

PARLIAMENTARY ROUND UP 8 September 2018 – 14 September 2018

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ACCOMMODATION

[170435](#)

Paul Sweeney (Lab, Glasgow North East) asks the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of his Departments policy on asylum accommodation since 2012.

Caroline Nokes, 10.9.18: The Home Office provides accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. The accommodation is arranged through a number of housing providers, who are contractually required to provide safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped accommodation that complies with the Decent Homes Standard, as well as standards outlined in relevant national housing legislation.

There is an inspection and contract compliance regime in place to ensure that the standards required in the contracts are met.

We remain in regular discussion with Providers, service users, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders about ways to improve the services provided and we will be making a number of improvements to the design of the future contracted services as a direct result of such feedback.

ACCOMMODATION

[170434](#)

Paul Sweeney (Lab, Glasgow North East) asks SSHD, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2018 to [Question 133797](#) on Asylum: Housing, how many asylum seekers have been placed into forced bedroom sharing in dispersed asylum accommodation in each of the last three years.

Caroline Nokes, 10.9.18: The draft asylum accommodation contract includes provision for amendment through a formal change control process that is subject to agreement and formal signing of variation by both parties.

The draft contract also includes provision for termination on grounds of cause or convenience at the authorities absolute discretion. Costs associated with enacting any of these provisions will vary on a case by case basis.

ACCOMMODATION

[170432](#) [170433](#)

Paul Sweeney (Lab, Glasgow North East) asks SSHD:

1. whether any government contracts for the provision of housing to asylum seekers include options for the payment of a bonus to the provider if certain criteria are met;
2. whether any bonus payments have been paid by the Government to any companies currently providing asylum seeker accommodation.

Caroline Nokes, 10.9.18: The United Kingdom Visa and Immigration Service (UKVI) discharges their statutory duty to provide destitute asylum seeker accommodation and transport via a suite of COMPASS contracts with three providers. The contract payment mechanism is based on per person per night cost and does not include any bonus payment facility.

ACCOMMODATION

[170436](#)

Paul Sweeney (Lab, Glasgow North East) asks SSHD, what discussions his Department has had with (a) external experts and (b) asylum seekers on the design of the contract for asylum seeker housing from 2019.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The Home Office has actively engaged with a wide range of stakeholders across local government, statutory and third sector as part of the development of the new asylum accommodation contracts and the information obtained through this process has influenced the design of the future service provision.

ACCOMMODATION

[171726](#)

Paul Sweeney (Lab, Glasgow North East) asks SSHD, what criteria will be used to determine destitution in the renewed asylum accommodation contract.

Caroline Nokes, 12.9.18: Section 95 of the of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 provides that an asylum seeker is destitute and therefore eligible to receive accommodation and other support from the Home Office if:

- a) he does not have adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it (whether or not his other essential living needs are met); or
- b) he has adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it, but cannot meet his other essential living needs.

The definition is not changed by the re-tender of the Home Office asylum accommodation contracts. The legislation provides that, unless there are children in their household, a person ceases to be eligible to receive section 95 support 21 days after their asylum claim or any appeal is finally rejected. However, another form of support, including accommodation, is available under section 4(2) of the 1999 Act if the person is taking reasonable steps to leave the UK or there is a temporary or legal or practical obstacle that prevents their departure.

Cessation of s95 support occurs once an applicant is no longer eligible, through having exhausted all appeal rights, being granted a form of leave, has been removed from the country or having left the accommodation voluntarily. Operational checks are undertaken to ensure that there are no outstanding issues or applications, and support can be reinstated if information is received to the contrary.

There is no provision in the accommodation contracts that enable people who cease to qualify for section 95 support and do not qualify for section 4(2) support to continue to be housed.

ACCOMMODATION

[171727](#) [171728](#)

Paul Sweeney (Lab, Glasgow North East) asks SSHD:

1. what steps his Department is taking to (a) monitor and (b) enforce the provisions in the asylum accommodation contract that people who would otherwise be destitute will continue to be housed.
2. how many asylum seekers have had their housing provision removed before their asylum process was fully completed including the appeals process since 2012.

