

PARLIAMENTARY ROUND UP 1 September 2018 – 7 September 2018

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ACCOMMODATION

[167272](#)

Catherine McKinnell, (Lab, Newcastle Upon Tyne North) asks the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2018 to [Question 133797](#) on Asylum: Housing, which regions have not secured compliant bids under the tendering process for the new asylum accommodation contracts.

Caroline Nokes, Minister of State for Immigration, 4.9.18: The Home Office did not receive compliant bids for the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC) for the following two regions:

- North East, Yorkshire & Humber (NEYH), and
- Northern Ireland (NI).

We are now in the process of re-competing these two regions under a linked but separate procurement and this is currently out to market. We remain confident of having fully operational contracts before the expiry of the current COMPASS contracts, with sufficient time to properly transition the services.

ACCOMMODATION

[167271](#) [167273](#)

Catherine McKinnell (Lab, Newcastle Upon Tyne North) asks SSHD, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2018 to [Question 133797](#) on Asylum: Housing:

1. what information his Department holds on the number of incidences of forced room sharing of asylum seekers in dispersed accommodation in each (a) local authority and (b) region.
2. how many asylum seekers have been placed into forced bedroom sharing in dispersed asylum accommodation in each of the last three years.

Caroline Nokes, 4.9.18: The use of individual properties across provider's portfolios changes daily subject to demand. Information on the current number of bedrooms shared between unrelated individuals in local authorities could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual provider property records.

ACCOMMODATION

[167270](#)

Catherine McKinnell (Lab, Newcastle Upon Tyne North) asks SSHD, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2018 to [Question 133797](#) on Asylum: Housing, what criteria (a) his Department and (b) accommodation providers use to assess the particular circumstances and vulnerability of those in dispersed asylum accommodation.

Caroline Nokes, 4.9.18: All asylum Accommodation Providers are contractually required to take account of any particular circumstances and vulnerability of those that they accommodate, including those who have health care issues. In addition Providers must comply with national and local housing regulations including those regarding room sharing. There are strict criteria set out in the contract around when room sharing can take place and who can share a room. Providers must also comply with local regulations including advice from social services and primary and secondary care bodies on whether room sharing is inappropriate for individual cases.

In accordance with our published policy, the Home Office will carefully consider all requests on a case by case basis from asylum seekers who may have particular vulnerabilities, care needs or health problems that necessitate a need for a specific location or specialist accommodation requirements. Further details regarding this policy can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-accommodation-requests-policy>

ACCOMMODATION

House of Commons, Business of the House, 6 September 2018, 1042 am read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Chris Stephens (SNP, Glasgow South West): Three days after the summer recess, the Home Office's asylum accommodation provider, Serco, announced plans to evict 330 asylum seekers in Glasgow from its property as they were deemed to be "failed". The facts are that they are not "failed"; the majority either have made a fresh claim or have an appeal pending. Will the Home Office make a statement, or may we have a debate, so that we can hold the Home Office to account

for passing wrong information to Serco and ensure that asylum seekers are treated with respect across the United Kingdom?

Andrea Leadsom (Leader of the House): I am sorry to hear about the particular case [Chris Stephens] raises. He will be aware that asylum seekers in the United Kingdom are cared for; they are housed and protected by the United Kingdom Government. If [he] would like to write to me about his specific case, I can take it up with Ministers on his behalf [...].

ACCOMMODATION

[169516](#)

Chris Stephens (SNP, Glasgow South West) asks SSHD, what discussions his Department have had with Serco on recent reports of the eviction of asylum seekers from their allocated properties; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes, 6.9.18: The Home Office currently provides accommodation to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute, until their asylum claim is fully determined or where they have a practical or legal obstacle that temporarily prevents them leaving the UK.

The individuals who are subject to the proposed lock change notices in Scotland are those who have no right to accommodation, have had their asylum claims determined and, where relevant, upheld by the courts.

Home Office officials are in regular contact with our accommodation providers as part of our day to day management of the accommodation contracts.

In relation to the issuing of lock change notices there have been a number of meetings between senior officials, Serco and relevant stakeholders to address this issue, with a protocol agreed with partners in Glasgow City Council around how such cases are managed.

In addition, following a productive series of meetings over recent weeks my officials and representatives from Serco form part of a Task Force chaired by Glasgow City Council which is committed to reviewing the cases identified by Serco that may no longer be entitled to Home Office support to ensure they are managed appropriately.

DECISION MAKING / LEGAL AID

[167957](#)

Kate Green (Lab, Stretford and Urmston) asks SSHD, what steps his Department is taking with other government departments to ensure that asylum seekers are able to present in their substantive asylum interview all information relevant to their claim and are able to access legal representation and advice.

Caroline Nokes, 7.9.18: We are committed to delivering an asylum process which supports claimants in providing all information relevant to their claim to facilitate fair and sustainable asylum decisions.

All interviewing personnel receive extensive training on interviewing and considering asylum claims, and must follow published Home Office policy guidance.

Legal aid remains available for individuals claiming asylum. The Lord Chancellor is also conducting a review of the recent legal aid reforms and the Home Office is inputting into this. The Government is keen to hear from interested parties to establish the impact of these changes, and the findings will be published later this year. The Government also plans to use this opportunity of engagement with stakeholders to inform its wider consideration on the future of legal support in the justice system.

DECISION MAKING

[167307](#)

Alison Thewliss (SNP, Glasgow Central) asks SSHD, what steps his Department is taking to ensure greater consistency in the accuracy of decision making for all nationalities of asylum applicants.

