the economy, which has seen food prices rise to levels that have caused such suffering and misery.

Changes to migration policy, combined with the loss of people coming from the EU to live and work in Scotland, make it harder for key sectors such as social care, agriculture and hospitality to recruit—and, crucially, to retain—vital staff.

Keith Brown is absolutely right: Tory policy on migration is absolutely toxic, and the sooner Scotland is free of a Tory Government, the better. However, Labour offers little change; on the big issues such as rejoining the European Union, a Labour Westminster Government will change absolutely nothing. It is only with independence that we will once again join the European Union and have free movement of people.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-18-04-2024?meeting=15804&iob=134907#orscontributions_M2103E403P739C2577719

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Talent Attraction and Migration Service

Tim Eagle (Conservative) [S6W-26723] To ask the Scottish Government on what date it will launch its online digital Talent Attraction and Migration Service (TAMS), and how this will be promoted to employers across Scotland.

Reply from Emma Roddick: The first iteration of Scotland's Migration Service

launched on 27 March 2024. The previous working title of 'Talent Attraction and Migration Service' was updated following testing with users.

The service is hosted on [Scotland.org](https://www.scotland.org) and provides information and advice to people who have recently moved to Scotland, international students, employers and inward investors, who are able to book one-to-one advice appointments with our expert suppliers – Citizens Advice Scotland and the law firm Seraphus. The scope of the full service will widen in Autumn 2024 to service the needs of individuals located outside Scotland with an interest in moving to Scotland.

Delivery of the first phase of the service is being promoted to employers across Scotland and all other users through a stakeholder advocacy approach. This involves targeted promotional activities through existing relationships and networks of stakeholders. Partnership communications toolkits have been shared with stakeholders containing materials to promote and encourage their own service users to use Scotland's Migration Service. The launch was also promoted via a [news release](#) from Scottish Government and social media post.

Further promotional activities will be conducted in Autumn to accompany the launch of the full service.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-26723>

Asylum Seekers: Suicide

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-26505] To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to recent reports that five asylum seekers living in hotels in Scotland have attempted suicide.

Reply from Emma Roddick: The Home Office is responsible for the provision of asylum accommodation and support, including the use of contingency hotels. The Scottish Government has consistently made clear to UK Government that hotels are not appropriate accommodation and we continue to be concerned about the effect prolonged stays in hotels have on people's wellbeing.

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

Every suicide is a tragedy with a far-reaching impact on family, friends and the wider community. In implementing the Scottish Government and CoSLA's suicide prevention strategy, *Creating Hope Together*, and its first 3-year Action Plan, 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.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-26504>

Creating Hope Together, referred to above, can be read at

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

Asylum Seekers: Mental Health Support

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-26505] To ask the Scottish Government what support it is providing to local authorities to ensure that adequate and accessible mental health support is available to asylum seekers in Scotland.

Reply from Emma Roddick: The Scottish Government funds a range of action that supports mental health and wellbeing which is available to anyone living in Scotland, regardless of their residence status.

The Home Office is responsible for the provision of asylum accommodation and

support, including the use of contingency hotels. People seeking asylum living in Scotland are entitled to access healthcare, including referral to mental health services.

Through our actions in our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Delivery Plan and Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan, we will continue to tackle the underlying causes of mental health inequalities and how we can better support groups most at risk of poor mental health, including asylum seekers and refugees.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-26505>

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Delivery Plan, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/mental-health-wellbeing-delivery-plan-2023-2025/>

The Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/suicide-prevention-action-plan-2023-to-2024-priorities/>

UK Parliament Debate

Age-disputed Refugee Children

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-19/debates/08FBDC2A-8B65-4263-9CF6-3024A29C1FBB/Age-DisputedRefugeeChildren>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Asylum Hotel Exits

The Minister for Legal Migration and the Border (Tom Pursglove): [HCWS407] The Government are committed to implementing effective measures to address the challenges posed by irregular migration, ensure the integrity of our borders, and reduce the burden on the taxpayer.

While allowing the Home Office to fulfil its statutory obligations towards destitute asylum seekers, Ministers have worked to cut reliance on hotels by expanding and driving efficiencies in the asylum accommodation estate. We have maximised the utilisation of bed spaces in the existing asylum estate, which has resulted in 72 fewer hotels being opened in 2023 than otherwise would have been required, and we are committed to going further to end our reliance on hotels.

We have undertaken work across Government to secure alternative sites that provide sustainable and cost-effective accommodation to house asylum seekers, with further sites in development. In addition, we continue with the implementation of the regional allocation plans for dispersed accommodation, which will further relieve pressure on communities through equitable dispersal.

The Prime Minister's commitment to clearing the legacy asylum backlog has been met, further reducing the need to use hotels. By streamlining processes and increasing efficiency, over 74,000 initial decisions were made on asylum applications in 2023, which is four times more than in 2022.

We now have 20,000 fewer asylum seekers accommodated in hotels than in September 2023—a reduction of 36%.

This week we will have returned 50 hotels to their communities for commercial use since the start of March 2024, and since October last year will have ended the use of 150 hotels by the beginning of May.

In conclusion, the Government's commitment to reducing hotel use for asylum seekers reflects our broader efforts to stop the boats, cut irregular migration, strengthen border security, and relieve pressure on local communities.

UK Parliament, House of Commons Oral Answers

Net Migration

Miriam Cates (Conservative) [902316] What recent progress [the Minister's] Department has made on reducing net migration.

Reply from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (James Cleverly):

... The Government have implemented a number of measures to reduce net migration. Those include restricting overseas students from bringing family dependants to the UK while they study, stopping overseas care workers from bringing family dependants, increasing the salary threshold for skilled worker visas—ultimately to £38,700—and increasing the minimum income requirements for family visas. We recognise that levels of migration have been too high and, upon my appointment, I immediately took action to bring those figures down.

Miriam Cates: ... one of the main drivers of immigration over the past 20 years or so has been labour shortages caused by falling birth rates. According to projections by Philip Pilkington and Paul Morland, if birth rates do not increase, immigration will have to rise to over a third of the population over the next 50 years if we are going to maintain a sufficient working-age population. Immigration on this scale has no democratic consent and obviously my right hon. Friend has promised repeatedly to reduce net migration, so what discussions has he had with colleagues in the Treasury about this issue? Does he agree that the Government must have a strategy to address falling birth rates, to ensure that we do not always have to rely on ever-increasing rates of immigration?

Reply from James Cleverly: My hon. Friend makes an important point. Birth rates are driven by myriad social and economic factors, which I have to concede are beyond my control, but I have spoken with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer about related issues and recognise that GDP per capita is an important metric, as is overall GDP. We are ensuring that we invest in a British workforce: my right hon. Friend the Education Secretary is passionate about apprenticeships and lifelong learning. We want to be a high-skilled, high-income economy, rather than a low-skilled, mass-migration economy. That remains the Government's priority, and we are taking action through our immigration policy to reflect that desire.

Andy Slaughter (Labour): Trhas Teklehaimanot Tesfay is one of the elite female cyclists chosen to lead RideLondon next month. She is also an asylum seeker, living in a hotel in my constituency where the food is so bad it makes her sick and unable to compete. Last month, an investigation by Sustain found food for asylum seekers that was undercooked, past its sell-by date and infested with insects, which in some cases left them malnourished and hospitalised. Could the Secretary of State investigate this scandal and the responsibility of the contractor Clearsprings, so that asylum seekers such as Trhas are not subject to such dangerous and degrading conditions?

Reply from James Cleverly: Mr Speaker, I can assure you, the hon. Gentleman and the House that our contractors are expected to maintain standards and, where they fall below those standards, they will be held to account. I will absolutely take note of the case that the hon. Gentleman has raised.

Kelly Tolhurst (Conservative): I welcome the measures my right hon. Friend has taken to tackle the levels of legal migration, but could he inform me what assessment he has made of the expected impact of the new immigration salary list and what impact that will have on the net migration figure?