Caroline Nokes, 12.9.18: Section 95 of the of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 provides that an asylum seeker is destitute and therefore eligible to receive accommodation and other support from the Home Office if:

- a) he does not have adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it (whether or not his other essential living needs are met);

or b) he has adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it, but cannot meet his other essential living needs.

The definition is not changed by the re-tender of the Home Office asylum accommodation contracts. The legislation provides that, unless there are children in their household, a person ceases to be eligible to receive section 95 support 21 days after their asylum claim or any appeal is finally rejected. However, another form of support, including accommodation, is available under section 4(2) of the 1999 Act if the person is taking reasonable steps to leave the UK or there is a temporary or legal or practical obstacle that prevents their departure.

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There is no provision in the accommodation contracts that enable people who cease to qualify for section 95 support and do not qualify for section 4(2) support to continue to be housed.

ACCOMMODATION

[172529](#)

Alex Cunningham (Lab, Stockton North) asks SSHD, what steps he is taking to ensure that people seeking asylum are not required to share bedrooms under the new asylum accommodation contracts.

Caroline Nokes, 14.9.18: The forthcoming Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts will permit the use of room sharing for some service users, providing it complies with the strict criteria set out in the contracts Statement of Requirements.

This includes compliance with relevant national and local housing regulations including any advice from social services and primary and secondary care bodies on whether room sharing is inappropriate for individual cases. In addition Providers will continue to be required to ensure they take into account a service users individual characteristics and provide them with appropriate accommodation reflective of any changing needs, including adherence to religious practice.

ACCOMMODATION

[172530](#)

Alex Cunningham (Lab, Stockton North) asks SSHD, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that asylum (a) accommodation and (b) facilities support adequately vulnerable people seeking asylum.

Caroline Nokes, 14.9.18 All applicants for asylum support and accommodation are asked to declare any specialist circumstance or specific accommodation requirements as part of the consideration of

their initial application form. 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>

A further ongoing assessment of needs is undertaken by asylum accommodation providers commencing upon initial entry into accommodation. 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 advice from social services and primary and secondary care bodies on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific needs of the individual.

A property inspection process forms part of the Home Office's contract compliance regime which ensures that the required performance standards expected of all providers are met. Where inspected property does not meet the required standards there are strict time limits on resolving property defects; failure to meet those time limits can result in service credits being applied through financial deduction from monthly invoices. These are monitored formally, on a monthly basis, at Contract Management meetings between the providers and representatives of UK Visas and Immigration.

ACCOMMODATION

[172531](#)

Alex Cunningham (Lab, Stockton North) asks SSHD, what plans he has to ensure the monitoring of the (a) quality and (b) effectiveness of the housing provided under the new ten-year asylum contracts.

Caroline Nokes, 14.9.18: The forthcoming Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts, include clearly defined performance standards measured through a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set within a wider Performance Management Regime (PMR) that will ensure the safety and wellbeing of all Service Users.

This will include ensuring that accommodation is 'Safe', 'Habitable', and 'Fit for Purpose' and is delivered in accordance with the Decent Home Standard, the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Accommodation providers will also be required to ensure that accommodation meets any other statutory housing standards which are applicable in the specified contract region and is compliant with any Local Authority licensing requirements whilst the property is used to accommodate Service Users.

A property inspection and audit process will form part of the Home Office's contract compliance regime which will ensure that the required performance standards expected of all providers are met. Where inspected property does not meet the required standards, there are strict contractual time limits on resolving property defects; failure to meet those time limits could result in service credits being applied through financial deduction from monthly invoices. These will be monitored formally,

on a monthly basis, at Contract Management meetings between the providers and representatives of UK Visas and Immigration.