Caroline Nokes, 4.9.18: All asylum claims lodged in the UK are carefully considered on their individual merits against a background of relevant case law and up to date country information. We ensure that claimants are given every opportunity to disclose information relevant to their claim before a decision is taken, even where that information may be sensitive or difficult to disclose.

We continue to work to improve the quality of decision-making to ensure that we properly consider all the evidence provided and get decisions right the first time. UK Visas and Immigration has an internal audit process, consisting of reviews by senior case workers and independent auditors, which assesses the quality of decisions and the application of Home Office policy.

DECISION MAKING

Tom Brake (Lib Dem, Carshalton and Wallington) asks SSHD, how many applications by refugees for Indefinite Leave to Remain submitted since July 2017 have still not received a decision.

Caroline Nokes 7.9.18: Published data on UKVI's performance against service standards for applications made in the UK as a whole can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/in-country-migration-data-may-2018>

DETENTION / ENFORCEMENT

[168114](#)

Angela Crawley (SNP, Lanark and Hamilton East) asks SSHD, how many pregnant women have been deported after being detained in an immigration detention centre.

Caroline Nokes, 7.9.18: Section 60 of the Immigration Act 2016, which came into force on 12 July 2016, placed a 72 hour limit on the detention of pregnant women for the purposes of removal, extendable to up to a week in total with Ministerial authorisation.

It may not always be appropriate for healthcare professionals to disclose confidential medical information that the patient has asked not to be disclosed. Subject to these limitations, Home Office

management information indicates that 104 pregnant women were detained in the immigration detention estate between 12 July 2016 and 30 June 2018. Of these women, 20 were removed from the UK directly from detention.

IMMIGRATION BILL

Business of the House, House of Commons, 6 September 2018, 1042 am read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Thangam Debbonaire (Lab, Bristol West): Another business questions and another week in which we have had no sight of and heard no mention of the Immigration Bill, and been given no possible clue, hint or even a raised eyebrow about its location. This House has to debate and pass that Bill before next March. When is it going to come to the House?

Andrea Leadsom: We have already introduced and passed some of the Brexit legislation: 23 Government Bills have received Royal Assent and we are bringing forward legislation as we need to do so. [Thangam Debbonaire] may be aware that there will be a Migration Advisory Committee report during the fourth quarter. The Immigration Bill will come forward after that and in good time.

IMMIGRATION BILL

[167930](#)

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru, Arfon) asks SSHD, when the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals on immigration

Caroline Nokes, 7.9.18: The Government plans to bring forward an Immigration Bill in the first two-year Parliamentary Session as announced in [the Queen's Speech](#) on 21 June 2017. The timing for introduction has yet to be confirmed and is subject to the Parliamentary timetable.

INTEGRATION / MOVE ON

Westminster Hall, 4 September 2018, 1130, British Citizenship Fees, Children, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Debate brought by Stuart C McDonald (Shadow SNP Spokesperson (Immigration, Asylum and Border Control) covering current regime for applying for citizenship for children, and the fees attached to the application.

Intervening: John Howell (Henley, Con); Stephen Kerr (Stirling, Con); Tim Loughton (Con, East Worthing and Shoreham); Deidre Brock (SNP, Edinburgh North and Leith); Ruth Cadbury (Lab, Brentworth and Isleworth); Douglas Ross (Con, Moray); Sandy Martin (Lab, Ipswich); Jim Shannon (Strangford, DUP); Kate Green (Lab, Stretford and Urmston); Alison Thewliss (SNP, Glasgow Central); Owen Smith (Pontypridd, Lab); David Linden (SNP, Glasgow East); Afzal Khan (Lab, Gorton)

INTEGRATION / MOVE ON / ESOL

[169080](#)

Dame Louise Ellman (Lab, Liverpool Riverside) asks SSHD, what steps he is taking to improve the English Language lessons service for refugees; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes 6.9.18: The Government is committed to ensuring that all refugees have access to the English language support they need. For refugees resettled in the UK under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme the Government has provided additional funding which can be accessed by local authorities. Those who make their own way to the UK to claim asylum and are granted refugee status are eligible for funding for English language courses through the Adult Education Budget. Courses are free for unemployed refugees who are looking for work.

The Government published the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper on 14th March (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>). This included proposals on the future of integration support for refugees and set out that the Government will work with civil society to increase integration support for refugees recognised after arrival in the UK. The Green Paper committed Government to share best practice and build on learning about what works in relation to support for refugees on employment, English language, mental health and cultural orientation. It also proposed the development of a new English language strategy for England.

Consultation on the Green Paper closed in June and there will be a Government response in the Autumn.

LEGAL AID

[167396](#)

Alex Sobel (Lab, Leeds North West), asks the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that legal aid solicitors have the capacity to meet the demand for their services in relation to complex asylum cases.

Lucy Frazer (Parliamentary Under Secretary, Ministry of Justice): The Legal Aid Agency monitors capacity across legal aid contracts on a regular basis and takes action to ensure there is ongoing availability of legal advice for the public. At a local level, engagement generally takes place through the LAA's local contract management team, although wider strategic concerns can also be raised by the profession's representative groups through the regular engagement meetings the LAA holds with those organisations.

The Legal Aid Agency requires that all providers who deliver legal aid to asylum seekers comply with the Law Society's Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme, with such work being overseen by an appointed supervisor of legal aid work for immigration and asylum cases at each firm.

LEGAL AID / CHILDREN / DUBLIN / DUBS

[167336](#)

Heidi Allen (Con, South Cambridgeshire) asks the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Written Statement of 12 July 2018, on Justice update, [HCWS853](#), whether the reinstatement of legal

aid will apply to children located outside of the UK whose cases may fall under (a) the Dublin regulation and (b) section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Lucy Frazer, 4.9.18: Children located outside of the UK who wish to challenge a decision by the UK government not to accept a request by another EU Member State to transfer their asylum claim to the UK under the Dublin Regulation can do so by means of judicial review, for which legal aid is already available.