Reply from James Cleverly: My hon. Friend is at the frontline of our fight against illegal migration, but legal migration is important. We have recognised that, for a

number of reasons, the figures have been too high in the most recent couple of years and I have listed measures we have taken. The combined impact of that is that, by our estimations, under the new regime that I have put in place, 300,000 people who would previously have been eligible will no longer be eligible. That is the order of magnitude of change that we will eventually see once these proposals are fully implemented.

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat): The refusal to allow care workers from overseas to bring a spouse with them comes at the same time as, in Cumbria, we are finding it impossible to fill at least a fifth of all the social care jobs. Would the Home Secretary explain to constituents of mine who are unable to find people to care for them and their loved ones why it seems sensible to make the lives of people from overseas so miserable in coming over here to care for our loved ones that they do not come at all?

Reply from James Cleverly: I recognise that, in rural communities, recruitment and retention of staff is difficult and in the hon. Member's constituency—a wonderful, beautiful, but very rural constituency—there are particular pressures. I can assure him that the global supply of potential care workers is very significant. Actually, the issues about where in the country those people work are more about the internal dynamic within the UK economy than the quantum of people around the world who would seek to work in the UK. There are plenty of people who would wish to work here, recognising that they are not allowed to bring their dependants with them, but the issue of where in the country those people work is actually a broader issue. ...

Alison Thewliss (SNP): The cruel Conservative hikes to the visa minimum income threshold have caused deep distress—deep, deep distress—to many. Does the Home Secretary understand the pain that these changes have caused, and what message does he believe it sends out to those who would do us the honour of making their home in these islands that he puts such a high price on love and family life?

Reply from James Cleverly: It is absolutely right that any nation in the world puts conditionality on the people it accepts within its own borders. This country has a long-standing tradition—in fact, I am a product of this, as are the Prime Minister, the Business and Trade Secretary and many others in the Government—of being open and welcoming. However, when we see the orders of magnitude of legal migration that we have seen over the last couple of years, it is incumbent on us to take action. We have made it clear what action we will take, and we have given notice of the changes so that people can make their plans accordingly. When there are special cases, there is a special cases exemption, so that we can both control immigration and do our moral duty to protect those people who seek our protection, and be an attractive place for people to come and work.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-15/debates/2B2C8A94-8FE1-47A1-ABC9-3EA24E6A1712/NetMigration>

Returning Illegal Migrants to their Home Country

Henry Smith (Conservative) [902319] What recent progress [the Minister's] Department has made on returning illegal migrants to their home country.

Reply from the Minister for Countering Illegal Migration (Michael Tomlinson): In 2023, we delivered a strong removal performance, with overall returns back to pre-covid levels. In total, 26,000 were returned, an increase of 74%, at an average of 500 removed every week last year.

Henry Smith: I am grateful to the Minister for his response. Can he update the House on how his Department is prioritising the return of foreign national offenders to their home countries to keep the streets and communities of the United Kingdom safe?

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: ... I visited Gatwick recently and saw for myself the good work of the Border Force team there. He will be pleased to know that

removals of foreign national offenders were up last year by 27%. We are committed to the removal of foreign criminals and those with no right to be in the United Kingdom.

Jessica Morden (Labour): On that point, I sadly see many asylum seekers in Newport who are stuck in limbo due to this Government's incompetence. However, can I draw the Minister's attention to the case of a man in Newport who lied about his name and country of origin and is a convicted sex offender who has breached the terms of his licence? The courts want him returned home. He wants to return home and will even pay for his flight, but for some unfathomable reason, the Home Office seem incapable of authorising or allowing that. It has been three years—why?

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The removals increased last year. It is interesting to note that Opposition Members, including the leader of the Labour party, have campaigned to ensure they are preventing the deportation of foreign criminals. Those on the Government Benches are determined to see foreign criminals removed, and there was an increase in removals of 74% last year. ...

Stephen Kinnock (Labour): Under successive Conservative Governments since 2010, returns of failed asylum seekers have collapsed by 44%, and returns of foreign national offenders have fallen by almost 30% over the same period. For all the Government's tough talk, only 2% of those arriving on small boats since 2018 have been returned anywhere, yet Ministers are still resisting Labour's plan for a new returns and enforcement unit to ensure the swift removal of those with no right to be here. Meanwhile, over the weekend, more people crossed the channel in small boats than will be covered in the entire first year of the Government's failing Rwanda scheme. Will the Minister stop the headline-chasing gimmicks and instead commit to setting out his plan for the 99% of people currently stuck in the asylum system who will never be sent to Rwanda?

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The fact of the matter is that nearly 18,000 foreign national offenders were returned between January 2019 and December 2023. The fact of the matter is that Opposition Members, including the leader of the Labour party, have campaigned to prevent the deportation of foreign criminals, while Government Members welcome an increase of 74%, with an average of 500 people being removed every single week.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-15/debates/ADACB127-79D0-4673-99B4-00D06EE27B0E/ReturningIllegalMigrantsToTheirHomeCountry>

Visa Scheme for Palestinian Refugees

Patrick Grady (SNP) [902325] If [the Minister] will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a visa scheme for Palestinian refugees.

Reply from the Minister for Legal Migration and the Border (Tom Pursglove): We are all concerned about the plight of those living in Gaza. Currently, we are not considering establishing a separate route for Palestinians. In any humanitarian situation, the UK must consider its resettlement approach in the round, rather than on a crisis-by-crisis basis.

Patrick Grady: It is not surprising that the upper tribunal found the decision to require biometric data for people from Gaza to be "irrational and unreasonable", because most of us find that to apply to most decisions made by the Home Office. Is it not also irrational and unreasonable for the United Kingdom to offer humanitarian visas to people caught up in the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan, but not to offer such visas to people fleeing the conflict in Gaza?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: I will not give a running commentary on ongoing litigation, but I can say that we are supporting British nationals with dependants in Gaza to get those individuals out of Gaza safely, working in collaboration with Foreign Office colleagues. There are also marked differences at play here. Of course, the right of return is fundamental as part of efforts towards a two-state

solution, and other factors are at play in responding to the Ukrainian situation. The dynamic is very different, which directly affects the relationship we have with the Ukrainian Government, particularly in respect of the ability to carry out checks on individuals. ...

Alison Thewliss (SNP): Gaza Families Reunited's petition for a Palestinian family visa scheme has garnered 100,000 signatures, and I hope it will soon be debated in Parliament. Gazans are stuck in a cruel and irrational Catch-22 situation: they cannot cross the border to Egypt because they do not have visas, as they cannot get their biometrics registered, but they cannot get their biometrics registered because they cannot get to a visa application centre in Egypt. The Government have the power to waive the requirement for biometrics to be registered, and it is in the Minister's hands to do so. Why won't he?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The hon. Lady will appreciate that the security of the system is imperative. We must act in accordance with the requirements, which we put front and centre. I will not comment on ongoing litigation, but I can say that we will continue to work with Foreign Office colleagues in the way that we have described. Elements of the peace process are at play in relation to these issues, but we will keep our response to this crisis under review as matters develop.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-15/debates/60D0E436-0E9A-4492-A909-E09B96FA382F/VisaSchemeForPalestinianRefugees>

The Upper Tribunal judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://tribunalsdecisions.service.gov.uk/utiac/jr-2024-lon-000082-jr-2024-lon-000128>

The petition referred to above can be read at

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/648577>

Asylum Seekers Accommodated in Hotels

Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [902328] What progress [the Minister] has made on reducing the number of asylum seekers accommodated in hotels.

David Evennett (Conservative) [902329] What progress [the Minister's] Department has made on closing asylum hotels.

Reply from the Minister for Legal Migration and the Border (Tom Pursglove):

The Home Office has been clear that the use of hotels is a temporary and short-term measure to ensure that we meet our statutory obligation to accommodate destitute asylum seekers. We have made significant progress in closing over 100 asylum hotels as of the end of March. Our actions mean that there are over 20,000 fewer asylum seekers in hotels today compared with six months ago.