ACCOMMODATION

[172532](#)

Alex Cunningham (Lab, Stockton North) asks SSHD, which local authorities have made representations to his Department on the new asylum accommodation contracts; and whether his Department has received representations on those contracts from the Local Government Association.

Caroline Nokes 14.9.18: To continue to meet UKVI's obligation to provide accommodation & support to destitute asylum seekers, the Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation (AASST) project has been established to design, develop and procure the future model for asylum accommodation and support, replacing the existing COMPASS arrangements when they expire in Sept 2019.

Since the establishment of the project in the autumn of 2016, there has been extensive engagement with strategic stakeholders, including Strategic Migration Partnerships, Local Authorities and Non-Government Organisations to identify a range of enhancements and improvements to the existing model which have been reflected in the design of the next generation of contracts.

We estimate that there have been over 60 separate stakeholder events or written exercises undertaken since autumn 2016. Details of the feedback provided by individual stakeholders from this engagement could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual correspondence, event minutes and records.

ACCOMMODATION

[172535](#)

Alex Cunningham (Lab, Stockton North) asks SSHD whether his Department has undertaken an equality impact assessment of its policy on room sharing in asylum accommodation.

Caroline Nokes, 14.9.18: The Government expects the highest standards from our contractors and Providers are monitored closely to ensure they continue to meet these standards. There are strict criteria set out in the current asylum accommodation contracts around when room sharing can take place and who can share a room.

Providers must also comply with national and local housing regulations including advice from social services and primary and secondary care bodies on whether room sharing is inappropriate for individual cases and discussions about equality impacts form part of regular engagement with stakeholder groups.

The COMPASS contracts and their associated procurement exercise defined the required performance standards expected of all providers including sensitivity of equality impacts. Equality

assessments with regard to room sharing elements of the contract have not been undertaken in isolation from wider contract tendering and management processes.

DECISION MAKING

[169327](#)

Bridget Phillipson (Lab, Houghton and Sunderland South) asks SSHD, what measures are in place to ensure that interpreters of interviews during the asylum process are able to translate to a high quality and produce work to an accredited standard.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: All asylum interviews are carried out by an impartial interviewing officer.

All interpreters engaged by the Home Office must demonstrate they have the required skills and qualifications. They must also:

- be a full member of the National Register of Public Services Interpreters (NRPSI), or
- hold a Diploma in Public Services Interpreting (DPSI) (Law) or a letter of Credit in all oral components (Law), or
- have been assessed by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) (formerly the Immigration Appellate Authority), or
- have been assessed by the Metropolitan Police.

They are also bound by a “Code of Conduct” to ensure minimum standards for interpreting and behaviour.

Home Office policy and guidance ensures that in the event of interpreters or interviews falling short of those standards, it would not adversely affect an individual’s asylum claim.

Interviewing Officers are encouraged to provide feedback on the performance of interpreters, using specifically designed monitoring forms. Interviews may also be monitored for training and security purposes.

DECISION MAKING / ADVICE

[169328](#)

Bridget Phillipson (Lab, Houghton and Sunderland South) asks SSHD, whether his Department has plans to fund independent advice on the asylum process for people subject to asylum processes.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The Home Office has provided grant-funding on a national level to Migrant Help for the provision of independent advice to asylum seekers since April 2014.

DECISION MAKING / LEGAL AID

[169329](#)

Bridget Phillipson (Lab, Houghton and Sunderland South) asks SSHD, whether he has plans to ensure that (a) people seeking asylum are able to access legal advice prior to their screening interviews and (b) screening interviews for asylum are not used during credibility assessments.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: All asylum claimants have the opportunity to be legally represented during the consideration of their asylum claim; the Legal Aid Agency ensures that legal aid funding is provided to those who need it. Free independent guidance is available to claimants provided by Migrant Help, including on finding legal representation. The straightforward nature of the screening interview means that claimants do not, in general, need to have legal advice prior to that interview.