Under section 67, participating States refer eligible children to the UK to be relocated. There is no individual application process or right to relocation if a person meets the eligibility criteria. Therefore, there is no process for which the individual could require legal aid.

We are currently consulting with stakeholders about the reinstatement of legal aid announced in the Written Statement of 12 July 2018, [HCWS853](#), and more information about the policy will be laid out in due course.

LEGAL AID

Legal Aid, Post Implementation Review, Westminster Hall, 4 September 2018, 1830 read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Debate brought by Karen Buck (Lab, Westminster North): That this House has considered legal aid and the post-implementation review.

Debate covers cuts to legal aid, and Government's review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, with some focus on non-asylum immigration advice for unaccompanied and separated children.

LEGAL AID

[169818](#)

Alex Sobel, Lab, Leeds North West, asks Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the (a) adequacy of support for and (b) capacity of legal aid solicitors to represent people with complex asylum cases.

Lucy Frazer, 6.9.18: The Legal Aid Agency monitors capacity across legal aid contracts on a regular basis and takes action to ensure there is ongoing availability of legal advice for the public. At a local level, engagement generally takes place through the LAA's local contract management team, although wider strategic concerns can also be raised by the profession's representative groups through the regular engagement meetings the LAA holds with those organisations.

The Legal Aid Agency requires that all providers who deliver legal aid to asylum seekers comply with the Law Society's Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme, with such work being overseen by an appointed supervisor of legal aid work for immigration and asylum cases at each firm.

LEGAL AID / DECISION MAKING / WOMEN / LGBTQ+

[169819](#) [169820](#) [169821](#)

Alex Sobel (Lab, Leeds North West) asks the Secretary of State for Justice:

1. what steps the Government is taking to ensure that women claiming asylum who have experienced forms of violence that may be difficult to disclose have adequate access to legal representation.
2. what steps the Government is taking to ensure that women seeking asylum who have experienced forms of violence that may be difficult to disclose have adequate access to legal representation.
3. what steps the Government is taking to ensure that LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum who have experienced forms of violence that may be difficult to disclose have adequate access to legal representation.

Lucy Frazer 6.9.18:

The government is clear that legal aid is available to those who need it most.

Subject to statutory means and merit tests, applications and appeals for asylum generally remain in scope for civil legal aid and advice can be accessed without the need to evidence any the specifics of the violence that an applicant may have experienced. The LAA procures immigration and asylum providers who are specialists in this area and are expected to be alert and aware of all issues relating to refugee and asylum status including any possible gender dimensions.

We recognise that it may be difficult to disclose sensitive information. The Home Office has taken steps to make this process sensitive by, for example, providing gender-specific interviewers and interpreters on request.

The Government is committed to delivering an asylum process which supports claimants in providing information relevant to their claim to facilitate fair and sustainable asylum decisions. This includes a commitment to ensuring that those who have suffered forms of violence feel able to disclose their experiences early in the asylum process so that decision-makers can consider that evidence and grant protection where needed without undue delay. At the point of claim, the Home Office provides information to asylum claimants including on legal advice. This includes details of support organisations that may be relevant for those who have experienced gender-based violence, torture, trafficking and modern slavery.

SUPPORT / INTEGRATION

Bridget Phillipson, (Lab, Houghton and Sunderland South) asks SSHD, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the rates of financial assistance provided through asylum support.

Caroline Nokes, 6.9.18: The most recent assessment of the adequacy of the asylum support rates is set out in a report published in March 2018, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers>.

We are currently undertaking a further review of the rates and have consulted key stakeholders in the normal way.

The consultation period has now ended and a decision on whether the rates should change will be made shortly.

ENFORCEMENT

House of Commons, 4 September 2018, 3.44pm, Windrush, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Diane Abbott (Lab, Hackney North and Stoke Newington): (*Urgent Question*): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to make a statement on the Government's policy on Windrush.

Debate covers historical review of removals and detentions, work of Windrush taskforce, compensation scheme and lessons learned review. Point of Order raised by Sir Hugo Swire (Con, East Devon) asking when the report of Sir Alex Allan (commissioned by the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office to review Windrush) will be made available to the House. Caroline Nokes: the Home Secretary is considering whether a redacted version of the report will be published.

Interventions from Dianne Abbott, Sir Hugo Swire (Con, East Devon), Joanna Cherry (SNP, Edinburgh South West, Phillip Hollobone (Con, Kettering); Yvette Cooper (Lab, Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford); Vicky Ford (Con, Chelmsford); Sir Edward Davey (Lib Dem, Kingston and Surbiton), Bill Grant (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock); Thangam Debbonaire (Lab, Bristol West); Rebecca Pow (Con, Taunton Deane); Patrick Grady (SNP, Glasgow North); Kevin Foster (Con, Torbay); Stephen Doughty (Lab, Coop, Cardiff South and Penarth); Tom Pursglove (Con, Corby); Janet Daby (Lab, Lewisham East); Helen Hayes (Lab, Dulwich); Emma Dent Coad (Lab, Kensington); Carol Monaghan (SNP, Glasgow North West); Barry Sheerman (Lab Coop, Huddersfield); Wes Streeting (Lab, Ilford North); Maria Eagle (Lab, Garston and Halewood); Emma Reynolds (Wolverhampton and North East); Mike Kane (Wythenshawe and Sale East); Kate Green (Lab, Stretford and Urmston); Alex Norris (Lab, Nottingham North); Sir Hugo Swire (Con, East Devon)

House of Lords, 4 September 2018, 7.11pm, Windrush read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Repeat of statement made in House of Commons.