Desmond Swayne: Does the Minister's ambition extend to closing all the hotels?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right that the Government's ambition is to close the hotels. We closed 100 by the end of March, and we are working towards closing 150 by May. Fundamentally, the objective is to alter the way in which people are accommodated and to introduce more cost-effective and appropriate approaches, but also to reduce the flow of people coming into this country illegally, which is the very best way of alleviating the pressures.

David Evennett: I welcome all the efforts that my hon. Friend is making to deal with and speed up the asylum process. However, will he outline what measures he considers when deciding which hotels to close in each tranche?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: My right hon. Friend will recognise that value for money is a critical consideration that informs hotel closure decisions, as are operational deliverability and the notice periods on contracts. It is also about recognising the needs in particular locations and the challenges that these sites present. We have a plan, we are closing hotels, and we will continue to deliver on precisely what we promised.

Toby Perkins (Labour): For almost two years, the Sandpiper Hotel in Chesterfield has

been used as a hotel for asylum seekers. The North Derbyshire Refugee Support Group has told me that not a single person who has stayed there has been asked to go back to their country. In fact, the vast majority of them have had their applications approved, which undermines the Government's suggestion that all these asylum seekers are not entitled to be here. Actually, the Government approve the vast majority of applications, so their approach is a waste of money. Why do the Government continue to fail in this way? For the Minister to celebrate the extraordinary usage of hotels just because it is diminishing slightly is hopeless. When will we get the Sandpiper back in public use?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: I thought it was interesting that a Labour insider said to *The Times* last week: "We need a viable answer to what we'd do differently other than just 'smash the gangs'" and that "we can't currently say how we are going to tackle the demand side of the issue."

They are absolutely right. I suspect we will be waiting a very long time for the answer. That goes right to the heart of the point that the hon. Gentleman raises. He says that we ought to be closing the hotels, but it is only this Government that have a credible plan to do just that.

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... When it comes to reducing the number of asylum seekers, I want to suggest one option to the Minister that we could certainly do in Strangford. For those people who are in hotels, there are companies in my constituency that wish to employ them and to give them accommodation at the same time. If we want to help the asylum seekers in the hotels in my constituency, and in the consistency adjoining mine, then let them get the jobs and let them get the accommodation.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: While I am always very willing to engage with the hon. Gentleman, he will appreciate that the difficulty that we have in respect of that approach is the pull factor that it would present—it would potentially encourage people to make dangerous journeys via small boats to get to the UK. We do not want to do anything that plays into the business model of the evil criminal gangs responsible for that miserable trade. What we want to do is put them out of business. On the wider accommodation point, I am very happy to engage with the hon. Gentleman.

Simon Clarke (Conservative): In 2016, Middlesbrough had the highest ratio of asylum seekers per head of population of anywhere in England. I welcome the closure of hotels, but I worry about reports in today's *Daily Mail* that the Home Office is buying up large amounts of property in some of the poorer areas of England, which risks taking us back to the situation we saw in 2016. Will the Minister reassure me that that is not the case, because my constituents are clear that that places an unacceptable strain on the community, and indeed an unhappy strain on community cohesion?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: My right hon. Friend is a strong supporter of the work the Government are doing to get a better grip on the flow of people coming across to our country, who inevitably need accommodating while they are here. We have a mixture of accommodation to meet those needs, and getting the numbers down is critical to be able to reduce that dependence. I am able to say, however, that we are not actively pursuing procurement in the three local authorities cited in the article that my right hon. Friend references—and that includes Middlesbrough.

Mike Amesbury (Labour): ... The Government promised some considerable time ago that a hotel used in my constituency would no longer be used to house those seeking asylum. That is not the case; it has almost become de facto permanent. Could the Minister speak to me—not necessarily on the Floor of the House, but separately—and give me an assurance that there will be a managed closure of that facility?

Reply from Tom Pursglove: What I cannot do on the Floor of the House is make commitments about specific hotels, but I would be very happy to meet the hon. Gentleman to discuss this. What he could do to help me with this particular challenge is to get behind the work that the Government are doing to reduce the

flow of people coming to the UK, which fundamentally and crucially would help us to be able to close hotels such as the one in his constituency.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-15/debates/4D829057-7C0B-4839-8EEB-7AF8FCB12EA9/AsylumSeekersAccommodatedInHotels>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Refugees

Dan Jarvis (Labour) [21043] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2024 to Question 19061 on Afghanistan, how many ARAP scheme applications have been reassessed as of 12 April 2024.

Reply from Andrew Murrison: The reassessment of applications from those with credible links to former Afghan specialist units is well under way and is being conducted by staff independent of those who previously worked on these applications.

The first reassessment occurred on March 26, and we aim to complete reassessing the majority of the approximately 2,000 cases in scope of the review within around 12 weeks. Some complex cases might extend beyond this as we ensure all evidence is considered.

I will update the House once the review is completed, but my immediate priority is processing the cases as swiftly and diligently as possible and ensuring that the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme criteria is consistently applied to all applications being reassessed.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21043>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-18/19061>

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>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Stephen Kinnock (Labour) [22008] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the then Minister for Immigration of 17 October 2023, Official Report, column 54WH, what recent progress the Government has made on establishing a specific route to family reunion for Afghan nationals who are family members of individuals resettled to the UK under pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: For those evacuated from Afghanistan under Pathway 1 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) without their immediate family members, the Home Secretary has committed to establishing a route for separated families to be reunited in the first half of this year.

Further details will be provided in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-16/22008>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-10-17/debates/449FB75E-4701-4CA5-999D-E098F278E714/SafeAsylumRoutesAfghanRefugees#contribution-4C365FCE-0EBE-4940-8548-CF17C83F5EF8>

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

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

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Ukraine

The following two questions both received the same answer

Refugees: Ukraine

Olivia Blake (Labour) [21246] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that separated displaced Ukrainian families will be able to reunite with their relatives in the UK on the (a) Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme and (b) Ukraine Permission Extension scheme.

Olivia Blake (Labour) [21247] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on family reunion pathways for separated displaced Ukrainian families of (a) closure of the Ukraine Family Scheme and (b) changes in sponsor eligibility criteria on the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK's Ukraine schemes are not family reunification pathways. The schemes are designed to provide temporary sanctuary in the UK for Ukrainian's fleeing the war.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme remains open for new applications from those wishing to come to the UK. Ukrainian nationals who would have qualified under the Ukraine Family Scheme will still be able to apply under Homes for Ukraine. Family members wishing to join a relative who is already in the UK may make an application to the Homes for Ukraine scheme provided they have a sponsor who meets the eligibility requirements for sponsorship. Ukrainians may also apply through standard visa or family routes, if they are eligible.

From early 2025, the new Ukraine Permission Extension scheme is due to open to those who fled Ukraine because of Russia's invasion and were granted a Ukraine scheme visa as well as those granted Leave Outside the Rules for the same reason.

We keep all of our Ukraine schemes under consistent review in line with developments in the ongoing war.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21246>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21247>

Information about the Ukrainian Family Scheme, Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and 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>

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

Visas: Married People

Drew Hendry (SNP) [21710] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing minimum income thresholds for spouse/partner visas.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: We do not intend to remove the Minimum Income Requirement (MIR) for spouse / partner visas under Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules.

The purpose of the MIR, implemented in July 2012 along with other reforms of the family Immigration Rules, is to ensure family migrants are supported at a reasonable level so they do not become a burden on the taxpayer and they can

participate sufficiently in everyday life to facilitate their integration into British society.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-15/21710>

Visas: Skilled Workers

Drew Hendry (SNP) [21127] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a regional system for issuing of Tier 2 Skilled Worker visas.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The UK has a single immigration system which works for the whole of the UK. Adding different rules for different locations would introduce further complexity into the system and create frictions where workers move from one location to another.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21127>

Immigration: EU Nationals

Kerry McCarthy (Labour) [19565] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of issuing physical back-up copies of immigration documents for people on the EU Settlement Scheme.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: As part of our move to a “digital by default” border and immigration system, physical immigration documents are being replaced by fully digital eVisas (an online record of the person’s immigration status).