The process of making an asylum decision is underpinned by an overall assessment of credibility where decision-makers must carefully consider all available evidence, including responses and statements provided during the completion of the screening questionnaire. Where a claimant makes a statement at asylum screening which is inconsistent with a statement provided later, they will be provided an opportunity to explain the discrepancy during their substantive interview.

DECISION MAKING

[169017](#)

Sir David Crausby (Lab, Bolton North East) asks SSHD, what the average time was for a final decision on an asylum application in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: Information regarding Asylum data is published as part of the Government's Transparency agenda the latest release of which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-august-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-august-2018>

DECISION MAKING

[169183](#)

Rosie Cooper (Lab, West Lancashire) asks SSHD, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of UKVI's communications with asylum claim applicants on the progress of their applications; and if he will take steps to ensure that those applicants receive adequate communications on the progress of their applications.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The Home Office aims to keep individuals informed of progress with their application at least every 6 months. This process is kept under review and we are working to make technology improvements to the process of updating individuals.

DECISION MAKING / LGBTQ+ / WOMEN / LEGAL AID

[HL10208](#) [HL10209](#)

Lord Judd (Lab) asks Her Majesty's Government:

1. what action they are taking to ensure that LGBT people seeking asylum, who have experienced torture and forms of violence that may be difficult to disclose, have access to legal representatives who are allowed time and capacity to obtain the requisite evidence.
2. what action they are taking to ensure that women seeking asylum, who have experienced forms of violence which may be difficult to disclose, have access to legal representatives who are allowed the time and capacity to obtain the requisite evidence.

Baroness Williams of Trafford 13.9.18: All asylum claimants have the opportunity to be legally represented during their asylum claim, and legal aid funding is provided to those who need it.

In addition, Migrant Help is funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Home Office to provide independent advice and guidance to assist those considering seeking asylum and those that have claimed asylum to move through and understand the asylum process. Migrant Help also run an asylum helpline and provide advice in a language that the asylum seeker speaks, that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers. This includes support for claimants who are seeking legal advice.

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, which covers country specific issues relating to torture, gender based harm, including female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, violence in conflict, domestic violence and those subject to violence relating to LGBT persecution. 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.

DECISION MAKING

[HL10103](#)

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Lib Dem) asks HMG whether they plan to compensate the 17 people who received decisions from the Home Office last year on asylum claims that they had submitted more than 15 years ago.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 13.9.18: In response to a recent Freedom of Information request, the Home Office provided figures which noted that, in 2017, 17 decisions were made on claims for asylum that had been submitted more than 15 years ago.

In the majority of these cases, whilst the Home Office database that registered the original claim for asylum was updated with a new outcome in 2017, the Home Office had also made an earlier decision on the asylum claim. For example, several of the entries made in 2017 were to update records where it had been identified that an individual had voluntarily left the United Kingdom at an earlier date. In other instances, new decisions were made on cases where individuals had previously lost contact with the Home Office.

UK Visas and Immigration has a formal complaints procedure for customers who are unhappy with the service that it provides. Under this procedure ex-gratia payments may be made in cases where it is found that maladministration has occurred.

DECISION MAKING / YEMEN

[HL10105](#)

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Lib Dem) asks HMG what assessment they have made of the number of asylum decisions concerning people from Yemen that have been overturned on appeal.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 13.9.18: 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.

Appeals are allowed for a variety of reasons, often because of new evidence presented before the tribunal which was not available to the decision maker at the time.

However, all allowed appeals are reviewed to understand where there are opportunities to further improve guidance and training.

DECISION MAKING / SRI LANKA

[HL9991](#)

Lord Naseby (Con) asks HMG how many Sri Lankans (1) applied for asylum, and (2) had applications approved in each year since 2008, broken down by ethnicity.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 13.9.18: The Home Office publishes data on the number of applications and initial decisions, broken down by nationality, in table as_01_q (volume 1 of the asylum tables) in the quarterly *Immigration Statistics* publication. The latest figures, up until June 2018, are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2018>

Data on ethnicity are not available.