Debate covers compensation scheme, apologies made, death of 3 people who have been affected, lack of identity card scheme in UK

Interventions from Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Lab), Baroness Hamwee (Lib Dem), Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench), Lord Desai (Lab). For the Government, Baroness Williams of Trafford (Minister of State, Home Office)

ENFORCEMENT / **DECISION MAKING**

4.9.18 Home Affairs Select Committee publishes [Government response to the Committee's sixth report of session 2017 – 19 on the Windrush generation to Windrush report](#)

Government response covers information audit, compensation scheme, timeliness of decision-making of taskforce, ongoing lessons learned review, Home Office culture, passport fees, target-led approach, compliant environment, data sharing police and immigration enforcement, banking measures, Home Office whistleblowing and reporting, legal aid and appeals, nationality law, undocumented children, EU and Chagos nationals.

Consultation on Windrush compensation scheme remains open until 11 October.

Re a proposal for a new “Minded to refuse” step, including in asylum claims, the response states:

“The Minded to Refuse category will not replace any existing appeal rights. We have commenced a ‘minded to refuse’ pilot scheme in asylum cases. We will learn lessons from this pilot and scale it up to include other immigration decisions where we believe this additional step will allow us to improve the quality of decision making (by having all the relevant evidence to inform the decision), whilst enabling UKVI to make timely decisions.”

ENFORCEMENT / DECISION MAKING

4.9.18: Home Affairs Select Committee publishes [Letter from the Home Secretary regarding Windrush, July update 21 August 2018](#), giving update on actions taken in response to Windrush scandal

ENFORCEMENT / DETENTION

Adjournment Debate, Immigration Control, House of Commons, 17.00, 6 September 2018, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Debate brought by David Lammy (Lab, Tottenham). Covers: experience of constituent subject to immigration enforcement with authorities acting on incorrect information; detention in Yarl’s Wood; experience of reporting; adverse effects experienced; compensation paid by UK government for unlawful detention; current climate on immigration; indefinite detention; inefficiency of immigration system; lack of legal aid and representation; burden to tax payers of immigration detention; money retained by Home Office for Immigration Applications; actions of current Government and previous Labour governments; shadow economy fuelled by workplace exploitation; call for cross party response to heal wounds, call for one off immigration amnesty to regularise status of people living in shadow economy.

Caroline Nokes:

- Congratulates Mr Lammy on securing debate.
- Extends congratulations on award to David Lammy as GQ’s politician of the year.

“[David Lammy] is of course right to point out that people from all over the world have come to the UK and helped to make this country what it is today. We welcome their contribution and the fact that Britain is one of the best countries in the world to come and live in. That is why we need a fair immigration system under which people can come here, be welcomed and become part of our communities, and a fair system that treats people with decency and respect.

That is why this Government are taking action and will continue to do so. We are fighting modern slavery to stop people being trafficked here and stripped of their freedom by slave drivers. We have changed the law to stop children being routinely detained in the immigration system. In 2009, over 1,100 children entered detention, and last year only 44 were held for a very brief period. We have set up a scheme to resettle 20,000 people fleeing Syria so that the most vulnerable, such as disabled people and torture victims, get refuge, not just those fit enough to travel here alone. We are also working to put right the wrongs done to the Windrush generation.

However, we also need to have a controlled system, because Britain is one of the best countries in the world to live in and many people want to come here. We need a controlled system under which the rules that make that possible are followed. That is what the Government are building, and it is what the public expect. When people break the rules and try to play the system, it is unfair, and the people it is most unfair to are those who have come here and played by the rules. That is why we have broken up the UK Border Agency to make the system more effective, reintroduced exit checks and toughened the penalties for people employing illegal workers. Migration benefits the UK, but that system has to be underpinned by rules.

I remain absolutely committed to improving the border, immigration and citizenship system. As hon. Members will recall, the system was labelled “not fit for purpose” by a former Labour Home Secretary. I have listed some examples of the progress made since 2010, but I absolutely recognise that there is more to do. That is why we are listening to Members in both Houses, to those using the system, to partners and to independent advice. I really welcome the constructive engagement I have had with members of Her Majesty’s Opposition. I have sought to keep my door open to colleagues from across the House, and while there has certainly been a great deal of challenge, there has also been much positivity and many constructive suggestions of ways in which we can work together to make the system better.

As I have said, the Government have made a strong commitment to learn the lessons from the wrongs experienced by the Windrush generation. On 19 July, the Home Office published the terms of reference for the Windrush lessons learned review. The review will have independent oversight by Wendy Williams, who I know the right hon. Gentleman has already met, and it will aim to publish its report by the end of March 2019.

However, we are not waiting for that review to take action to improve the system. The review is part of a whole series of examples of independent scrutiny bodies that the Government are working with or have commissioned. For example, we have commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee for advice on a migration system for European economic area nationals following our exit from the European Union, and asked it to conduct a full review of the shortage occupation list. The independent chief inspector of borders and immigration continues to scrutinise the border, immigration and citizenship system.

We are not only implementing the recommendations from Stephen Shaw’s review of detention, but, as my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary set out in July, going further and undertaking a series of improvements. As part of our response to Shaw, the Government will explore alternatives to detention with faith groups, non-governmental organisations and communities. As a first step, we intend to pilot a scheme to manage in the community vulnerable women who would otherwise have been detained at Yarl’s Wood immigration removal centre. Home Office officials have been working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to develop that pilot, which will mean that rather than receiving support and care in an immigration removal centre, the women will get a programme of support and care in the community.