All EU, EEA and Swiss citizens granted pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) are now able to prove their rights in the UK digitally, by using the View and Prove service on GOV.UK, instead of using physical documents. Non-EU, EEA or Swiss citizen family members who have a UKVI account can also use the View and Prove service.

Successful applicants continue to receive written notice of their immigration status by email or letter, which they can keep for their personal records if they wish. However, due to the possibility of fraud and abuse this document cannot be used to evidence an individual’s immigration status to external organisations.

There are no plans to provide EU citizens granted status under the EUSS with physical back-up copies of immigration documents.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-20/19565>

Information about the EU Settlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

Passports: British National (Overseas)

Alexander Stafford (Conservative) [20477] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make it his policy to expand the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) passport to include children of BN(O) passport holders.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The Home Office cannot issue a BN(O) passport to someone who does not hold BN(O) status. BN(O) status was only available by registration before 1 July 1997, and people born on or after that date cannot become a BN(O). There are no plans to retrospectively allow BN(O) status to be acquired by descendants of BN(O) status holders.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-25/20477>

Information about the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa>

Asylum: LGBT+ People

Alison Thewliss (SNP) [20674] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

what assessment he has made of the (a) needs and (b) vulnerabilities of LGBTQI+ people as part of Operation Maximise.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: The safety and wellbeing of asylum seekers in our care is of paramount importance to the Home Office. We expect high standards from all of our providers, and we have a robust governance framework in place to manage service delivery of the Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts (AASC). Further details can be found at: [AASC - Schedule 2 - Statement of Requirements.pdf](#)

Section G.2 of the AASC provides examples of factors which accommodation providers should consider as part of their case-by-case assessment of an individual's needs in room sharing, including whether they identify as LGBT. This aligns with the allocation of accommodation policy which sets out that the circumstances of every person in asylum accommodation should be assessed individually. Where an individual need or safeguarding concern exists, accommodation may be provided to meet such need.

Additionally, the Home Office has published the Asylum Support Contracts Safeguarding Framework at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-support-contracts-safeguarding-framework>

This framework sets out a joint, overarching approach, as well as the key controls and reporting mechanisms in place, across the AASC contracts, for safeguarding arrangements. All asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can raise any concerns regarding accommodation or support services and they can get information about how to obtain further support.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-26/20674>

Asylum: Deportation

Diana Johnson (Labour) [21939] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people who have claimed asylum since 20 July 2023 will be subject to the duty to remove imposed by the Illegal Migration Act.

Reply from Michael Tomlinson: The Illegal Migration Act was introduced on 7th of March 2023 and received Royal Assent on 20 July 2023. Individuals who entered or arrived illegally from 20 July 2023 will be subject to the duty to remove (section 2 of the Illegal Migration Act) once commenced.

Once the act is commenced, official numbers will be available.

Official statistics published by the Home Office are kept under review in line with the code of practice for statistics, taking into account a number of factors including user needs, as well as quality and availability of data. The Government's published data on illegal migration (available here: [Statistics relating to Illegal Migration](#)).

The Government's priority is to deter individuals from making dangerous, illegal, and unnecessary journeys to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-16/21939>

Deportation: Palestinians

Derek Thomas (Conservative) [21173] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is his Department's policy that Palestinian citizens of Israel have a well-founded fear of persecution if returned to Israel.

Reply from Tom Pursglove: All asylum and human rights claims are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Each individual assessment is made by considering any relevant extant caselaw and the latest available country of origin information.

Our position for different groups is set out in the respective country policy and

information note(s), which are published on the gov.uk website.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-04-12/21173>

Israel is not listed in the country policy and information notes, referred to above, which can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/country-policy-and-information-notes>

UK Parliament Petition

Immigration health surcharge

The petition of residents of the constituency of Linlithgow and East Falkirk, Declares that in this time of crisis in the cost of living, the spiralling cost of the immigration health surcharge paid by migrants is alarming; further that the immigration health surcharge now stands at £1035 per annum, representing a 400% increase compared with five years ago; further that when combined with the increases in visa and immigration fees, many migrant families are facing poverty, debt and destitution as they try to bear these costs; and notes that migrant workers are a vital part of our communities and our workforce, including in the UK's health and social care sectors.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to review the immigration health surcharge, taking account of the fact that migrants already pay into and contribute significantly to health and care services across the UK.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[\[Presented by Martyn Day, Official Report, 13 March 2024; Vol. 747, c. 396.\]](#) [P002925]

Observations from the Minister for Legal Migration and the Border (Tom Pursglove): While the significant contribution migrants make to the UK is recognised, it is the Government's policy that they should contribute directly to the comprehensive and high-quality NHS services available to them from the moment they arrive in the UK.

The immigration health surcharge is paid by temporary migrants applying for a visa to enter the UK for more than six months. It is paid up front, is separate to the visa fee, and covers the full cost to the NHS of providing healthcare to those who pay it. Once paid, an IHS payer can access NHS services in broadly the same manner as permanent residents— without having made any prior tax or national insurance contributions. Where additional NHS charges are paid, these are consistent with those paid by a UK resident, such as prescription charges in England.

Some temporary migrants will be paying tax and national insurance contributions. However, they will not 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 the migrant's immigration status that determines whether or not they pay the IHS, not their tax contributions.

It is therefore right and fair that an up-front financial contribution to the NHS is required.

The IHS was increased in February this year, as agreed by Parliament, to £1,035 per person per annum, with the discounted rate for students, their dependents, those on youth mobility schemes, and under-18s increasing to £776 per person per annum. These new levels reflect the increases in healthcare expenditure and utilise the latest revised assumptions of migrant use of healthcare services. I note the increase does not represent the claimed 400% increase in five years.

It is important to highlight that safeguards exist in administering the IHS. The Government recognise the cost of the IHS may be unaffordable for some. On family and human rights routes a fee waiver application can be made, and a full fee waiver will be granted if it is determined the applicant cannot afford the visa fee, and the IHS. A partial fee waiver can be granted if it is determined they can afford the visa

fee but not the IHS as well.

Finally, the IHS is designed to benefit our NHS and support its long-term sustainability. Payment of the IHS provides near comprehensive access to our health service, regardless of the amount of care needed. It is right that migrants granted temporary permission to be in the UK make a financial contribution to the running of NHS services available to them during their stay.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-15/debates/24041536000136/ImmigrationHealthSurcharge>

Press Releases

Funding to support refugee integration

<https://www.gov.scot/news/funding-to-support-refugee-integration/>

eVisa rollout begins with immigration documents replaced by 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/evisa-rollout-begins-with-immigration-documents-replaced-by-2025>

UK signs new agreement with Vietnam on illegal migration

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-signs-new-agreement-with-vietnam-on-illegal-migration>

New Publications

House of Lords Library Briefing: Foreign national offenders in UK prisons: Powers to deport

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/foreign-national-offenders-in-uk-prisons-powers-to-deport/>

Practical Tool for Guardians - Transnational procedures in the framework of international protection

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/euaa-fra-practical-tool-guardians-transnational-procedures_0.pdf

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing: The European Commission's proposal for an EU-UK youth mobility agreement

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2024/04/19/the-european-commissions-proposal-for-an-eu-uk-youth-mobility-agreement/>

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

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

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

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

News: Rwanda Refugee Policy

Peers and MPs 'will sit and vote' until Rwanda Bill passed, says Sunak

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/19/lords-and-mps-to-sit-and-vote-until-rwanda-bill-passed-says/>