We will review the adults at risk policy, ensuring that the most vulnerable and complex cases get the attention they need. We will look again at how consideration of rule 35 reports on possible cases of torture can be improved, while avoiding abuse of the processes. We will pilot an additional bail referral at the two-month point and increase the size and scope of the detention gatekeeper function. For now, the policy is one of senior civil servant sign-off for detention decisions, and we

will strengthen links with pre-departure teams by putting additional Home Office people in removal centres to increase face-to-face engagement with detainees and resolve possible problems with detention.

We will commission the independent chief inspector of borders and immigration to report each year on whether and how the adults at risk policy is making a difference. We will pilot the use of Skype so that detainees can contact their families overseas and in the UK. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked officials to review how time limits work in other countries, and how they relate to other protections in their detention systems, so as to have a better-informed debate based on what works to tackle illegal migration and what is humane for those detained. Once that is complete we will consider further the issue of time-limited detention.

I point out to the right hon. Member for Tottenham that the Government currently manage 95% of those in the removal pool in the community, and of those in immigration removal centres, 63% leave within 28 days and more than 90% within four months. He mentioned the debate held earlier this week in Westminster Hall, which was initiated by the hon. Member for Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East (Stuart C. McDonald), in which we discussed immigration fees. Of course we keep all Home Office fees under regular review, and when setting immigration and nationality fees, which are approved by Parliament in line with the Immigration Act 2014, we take into account the wider costs involved in running our border, immigration and citizenship system, so that those who directly benefit from it contribute to its funding. That reduces the burden on UK taxpayers.

I am carefully considering points made during a recent debate in the Lords on child citizenship fees, and in other debates held this week, and in due course I will take account of the findings of the imminent review by the independent chief inspector of borders and immigration. It is important that we have a fair charging policy that considers a customer's circumstances and requirements and supports the effective operation of our immigration system. We will continue to set fees that take into account the benefits accruing from a successful application, for example across the labour market.

Now more than ever, we are listening to independent advice, developing policy that is rooted in evidence and taking feedback from customers to ensure that we continue to have a world-leading border, immigration and citizenship system, and that those subject to immigration control are provided with the appropriate service. The right hon. Member for Tottenham and others are right to bring matters to my attention, but I remind the House of the scale of the immigration system. Thousands of decisions are made every day, and the overwhelming majority are completed within published service standards and enable people to visit the UK, study or work here, or rebuild their lives.

UK Visas and Immigration offices make more than 3 million decisions a year, and the Border Force enables 250 million people to cross our border while keeping our country safe and secure. Immigration Enforcement ensures that 95% of individuals who require leave to remain, but do not have it because they have overstayed their visa or are not eligible to have it extended, are managed in the community and receive guidance on departure.

I am not complacent, but I list those achievements because they are not insignificant. For every case in which I have conceded that the system could have done better, and must do better in future, there are thousands more people who are satisfied with their experience of the immigration system.

I am proud of the hard work and dedication of officials in the Home Office, and their integrity will always be our first line of assurance. The treatment of the Windrush generation has been unacceptable and we will put it right. Britain is one of the best places in the world to come and live, and I want it to stay that way.

In conclusion, I welcome the offer made by the right hon. Gentleman and many of his colleagues from across the House to work on a cross-party basis to ensure that our future systems are the best they can possibly be.”

FAMILY REUNION / UNHCR

[167142](#) [167143](#)

Maria Eagle (Lab, Garston and Halewood) asks Secretary of State for International Development:

- how much funding her Department has allocated to the UNHCR to support the processing of family links applications for each year since 2010.
- if she will increase funding from her Department to the UNHCR to support the processing of family links applications in the Liverpool City Council area in each year for which information is available.

Alistair Burt, 4.9.18: The UK is a long-standing supporter of UNHCR, reflecting our shared commitment to international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law and ensuring that UK aid reaches the most marginalised. Since 2010, the UK has contributed in excess of USD 1.2 billion to UNHCR in support of their work to protect refugees and other forcibly displaced people. It is not possible to disaggregate the amount of this funding utilised solely on progressing family reunification applications, nor by those with familial links in the Liverpool area.

The Department for International Development has also committed to provide UNHCR with an annual contribution of £35m core unearmarked funding (up to 2021). This funding will support UNHCR’s work to assist and protect refugees, as well as ambitious system-wide improvements to deliver the greatest possible impact for those most in need.

Funding for UNHCR and for local authorities participating in resettling refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) is provided by the Home Office.

FAMILY REUNION

Business of the House, House of Commons, 6 September 2018, 1042 am read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Pete Wishart (SNP, Perth and North Perthshire)

[...] The issue of private Members’ Bills is not going to go away for the Leader of the House. There are only two sitting Fridays left in this Session of Parliament, and there is a list of private Members’ Bills still awaiting money resolutions, prime among them the critical Bill on reuniting refugee families tabled by [Angus Brendan MacNeil]. Will we see some extra sitting Fridays, and will there be progress on those money resolutions? [...]

Andrea Leadsom (Leader of the House) [...] The House approved, early in this Session, 13 sitting Fridays for the Session. As I said during the debate on 17 July 2017, given that we have announced that this will be an extended Session, we will be bringing forward additional sitting Fridays in due course. However, we have seen some excellent progress right across the House. I am pleased that we will be discussing a money resolution for the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill, tabled by [Mr Robinson]. That is a very important private Member's Bill, so I do think we are making progress. There is always more to do, but I hope that [Pete Wishart] will continue to be resolute in his determination to see his hon. Friends' Bills taken forward also. [...]

FAMILY REUNION

[167356](#)

Bambos Charalambous (Lab, Enfield Southgate) asks SSHD what progress has been made on his review of his Department's policies on (a) immigration and (b) refugee family reunion.

Caroline Nokes, 7.9.18: We keep all immigration policies under constant review to ensure that the immigration system operates in the national interest

We are listening carefully to calls to expand the scope of the refugee family reunion rules and are reviewing our approach. We continue to follow the passage of two Private Members' Bills on refugee family reunion closely and will continue our productive discussions with non-governmental organisations in this area.

RESETTLEMENT / CHILDREN / FAMILY REUNION

[169822](#)

Lesley Laird (Lab, Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) asks SSHD, how many unaccompanied child refugees have been re-settled in Scotland in each of the last three years; and how many of those children were resettled with family already living in Scotland.

Caroline Nokes, 6.9.18: The Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) resettles 'at-risk' refugee children from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including their families. Our aim is to resettle up to 3,000 people (children and families, where the child at risk is part of a family unit) through the scheme by 2020.

The scheme does not solely target unaccompanied children, but on UNHCR's advice also extends to vulnerable 'children at risk', such as those threatened with child labour, child marriage and other forms of abuse or exploitation. It is open to all at risk groups and nationalities within the region.

The scheme, which is the largest resettlement effort aimed specifically at children at risk from the MENA region, is in addition to the Government's commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees from Syria under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS).

The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The statistics are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2018>.

RESETTLEMENT / SYRIA

[167139](#) [167140](#) [167141](#) [167144](#) [167145](#)

Maria Eagle (Liverpool, Garston and Halewood) asks SSHD:

1. what extra support he is providing to the Liverpool City Council for the Syrian Resettlement Programme;
2. how many Syrian refugees have been resettled in the Liverpool City Region since 2016;
3. how many family links applications to the UNHCR have been successful in reuniting relatives of Syrian families settled in the Liverpool City Council area;
4. how much funding has been allocated from his Department to the UNHCR to support the processing of family links applications for each year since 2010;
5. if he will take steps to increase the funding from his Department to the UNHCR to support the processing of family links applications in the Liverpool City Council area.

Caroline Nokes, 7.9.18: The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The latest statistics detailing arrivals under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) by local authority are available in table as20q at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to#resettlement>

We are grateful for the ongoing support of over 270 local authorities across the UK participating in resettling refugees under the VPRS. The Home Office provides funding to local authorities via a tariff payment per person. The year one tariff is £8,520 for direct local authority costs. The costs over years two to five taper from £5,000 per person in their second year in the UK, to £1,000 per person in year five.

There is also an exceptional cases fund to assist the most vulnerable refugees. This funding is available to help local authorities with exceptional costs such as social care and housing adaptations.

Where UNHCR refer refugees with existing family links to the UK and the UK accepts them for resettlement, we endeavour to resettle them as close as possible to their existing family members, subject to suitable accommodation and support being available.

The funding provided to UNHCR covers the processing and referral of refugees arriving under the VPRS. It is not apportioned according to referral reason or by the local authority area in which refugees may be resettled

RESETTLEMENT / SYRIA

[167888](#)

Maria Eagle (Lab, Garston and Halewood) asks SSHD , how much Government funding is available to the UNHCR for the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the Liverpool City Council area.

Caroline Nokes, 7.9.18: I refer the Hon. Member to the response given to UIN167144 on 7th September 2018.

RESETTLEMENT / SYRIA / WHITE HELMETS

[WQ169150](#)

Andrew Gwynne (Lab, Denton and Reddish) asks SSHD, with reference to the statement by the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for International Development, made on 22 July 2018, whether White Helmet volunteers have been resettled in the (a) North West, (b) Greater Manchester and (c) Denton and Reddish constituency.

Caroline Nokes, 6.9.18: Together with international partners, the UK is working to resettle members of the White Helmets and their families. Any resettlement to the UK will be in line with the established UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) process for identifying and resettling the most vulnerable refugees. Our prime concern for those coming to the UK under our resettlement schemes is their safety and protection as they arrive in this country. We believe that one way to protect their privacy and support their recovery and integration is to limit the amount of information about them that we make publicly available.

Notwithstanding this the Home Office is committed to publishing data on arrivals in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

UN / GLOBAL COMPACT

House of Commons, Questions to the Prime Minister, 12.01pm, 5 September 2018 read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Gillian Keegan (Con, Chichester): [...]I have recently returned from Africa, where I visited a refugee camp in Tanzania with Plan, witnessing the transformative impact of UK aid in protecting women from sexual violence and giving children access to education. With the UN General Assembly fast approaching, will the Prime Minister outline what preparations she has made for the global compact on refugees?

The Prime Minister: Yes, we are looking at this. We are not just looking at what has been proposed for the global compact for refugees; we have actually been part of the discussions about what should be in that global compact. This partly reflects one of the speeches I gave when I was at UNGA in 2016, shortly after I became Prime Minister, about the need to look internationally at how we deal with migration and refugees. I want to see a better ability to differentiate between illegal economic migrants and refugees, because I think by doing that we will be able to ensure that we are providing the support necessary for refugees.

UN

House of Lords, 6 September 2018, 5.54pm, United Nations General Assembly 2018: IRC report question for short debate read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Lord Howell of Guildford: To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the Report from the International Relations Committee *The United Nations General Assembly 2018* (4th Report, HL Paper 156).

Lord Howell: [...]The great world tragedies, and the focus points for the UN, have now shifted. The prime, truly global tasks now are to bring peace instead of war [...]to push ahead with the new proposals for addressing migration and defining more clearly the distinction between refugees and economic migrants, now disrupting the entire world, and certainly the whole of Europe, on an unprecedented scale[...]