Passions run high as Lords insist on Rwanda bill changes

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-68833783>

MPs reject Lords' plan to protect Afghan heroes from deportation to Rwanda for second time

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-bill-afghan-mps-commons-b2529054.html>

Rwanda bill delayed after Lords insist on amendments

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rwanda-bill-mps-lords-migrant-deportation-flights-m969d827b>

MPs reject Lords amendments to Rwanda bill

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-68815191>

Home Office minister repeatedly ignores question on whether government has airline for Rwanda scheme

<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/rwanda-bill-flights-airline-home-office-b2529530.html>

Shapps: RAF planes may be used to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/18/grant-shapps-raf-planes-rwanda-flights-bill/>

Rwanda: Charities plan legal challenges to removals as law set to pass

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68809947>

News: Channel Migrants

Claims government officials working on small boats policy referred to 'bloody migrants'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/small-boats-bloody-migrants-civil-servants-b2531926.html>

UK small boats policymakers referred to 'bloody migrants', says civil servant

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/apr/20/uk-small-boats-policymakers-civil-servant-inhumane-conversations>

More migrants crossing the Channel are from Vietnam than anywhere else

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/15/more-migrants-crossing-channel-vietnam-uk/>

News: Afghanistan

Delays by Home Office risk return of vulnerable Afghan families to Taliban

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/apr/14/home-office-delays-risk-return-of-vulnerable-afghan-families-to-taliban>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Refugee Council to launch new Scotland-wide support service

<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/refugee-support-service-launch/>

We need more skilled workers, not more barriers to securing their visas

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/we-need-more-skilled-workers-not-more-barriers-to-securing-them-visas-pvrjvw0sk>

My friend, Anthony Williams, died too soon. What trauma are other Windrush survivors still going through?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/17/anthony-williams-windrush-survivors-scandal>

'I just fell in love with it': How a Syrian refugee is finally fulfilling her dentistry dream after swapping Damascus for Dundee

<https://www.scotsman.com/education/i-just-fell-in-love-with-it-how-a-syrian-refugee-is-finally-fulfilling-her-dentistry-dream-after-swapping-damascus-for-dundee-4588142>

TOP

Community Relations

News

Call for submissions for Black History Month programme

<https://www.blackhistorymonthscotland.org/submissions>

TOP

Equality

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Armed Forces: Ethnic Groups

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [20421] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason there is no armed forces recruitment target for ethnic minorities.

Reply from Andrew Murrison: Whilst Defence has not set hard targets for the recruitment of ethnic minority personnel for the Armed Forces, we have set internally published levels of ambition to increase the recruitment and representation of underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities. The purpose of these levels of ambition is to act as a catalyst for innovation and activity, and to provide challenge and stretch to existing processes and approaches.

Defence has committed to improving the recruitment of ethnic minority personnel into the Armed Forces and is engaged in a wide range of activities to promote better understanding and enhance engagement with ethnic minority communities, reviewing Armed Forces recruitment processes and delivering more targeted marketing and communications towards potential ethnic minority applicants.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-25/20421>

New Publications

House of Commons Library Briefing: Income inequality in the UK

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7484/CBP-7484.pdf>

Too Young to Leave Behind: The long-term negative impact of exclusions and suspensions in primary school

https://www.chanceuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Too-Young-to-Leave-Behind-full-branded-report_Final.pdf

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Debate

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-17-04-2024?meeting=15801&iob=134892>

Scottish Parliament Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 (Implementation)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance): ... Let me begin by emphasising that we in Scotland should be rightly proud of our history as a welcoming nation that celebrates and values diversity in our communities. However, we must be vigilant in protecting those values, challenge those who deny them and recognise that there are people who experience hatred and prejudice every day. We cannot and must not be complacent. We should remember that when we talk about hate crime, we are describing behaviour that is criminal and is rooted in prejudice, where the offender's actions have been driven by hatred towards a particular group—hatred for people just on the basis of who they are.

Police Scotland describes hate crimes as offences that include, but are not limited to, assault, verbal abuse, damage to property, threatening behaviour, robbery and harassment, and they can take place anywhere, including online.

The hate crime act maintains and consolidates existing legislative protections against offences that are aggravated by prejudice against the following five characteristics: disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity. Those are the same characteristics that are protected under hate crime legislation in England and Wales. ...

The act introduces new offences for threatening and/or abusive behaviour and the communication of threatening or abusive material that is intended to stir up hatred against a group of people who possess or appear to possess the particular characteristics that I have outlined. That could take many forms, including pictures, videos or information posted on websites.

Lord Bracadale, who led the independent review of hate crime legislation that led to the act, was clear on the need for the legislation to include offences relating to stirring up hatred. He noted: "Stirring up of hatred might lead to violence or public disorder." ...

Those offences are similar to those that are covered by the legislation in England and Wales, which has criminalised stirring up hatred on the ground of religion since 2007 and on the ground of sexual orientation since 2010. ...

It is also important to note that the new offences have a higher threshold for a crime to be committed than the long-standing offence of stirring up racial hatred, which has been in place for the best part of 40 years without controversy.

People can still be offensive, critical and insulting under the act—and we have seen people be exactly that. The act includes rigorous safeguards on freedom of speech, and behaviour or material is not to be taken to be threatening or abusive just because it involves

discussion or criticism of matters that relate to one of the characteristics included in legislation. The act is compatible with the European convention on human rights, and it specifically provides that the court should have regard to the general principle that article 10 rights apply to the expression of information or ideas that offend, shock or disturb. ...

There is nothing in the hate crime act that is divisive. ...

The act is an essential element of our wider approach, as set out in “Hate Crime Strategy for Scotland ... to build a Scotland in which everyone can feel safe. ... The reality is that there are people who are frightened to leave their home, who avoid public places, and who significantly alter their lives in order to avoid certain interactions. ...

Legislation to protect people from hatred and prejudice is not new, and nor is it unique to Scotland. ...

In March, Adam Tomkins, who is a former Conservative MSP and a professor of public law, stated: “Offensive speech is not criminalised by this legislation: the only speech relating to sexual orientation, transgender identity, age or disability outlawed here is speech which ... a reasonable person ... would consider to be threatening or abusive and which ... was intended to stir up hatred and ... was not reasonable in the circumstances.”

Since 2014-15, the number of hate crimes recorded annually has been between 6,300 and 7,000. In 2021-22, the police recorded 6,927 hate crimes, and 62 per cent of those included a race aggravator. In 2020-21, almost a quarter of all victims were police officers. ...

In the first week of implementation, Police Scotland received more than 7,000 reports of hate crime, the vast majority of which were not considered to be criminal. Of the 445 hate crimes recorded over the period 1 April to 14 April, only seven of those were stirring-up offences.

In the past week, there has been a 74.4 per cent decrease in online reports, to 1,832. Sadly, the number of recorded hate crimes did not decrease so significantly, which again reinforces the importance of the legislation. ...

People and communities who are at the sharp end of hatred in their daily lives simply for being who they are should rightly look to the Parliament to stand with them, and the Scottish Government will continue to do so. ...

Russell Findlay (Conservative): ... Police Scotland has been bombarded with almost 9,000 reports because of Humza Yousaf’s hate crime law—a law that threatens free speech, and which is critically different from competent legislation elsewhere in the UK ... The vast majority of those 9,000 reports are not of crimes ... Scotland is not suffering from a hate epidemic ...

Reply from Angela Constance: ... I, for one, will not turn a blind eye to hate crime or to the victims who suffer at the hands of those who perpetrate hate. ...

First, we should be united on the evils of hate crime and on the corrosive effect that it has on individuals, families and communities the length and breadth of Scotland.

Secondly, I say to Mr Findlay that we should be united, and on the same script in strongly calling for people not to waste police time and discouraging them from doing so. ...

Katy Clark (Labour): Does the cabinet secretary accept that the first few days of the implementation of the act have been a shambles, that poor communication has led to confusion over what is a hate crime and that there has been a loss of public confidence? The police have been overwhelmed and the Scottish Police Federation has said that the training has not been good enough. ... Will the cabinet secretary commit to adding sex as a characteristic and to undertaking an urgent review of the operation of the act?

Reply from Angela Constance: ... The legislation is there to protect vulnerable communities; it is not there to be weaponised by people, irrespective of what side of the so-called culture wars they are on.

I have been very clear that I will introduce legislation to tackle misogyny. ... It was due to the representation of many women’s groups, which did not want sex to be captured, that sex was not included as a characteristic in the Hate Crime and Public

Order (Scotland) Act 2021. There are many reasons for that. For example, women are not a minority; we make up 51 per cent of the population. ...

Sharon Dowey (Conservative): Although the Scottish Government has spent £400,000 on advertising its new hate crime legislation, the public and the police still lack clarity on the definition of a hate crime. ... Does the Scottish Government believe that a two-hour training module, which some officers are still to complete, is enough to enable officers to enforce the legislation without arresting innocent people?

Reply from Angela Constance: ... I would have hoped that members would have been reassured by the fact that, according to the deputy chief constable, more than 80 per cent of police officers have been trained. ...

John Swinney (SNP): Given that thresholds relating to the stirring up of racial hatred have been in place in legislation for more than 40 years in Scotland, what approach is enshrined in the 2021 act in relation to the other characteristics that are now in scope with regard to the thresholds for whether an offence has been committed? Does the 2021 act take the same approach as was taken in relation to racial hatred, or does it take a tougher approach? ...

Reply from Angela Constance: The hate crime legislation that has been passed by this Parliament takes a tougher approach. A racial hatred offence has been in place across the UK since 1986. The Public Order Act 1986 criminalises behaviour that is “threatening, abusive or insulting” when the perpetrator either “intends ... to stir up racial hatred” or is “likely” to stir up racial hatred. That is a lower threshold for criminality than is in place for the new stirring-up offences under the 2021 act. The 2021 act does not change the UK-wide offence in relation to racial hatred. The UK-wide offence is wider than the offences under the 2021 act, as there is no requirement for intent to stir up hatred, and it covers behaviour or communication that is insulting as well as that which is threatening or abusive. Under the 2021 act, the behaviour has to be threatening and/or abusive and intended to stir up hatred, which is a high threshold for criminality. ...

Rona Mackay (SNP): During the past few weeks, the people whose voices have been drowned out by Tory misinformation regarding the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 are those who will benefit from the legislation.

Can the cabinet secretary detail how the 2021 act will help to provide greater protection for victims and communities?

Reply from Angela Constance: The 2021 act provides greater protections because it extends the stirring up of hatred offence to all characteristics that are protected, as outlined in the act, including the new characteristic of age, which is therefore now in line with the existing offence of stirring up racial hatred that has been part of criminal law across the UK for decades.

It is well worth our while to note that approximately a third of hate crimes in Scotland involve a victim who has experienced an incident at their place of work or as part of their occupation. Most of those victims were working in retail and other service industries, and a quarter of recorded hate crimes had a police officer victim. Everyone in the chamber should want to protect people and society from such crimes. ...

Fulton MacGregor (SNP): For the most part, the 2021 act consolidates hate crime legislation in one place. Is the effect of the act to properly recognise that crimes against public order, such as being threatening or abusive, which have long been in place, along with stirring up hatred against the community, are exactly that—hate crimes—and should be recognised as such?

Reply from Angela Constance: That is absolutely the case. The 2021 act outlines that the offences that are covered in the legislation are hate crimes and are not acceptable.

Understandably, there has been a lot of media coverage of the number of reports

that Police Scotland has received. The very fact that we saw 213 police-recorded hate crimes last week and 232 the week before that reinforces the importance of the 2021 act. The act is an essential element of our wider approach to tackling hate crime, as well as to recognising the harm that hate crime causes. The legislation sends an important message to victims, offenders and wider society that such crime should not and will not be tolerated.

Maggie Chapman (Green): In the first week since the 2021 act's implementation, Police Scotland indicated that only 3.8 per cent of the allegations that were received were authentic—240 were logged as hate crimes and 30 as non-hate crimes. Does the cabinet secretary believe that those numbers were due to the widespread misinformation ...

Reply from Angela Constance: ... There is no doubt that Police Scotland received a high volume of online hate crime reports, but we should all be encouraged by having seen a nearly 75 per cent decrease in the past week, with the number of calls falling from in excess of 7,000 to in excess of 1,800. ...

To read the full transcript see

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-16-04-2024?meeting=15798&iob=134856#orscontributions_M1735E440P776C2576911

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

The Hate Crime Strategy referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-strategy-scotland/>

Adam Tomkins comments referred to above can be read at <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24199465.scotlands-new-hate-crime-law-doesnt-criminalise-offensive-speech/>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021

Douglas Ross (Conservative): ... When we opposed the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, the Scottish Conservatives warned that the legislation would overburden our already overstretched police. Now, that is exactly what has happened. ...

Calum Steele, who is the general secretary of the International Council of Police Representative Associations, has said: "Police officers have been left embarrassed by this week's hate crime farce, with some left so angry they have told me they have never been more ashamed of being in the police service than they are at this moment." ... Why does Humza Yousaf think that he is right and the police are wrong?

Reply from the First Minister (Humza Yousaf): I remind Douglas Ross that, in almost a quarter of the hate crime reports, the victims are police officers. Not only that, but we can say from the statistics that we have to hand that many of them suffer the most outrageous abuse, some of which is directed at them because of prejudice in relation to their sexual orientation and some in relation to their race. ...

If the act did not exist, the stroke of a pen would have removed protection from stirring up of hatred against those who suffer racist abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, or abuse because of their disability. ...

Douglas Ross: ... It is a disgrace that the First Minister is unwilling to accept the failures of

his act and listen to the voice of police officers up and down the country. If he will not listen to police officers, he should listen to others ... who said that the bill was too vague, was poorly defined, and would not work. Now, some of Scotland's top legal experts have said the same. Alistair Bonnington, who is a professor of law at the University of Glasgow, has said that the law is "extremely dangerous" and "could see entirely respectable and reasonable citizens prosecuted for expressing viewpoints which the law would allow in almost every country in the world."

Lord Hope, who is a former Supreme Court justice and Scotland's most senior judge, has said that the act has "misfired" and has described it as "unworkable". As the Scottish Conservatives have done, he has called for the hate crime act to be repealed. Why does Humza Yousaf think that he is right and legal experts are wrong?

Reply from the First Minister: In all that, the one group of people whom Douglas Ross is refusing to listen to are the victims of hate crime. ...

Let us look at some of the details. Of the 8,984 hate crime complaints that were made to Police Scotland in the first couple of weeks of April, the vast majority—at least 95 per cent—have been deemed not to be crimes. The idea that there would somehow be mass criminalisation of people simply for expressing their opinions, or for being insulting or offensive, did not materialise. Why did it not materialise? If we look at the detail of the 2021 act, it makes it abundantly clear that, for the new stirring-up offences, behaviour has to be both threatening or abusive and intended to stir up hatred.

We have a piece of legislation that does what any civilised society would want a piece of legislation of that nature to do: it protects people from hatred. Of course, there is an appropriate balance to be struck in relation to protecting people's freedom of speech and freedom of expression. ...

Douglas Ross: We are opposing Humza Yousaf's bad SNP law because of the impact that it is having.

Victims of hate crimes are not getting support from the police because the police are being inundated with thousands of complaints. We are hearing that from the police and from legal experts.

We said at the very beginning that the act would put free speech at risk. Members will all have heard the report of a 74-year-old pensioner who was taken by the police to a station over a dispute with her neighbour. That grandmother was not charged and had not committed an offence, but she has been punished by the process—exactly as we warned would happen, just a few weeks ago.