[...] Baroness Coussins (CrossBench): [...] I ask the Minister whether Her Majesty's Government will seek to strengthen the text of the global compact on refugees, which is being put to the General Assembly, specifically in respect of language issues [...]The draft global compact acknowledges the importance of language education for integration but would be significantly strengthened if it provided explicitly for the right of refugees to information in a language they speak and understand so that they can access relevant protection and assistance. This right would need to be backed up by systematic data collection on language and improved resourcing for interpreting and translation, so that help for refugees can be better targeted and more effective.

I am grateful to the splendid organisation Translators without Borders for alerting me to these issues. I hope the Minister will be willing to see that they are raised at the General Assembly later this month, along with the issues flagged up in the Select Committee's report [...]

Baroness Goldie (Con): [...]unmanaged migration continues to pose a significant challenge across Europe, and it is clear that bilateral and regional efforts to address this challenge are by themselves insufficient. [...]The UK recognises the value of safe, orderly and properly managed migration, and the Government welcome that global compact, which was agreed in New York in July, as an international framework towards achieving a more orderly and managed process. We look forward to its implementation. In this context, I also noticed a very interesting observation by [Baroness Coussins] in her point about language and translation, which will be noted.[...]

COUNTRY SITUATIONS

AFGHANISTAN

House of Lords, 4.9.18, Question for Short Debate, 7.24pm 4 September 2018, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Baroness de Souza: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review United Kingdom assistance to Afghanistan; and what assessment they have made of the prospects for peace in that country.

Debate covers situation in Afghanistan, and UK assistance.

BURMA MYANMAR / ROHINGYA

House of Commons, Oral answers to Questions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 4 September 2018 read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Mr Philip Hollobone (Con, Kettering): What diplomatic initiatives are under way to overcome the statelessness of the Rohingya refugees?

Jeremy Hunt: [...]My colleague in the other place, Lord Ahmad, hosted a Security Council meeting on 28 August to look at all these issues. I will be looking at that particular issue when we have a high-level meeting of Foreign Ministers at the UN General Assembly.

BURMA MYANMAR / ROHINGYA

[168150](#)

Alison Thewliss (SNP, Glasgow Central) asks Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage the United Nations Security Council to refer the people responsible for the situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

Mark Field, 7.9.18: It is our assessment pushing for a Security Council resolution that includes a referral to the International Criminal Court would not be productive in our efforts at this point to ensure accountability and persuade the Burmese authorities to make faster progress on refugee returns, nor would it receive support without veto amongst UNSC members. When the UN Security Council considers the final UN Fact Finding Mission report on Burma, we will have the opportunity to explore urgently all options to ensure accountability, including ICC referral, while also pushing for accelerated progress on refugee returns.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-24/168150/>

FRANCE / CALAIS

[167883](#)

Andrew Rosindell (Con, Romford) asks SSHD, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UK Government initiatives to prevent illegal immigration from Calais.

Caroline Nokes, 7.9.18: In preventing illegal migration from Calais (and Northern France more broadly), the UK continues to maintain a strong cooperative relationship with France. Most recently, our two countries signed the Sandhurst Treaty at the UK-France Summit in January 2018, which demonstrates our ongoing mutual commitment to the juxtaposed controls and adoption of a 'whole of route' approach to illegal migration. €50 million of financial support has been allocated to progress this cooperation. Our cooperation with France includes joint work to improve security at the shared border in northern France; to reduce illegal migration flows towards northern French ports and to support France in returning migrants with no legal right to be in Europe.

At the juxtaposed controls, Border Force officers use advanced detection technology available to identify migrants attempting to reach the UK illegally. In 2015 there were over 80,000 recorded attempts to illegally enter the United Kingdom from Northern France; in 2017 this was reduced to just over 30,000 as a consequence of the security enhancements and camp closures in 2016. This reduction signifies our approach is working, and builds on our cooperation under the Sandhurst Treaty, which has contributed significantly to a rise in the numbers being brought into the French asylum system, and a reduction in migrant numbers located around the Northern French Ports.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

[Early Day Motion 1566 tabled 4.9.18](#) by Richard Burden (Lab, Birmingham Northfield), sponsored by Nicolas Soames (Con, Mid Sussex), Tom Brake (Lib Dem, Carshalton and Wallington), Grahame M Morris (Lab, Easington), Phillippa Whitford (SNP, Central Ayrshire), Catherine West (Lab, Hornsey and Wood Green)

That this House is appalled by the decision of the US Administration to end its funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which amounts to a reduction of nearly a third of UNRWA's operating budget; believes that such a move takes the Middle East further away from peace and is part of an unprecedented attempt to undermine the international legal consensus on the protected status of Palestinian refugees; notes that across Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, around six million Palestinian refugees are registered with UNRWA and reaffirms their status as such; is concerned that this funding decision will critically endanger UNRWA's ability to continue providing vital services, including health care and social services as well as education for well over 500,000 refugee children; and calls on the Government to work with international partners to fill the funding gap left by the US Administration and ensure that vital front-line services are not put at risk by this reckless unilateral withdrawal of support.

73 signatures, for details read [here](#)

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

House of Commons, Oral answers to Questions, Peace Process Israel and Palestine, 4 September 2018 3.18pm read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...]

Matthew Pennycock (Lab, Greenwich and Woolwich): In response to the cruel decision taken by the Trump Administration to cut US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the German Government have pledged to increase their financial support for the agency. Will the Minister commit his Government to do the same, so that Palestinian refugees do not suffer as a result of the President's decision?