Public opinion is already against Humza Yousaf's law. A recent poll found that two thirds of Scots thought that the hate crime act should be repealed.

Why does Humza Yousaf think that he is right and the public are wrong?

Reply from the First Minister: Once again, in that question, Douglas Ross did not mention the victims of hate crime.

Douglas Ross: I did. I literally said it. ...

Reply from the First Minister: Time and again, Douglas Ross forgets to mention the very people who suffer hatred.

In the figures for 2021-22, almost 7,000 hate crimes were recorded by Police Scotland. Those are almost 7,000 people who have been the victims of racist abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia and transphobia, and people who have been the victims of hatred because of their sexual orientation or disability. Those people deserve protection.

What we have seen in the past few weeks is deliberate disinformation from the Conservatives and many other bad-faith actors who have refused to look at what the law actually does. The law is abundantly clear that, for the new stirring up offences, behaviour has to be threatening or abusive and intended to stir up hatred. In relation to police officers, let us go back to what Police Scotland has actually

said. Let me commend and thank Police Scotland for the incredible job that it has done, despite the fact that there have been many bad-faith actors in relation to the hate crime act. In Police Scotland's own words, there has been a "minimal" impact on front-line policing in the first couple of weeks.

Let me thank police officers not only for the work that they do, day in and day out, in tackling hate crime, but for the fact that almost a quarter of hate crime reports are against police officers themselves.

Douglas Ross: Humza Yousaf is describing opponents of his bill as "bad-faith actors". They are the two thirds of Scots, who, at the moment, want to see his legislation being repealed.

Humza Yousaf is sitting there saying that everything is fine with his legislation, just as he did with the ferries that he could not get to sail, the trains that he could not get to run on time and the NHS waiting lists that grew under his stewardship of the health service. ... We warned him that all these problems with the hate crime act would happen. We warned that the police would be overwhelmed, and that the law was poorly written and would put free speech at risk. He dismissed every single valid criticism. Humza Yousaf said that he knew best.

Now, the police, legal experts and the public are telling him that he has got this badly wrong. The only person in Scotland who seems to think that the act is working well is Humza Yousaf. How on earth can the First Minister say that the hate crime act has been a success?

Reply from the First Minister: ... The Parliament did not back the Conservatives. In fact, with the exception of the Conservative Party, the Parliament backed the act. ...

When I talk about bad-faith actors, I am talking about the Conservative Party. I also mean, for example, neo-Nazis—those on the far right—whom The Observer reported were organising and orchestrating complaints to Police Scotland. They are, by any stretch of the imagination, bad-faith actors. Far too many such actors have been spreading disinformation and misinformation. Despite that, despite what they had been warning—which was proved to be untrue—and even despite what I suspect some of them wished, the police dealt well with those thousands of complaints. Only a minority of such complaints have ended up being recorded as hate crimes.

Time and again, every one of us stands up in the chamber to say that we have a zero-tolerance approach to hatred. I have to say that that has been sorely tested by some comments that the Conservative Party has made in recent weeks. If they have that zero-tolerance approach, they should be getting behind the act and supporting the victims of hatred.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-18-04-2024?meeting=15804&iob=134907#orscontributions_M4981E312P801C2577679

Scottish Parliament Motions

Russell Findlay (Conservative) [S6M-12885] Repealing the Hate Crime Act – That the Parliament believes that the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 should be repealed.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-12855>

Ash Regan (Alba) [S6M-12885.1] Repealing the Hate Crime Act - Amendment – As an amendment to motion S6M-12855 in the name of Russell Findlay (Repealing the Hate Crime Act), insert at end ", and notes with concern that the root cause of failings in

the roll-out of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, and other legislative failures, is the erosion of good governance to safeguard the legislative processes, and that it is essential for public confidence that Scotland's governance is returned to a competent footing."

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-12855-1>

Liam McArthur (Liberal Democrat) [S6M-12885.2] Repealing the Hate Crime Act - Amendment – As an amendment to motion S6M-12855 in the name of Russell Findlay (Repealing the Hate Crime Act), leave out from second "the" to end and insert "there needs to be robust action to tackle hate crime, particularly at a time of rising numbers of cases of antisemitism and Islamophobia; considers that substandard promotion and communication has accompanied the implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, which has contributed to the public uncertainty and concern around its potential impact, and calls on the Scottish Government to take all necessary steps to ensure that this can be rectified and the law applied sensitively, practicably, and in a way that fully respects essential freedoms, such as freedom of expression."

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-12855-2>

Siobhian Brown (SNP) [S6M-12885.3] Repealing the Hate Crime Act - Amendment – As an amendment to motion S6M-12855 in the name of Russell Findlay (Repealing the Hate Crime Act), leave out from "should" to end and insert ", as supported by the majority of the Parliament, will provide greater protections for those who are targeted victims of hate crime; notes that the Act was developed following a review into hate crime by senior retired judge Lord Bracadale, who recommended specific legislation to recognise the impact and harm caused by hate crime; further notes that around a third of hate crimes in Scotland involved a victim who experienced the incident at their place of work or whilst undertaking duties as part of their occupation, most of whom were working in retail or other service industries, and that a quarter of recorded hate crimes had a police officer victim, and recognises that the impact on victims of hate crime can be traumatic and life changing."

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-12855-3>

Pauline McNeill (Labour) [S6M-12885.4] Repealing the Hate Crime Act - Amendment – As an amendment to motion S6M-12550 in the name of Russell Findlay (Repealing the Hate Crime Act), leave out from "believes" to end and insert "recognises that the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 was intended to improve protections for individuals and communities from hate, but has been let down by the chaotic implementation of it by the Scottish National Party administration; acknowledges the Scottish Government's failure to properly communicate the changes in the legislation, or to give adequate training to Police Scotland; requests that the Criminal Justice Committee carry out an urgent review into the operation of the Act, specifically the new provisions, and calls on the Scottish Government to urgently address the flaws in its implementation of the Act, to use its powers under section 12 of the Act to add the characteristic of sex as an aggravator and protected characteristic under the Act, and to review the recording of hate incident reporting to make sure that it is compliant with human rights law and prevents the recording of vexatious complaints."

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-12855-4>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answer

Hate Crime and Racial Discrimination

Apsana Begum (Labour) [20804] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the risk of the far right and racists targeting (a) Poplar and Limehouse constituency and (b) other diverse areas; and what steps he is taking to protect communities from hate (i) crimes and (ii) speech.

Reply from Laura Farris: We have a robust legislative framework in place to respond to hate crimes which target race and religion and expect the police to fully investigate these appalling offences and work with the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. Our priority is to get more police onto our streets, cut crime, protect the public and bring more criminals to justice. We are supporting the police by providing them with the resources they need. Part of this necessitates police recruitment and training - there are now over 149,000 officers in England and Wales, which is higher than the previous peak in March 2010 before the Police Uplift Programme. Funding for the Metropolitan Police Service will be up to £3.5bn in 2024/25, an increase of up to £125.8m when compared to 2023/24. As of 30 September 2023, the Metropolitan Police Service has over 35,000 officers (35,006).

We are committed to protecting all communities from hate crime. In 2023/24, the Home Office is providing up to £50.9 million to protect faith communities. This includes £18 million through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, £29.4 million through the new Protective Security for Mosques scheme and a scheme for Muslim faith schools, and £3.5 million for the places of worship of other (non-Muslim and non-Jewish) faiths.

The Government continues to fund True Vision, an online hate crime reporting portal designed so that victims of all forms of hate crime do not have to visit a police station to report. We also fund the National Online Hate Crime Hub, a central capability designed to provide expert advice to support individual local police forces in dealing with online hate crime.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-26/20804>

Information about the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-funding-will-protect-jewish-communities-from-harm>

Information about the Protective Security for Mosques scheme and scheme for Muslim faith schools, referred to above, can be read at

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

Information about True Vision, referred to above, can be read at

https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force

Press Release

First Minister The Muslim community is an important and integral part of Scottish society and @ScotGov value the contribution they make. First Minister @HumzaYousaf reiterated his commitment to stand against all forms of hatred as he hosted an event @EdinburghCastle to mark Eid Ul-Fitr. [plus video]

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1781343281109950584>

New Publications

Police Scotland: Weekly Hate Crime and Incident Report Week 2: 8th April – 14th April

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/0mkpwnlo/hate-crime-and-incidents-report-week-2.pdf>

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act: factsheet

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-act-factsheet/>

High Court judgement: The King (On the application of TTT, by her mother and litigation friend UUU) and Michaela Community Schools Trust and London Borough of Brent [2024] EWHC 843 (Admin)

This judgement concerns the right of Muslim pupils to pray on school premises during the lunch break, which the school did not allow. The judgement supports the school's practice of not allowing prayer on the premises.

Press Release

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Press-Summary-R-v-Michaela-Community-Schools-Trust.pdf>

Full Judgement

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2024/843.html>

News: Michaela School

Michaela School: Muslim student loses prayer ban challenge

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-68731366>

High court upholds top London school's ban on prayer rituals

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/apr/16/london-school-katharine-birbalsingh-prayer-rituals-ban-not-unlawful-high-court>

Muslim student loses bid to take part in prayer rituals at 'Britain's strictest school'

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prayer-ban-muslim-britain-strictist-school-b2529351.html>

Muslim student loses legal challenge against Michaela Community School's 'prayer ban'

<https://news.sky.com/story/muslim-student-loses-legal-challenge-against-michaela-community-schools-prayer-ban-13116385>

Who is Katharine Birbalsingh? 'Britain's strictest headteacher' in Muslim prayer ban row

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/muslim-prayer-ban-teacher-katharine-birbalsingh-b2530059.html>

Katharine Birbalsingh questions level of legal aid for pupil who challenged prayer ban

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/16/birbalsingh-questions-level-legal-aid-pupil-prayer-ban/>

The Michaela court ruling is a victory for all schools

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-michaela-court-ruling-is-a-victory-for-all-schools/>

Michaela school will keep its prayer ban – but as a Muslim teacher I know it doesn't have to be this way

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/16/michaela-school-prayer-ban-muslim-teacher-religion>

News: Other Racism and Religious Hatred

Justice Minister admits Hate Crime information could have been better

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24257553.justice-minister-admits-hate-crime-information-better/>

Hate crimes in Scotland decrease in second week of new laws

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24256687.hate-crimes-scotland-decrease-second-week-new-laws/>

Only two hate crime reports out of 7,000 pursued by police under new law

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/16/only-two-hate-crime-reports-pursued-by-police-under-new-sco/>

A quarter of hate crime reports are against police officers

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-quarter-of-hate-crime-reports-are-against-police-officers-w9k5c0z35>

Former civil servant says ‘racism in Cabinet Office’ forced her to resign

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/apr/18/former-civil-servant-says-racism-in-cabinet-office-forced-her-to-resign>

Simon Case ‘allowed unrelenting and systemic racism to run rampant’ in Cabinet Office

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/18/simon-case-accused-unrelenting-systemic-racism-run-rampant/>

It’s racist to say someone is playing the race card, tribunal rules

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/15/its-racist-to-say-someone-is-playing-the-race-card-at-work/>

Accusing someone of ‘playing the race card’ is itself racist, judge rules

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/accusing-someone-of-playing-the-race-card-is-itself-racist-judge-rules-vsmhzz6zj>

Minister 'deeply concerned' by Met protest row

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4n19j892neo>

I was treated like a criminal for being Jewish. The Met chief must go

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/i-was-treated-like-a-criminal-for-being-jewish-the-met-chief-must-go-v2v6w59zq>

Met Police apologise for earlier apology about ‘openly Jewish’ comment

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/jewish-londoners-london-met-police-government-b2531600.html>

Updated statement on Met's policing of protest

<https://news.met.police.uk/news/updated-statement-on-mets-policing-of-protest-482835>

Met apologises for calling antisemitism campaigner ‘openly Jewish’

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2024/apr/19/met-apologises-for-calling-antisemitism-campaigner-openly-jewish>

Being Jewish 'should never be seen as provocative', says Home Office

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/20/being-jewish-should-never-be-seen-as-provocative-says-home-office>

Being Jewish is not provocative, says Home Office after police comments

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/met-police-apology-for-describing-man-as-openly-jewish-b7368sv3b>

Being Jewish 'never provocative', says Home Office amid policing row

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/met-londoners-sadiq-khan-home-office-government-b2531897.html>

Paris Olympics 2024: The controversial hijab ban at sport's biggest party

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/68739487>

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Other News

Peter Murrell charged with embezzlement in SNP finance probe

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-68850088>

Nicola Sturgeon's husband Peter Murrell charged with embezzlement of SNP funds

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/nicola-sturgeons-husband-peter-murrell-charged-with-embezzlement-of-snp-funds-4596788>

Man sentenced to hospital order for setting fire to worshippers as they left mosques

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/man-sentenced-hospital-order-setting-fire-worshippers-they-left-mosques>

Mohammed Abbkr sentenced for setting worshippers alight

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-birmingham-68820583>

'My son's body was butchered in a post-mortem'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-68826284>

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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>

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>

House of Commons consideration of House of Lords message ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-15/debates/C859A528-24DF-417D-8D9C-B5ECE0417E5A/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-15/debates/C859A528-24DF-417D-8D9C-B5ECE0417E5A/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

House of Lords consideration of House of Commons amendments and reasons ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-16/debates/1DEECB02-ADF8-4129-BE40-67012002FE37/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-16/debates/1DEECB02-ADF8-4129-BE40-67012002FE37/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

House of Commons consideration of House of Lords message ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-17/debates/797BA1A6-F949-4371-BEB6-BB224AB71ED4/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-04-17/debates/797BA1A6-F949-4371-BEB6-BB224AB71ED4/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

House of Lords consideration of House of Commons reasons ('ping pong')

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-17/debates/7D6E2D71-4E60-4802-9E5D-AF550827B953/SafetyOfRwanda\(AsylumAndImmigration\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-04-17/debates/7D6E2D71-4E60-4802-9E5D-AF550827B953/SafetyOfRwanda(AsylumAndImmigration)Bill)

Amendment Papers

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0201/230201.pdf>

and

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/55026/documents/4694>

and

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0203/230203.pdf>

and

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-04/0203/amend/rwanda_day_cclm_0422.pdf

House of Commons Library Briefing

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9944/CBP-9944.pdf>

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

** How do the Scottish Government's capital spending plans affect you?

(closing date 6 May 2024)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/ehrcj/affect-of-scottish-governments-capital-spending/>

Charity banking challenges survey 2024 (closing date 15 May 2024)

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/have-your-say-charity-banking-challenges-survey-2024/>

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

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

**** next week!**

Introduction to refugees: asylum and resettlement

1 May 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

18 July 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Scottish Refugee Council course to help you understand relevant legal definitions and processes including the UK asylum process, learn about the rights and entitlements of asylum seekers and refugees, and identify sources of support that empower people to live fully integrated lives. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/sbmevc64>

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>

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>

Introduction to working with interpreters

14 May 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

31 July 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Scottish Refugee Council course to enable you to understand the roles and responsibilities of interpreters and service providers, understand the rights of the client – confidentiality, professional boundaries, advocacy and advice, know what to consider when planning for an interpreted session, and feel confident to manage the interpreting dynamic as a service provider. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/mrxbdyc5>

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>

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>

Introduction to supporting refugee integration

10 September 2024 (online, 9.30–1.00)

Scottish Refugee Council course to help you understand the key principles of a rights-based refugee-led approach to integration, the underpinning principles of the Scottish integration framework and effective integration planning. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p9p9jdx>

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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>

TOP

SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



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

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

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



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

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