Alistair Burt: I am pleased to announce [...]today we have taken the decision to increase funding to UNRWA by a further £7 million. I spoke just a couple of hours ago to Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl to express our support for UNRWA. We understand the concerns of the United States, but we do not believe that the way it has gone about this is correct. We will continue to support the most vulnerable people, because that also forms a vital part of a just solution to the issues between the Palestinians and Israel.

[...] Helen Goodman (Lab, Bishop Auckland): I welcome what the Minister has just said [...]Labour has been saying for months that proposed cuts from Donald Trump would damage Palestinian schooling and education and harm the peace process. Will the Foreign Office also now take the lead in organising an international emergency conference, so that others may also pledge more support?

Alistair Burt: [...]We have increased funding more than once during this year, and more than £40 million extra has been brought forward to support UNRWA. I spoke to the commissioner-general about education in particular. He has the funds to open the schools at present and keep them going, but this will depend on further funding decisions in the future. I hope that we will be able to take part in mutual discussions at the UN General Assembly with other states that are affected. This is not

just about the west bank and Gaza; it is also about Jordan and Lebanon. It is about places where children are getting an education. We are talking about an education that is gender neutral in a way in which other parts of the education system in the region are not. The question is: if UNRWA does not provide the education, who might? That is why it is so important to keep this going[.]

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

Oral Answers to Questions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 4 September 2018, 3.25pm read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Richard Burden (): [...] May I put it to him that one of the most disreputable aspects of President Trump's decision to end United States funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency is the fact that he dressed it up as part of a grand negotiating strategy towards what he calls the deal of the century, when in reality that decision is hitting schools and hospitals and the food aid for hundreds of thousands of people in abject poverty? I applaud the increase in funding for UNRWA, but may I press the Secretary of State a bit more about what action the UK Government and their partners will take to ensure that the vital lifeline that UNRWA provides to vulnerable people around the world will not be lost?

Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs: [...]we do not agree with the American Administration's decision on this issue. Today's funding announcement is part of our response, but [...]we will talk to other donors as well, to see whether we can make up the gap in funding to UNRWA that has been caused by that decision.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

House of Lords, Private Notice Question, 3.08pm 4 September 2018 read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Baroness Northover (Lib Dem): To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the United States concerning the funding of United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the UN's Palestinian refugee agency.

Lord Bates (Minister of State, Department for International Development): The United States has consistently been UNRWA's single largest donor. When the US announced its intention to withhold a planned disbursement to UNRWA in January, we were sympathetic to the need for a broader donor base for UNRWA, but made clear our concerns about the impact on UNRWA's activities that any unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements might have. That remains our position.

Baroness Northover: [...]UNRWA supports Palestinians [...]in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, as well as the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Gaza. Does he worry about the effect of this decision on these fragile states which already have a huge burden of refugees? Will the Government reassert the importance of UNRWA's role, emphasising that refugee rights must be recognised and cannot simply be set aside by outside powers?

Lord Bates: I am very happy to do that, and I am very happy to give this Government's strong and unequivocal support to the work of UNRWA, which provides vital education, healthcare and other services to the refugees in that area. What is more, we have underscored that by the fact that when this crisis first arose, an emergency meeting took place, which the Minister, Alistair Burt, attended,

and we brought forward £28.5 million in support planned for this year. Then in June, we announced a further £10 million for that cause. There is our government commitment, and at the same time, we have encouraged other countries to step up to the plate to ensure that this vital work continues.

Further interventions by Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab), Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB), Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (LD), Lord Pickles (Con), Lord Judd (Lab), Lord Leigh of Hurley (Con), Baroness Symons of Vernon Dean (Lab)

Lord Leigh of Hurley (Con): My Lords, it is estimated that the number of Palestinian refugees who are alive today who were displaced in 1948 is around 30,000. However, unique to any refugee situation in the world, the United Nations now defines their descendants as refugees, so the total is over 5 million. Does the Minister agree that a solution to this issue is made almost impossible when refugee status can be inherited in perpetuity? We should bring pressure on UNRWA to rehabilitate, rather than perpetuate.

Lord Bates: [...]importance of peace dialogue and reconciliation. The plight of Palestinian refugees has been experienced at first hand by many noble Lords, including me, and cannot be denied. In Syria they are doubly blighted by the situation there. This is a group of people in urgent need; this country has never walked by on the other side and will not do so in this case

[...]. In Foreign Office Oral Questions, which are taking place at this moment in the other place, an announcement will be made of a sum of money additional to the £10 million announced in June and the £28.5 million which was brought forward. I have been asked to restrain myself from announcing the precise amount of this additional money until Minister Burt has done so. I am happy to find another mechanism for ensuring that this House is correctly informed of it.

SOUTH SUDAN

[166443](#)

Mark Hendrick (Lab, Preston) asks Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department is planning to send emergency aid to refugees to South Sudan as a result of violence in that region.

Harriet Baldwin (Minister of State (Department for International Development) (Joint with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) 4.9.18: The conflict in South Sudan continues to drive the largest refugee crisis in Africa. Ongoing violence and the severe humanitarian crisis have forced nearly 2.5 million people to flee their homes to neighbouring countries. Through bilateral programmes and multilateral partners, the Department for International Development has provided lifesaving aid and livelihood support to South Sudanese refugees, including 950,000 refugees in Uganda; up to 150,000 in Sudan; and 100,000 in Kenya. DFID is also a significant contributor to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, providing £140 million of flexible funding from 2017-2021, which includes support for South Sudanese refugees who have fled to Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition to support for South Sudanese refugees in the region, through our Humanitarian Response and Resilience in South Sudan (HARRIS) programme, DFID South Sudan is providing humanitarian and livelihoods support to 1.8 million people who have been internally displaced by ongoing violence.