Table 1: Asylum applications, initial decision, and grants on asylum applications from Sri Lankan nationals, 2008 to June 2018

Year	Total applications	Total initial decisions	Total grants
2008	1,473	874	206
2009	1,115	1,251	190
2010	1,357	1,612	228
2011	1,756	1,604	323
2012	1,744	1,384	333
2013	1,811	1,287	262
2014	1,292	1,217	157
2015	961	1,537	179
2016	845	731	44
2017	690	645	49
2018 (Jan-Jun)	261	302	22

1. Grants include grants of asylum, discretionary leave, humanitarian protection, and grants under family and private life rules.

2. Decisions made in a given year does not necessarily relate to the number of applications in the same year. Applications are based on the date of application and decisions are based on the date of initial decision.

3. Data include main applicants only.

4. Data for 2018 include 6 months of data only (Jan-Jun). This is the latest period that is publicly available.

[Table as 01 q \(Vol 1 - Asylum Table\)](#) (Excel SpreadSheet, 10.15 KB)

DECISION MAKING / VENEZUELA / LGBTQ+

House of Commons, 13 September 2018, LGBT equality, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Lloyd Russell Moyle (Lab, Brighton Kemptown):

Does the Minister agree that we need to do more to help our LGBT friends around the world, particularly those who are seeking asylum? Will she therefore condemn the Home Office's approach at the moment? It is deporting one of my constituents back to Venezuela after he has applied for asylum and married someone here and lived in Britain for three years. The Home Office still says that Venezuela is a safe place for an LGBT person to live. It even recommends that his husband moves back with him.

Victoria Atkins (Parliamentary Under Secretary, Minister for Women): Of course I am concerned to hear about LGBT people in Venezuela being treated as despicably as [...] described. If I may, I will take the opportunity to invite him to write to the relevant Minister. I would certainly hope that we can look into the matter in more detail.

DECISION MAKING

House of Lords, 13 September 2018, 4.18pm Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to change the way formal international declarations of genocide or crimes against humanity are made and to further the expeditious prosecution of those responsible.

[...]

Lord Brown of Eaton Under Heywood (Cross Bench): [...] My involvement, so far as I had any in the field of international crime, has generally arisen in the context of asylum claims. They were usually claims of refugee status brought by those actual or threatened victims of such crimes abroad, but occasionally, and altogether more problematic, cases falling under Article 1F(a) of the convention, which excludes from entitlement to refugee status anyone who has committed or is otherwise responsible for one of the crimes against humanity or other such grave international crimes. They can raise difficult points as to the precise nature and extent of an individual asylum seeker's involvement in a terrorist group—for example, one such case involved a Tamil Tiger—and whether

they are properly to be regarded as disqualified from the safe haven to which they would otherwise be entitled [...]

DESTITUTION / HOMELESSNESS

[170312](#)

Paul Blomfield (Lab, Sheffield Central) asks SSHD, what assessment he has made of the effect on levels of homelessness of refugees granted discretionary leave to remain with no recourse to public funds.

Caroline Nokes, 10.9.18: No assessment has been made.

This is because migrants who are recognised as refugees are granted leave to remain with access to public funds. They are therefore eligible to apply for mainstream benefits and assistance from their local authority to find housing.

DETENTION / SHAW REVIEW / WOMEN

House of Commons, Business of the House, 13 September 2018, 1206pm, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Angela Crawley (SNP, Lanark and Hamilton East) The Home Secretary recently responded to the Shaw report on immigration detention by commissioning a number of reviews. However, in his statement he failed to mention Stephen Shaw's recommendation that the practice of detaining pregnant women should end. It has been revealed that more than 100 pregnant women were detained last year, yet only 20 of them were deported. There is simply no justification for this policy. Can we have a debate in Government time on ending the practice of detaining pregnant women?

Andrea Leadsom: I am very sympathetic to the hon. Lady's request for a debate. It would be very well suited to an Adjournment debate, and she might be able to achieve that sooner than a debate in Government time. She raises an incredibly important issue.[...]

DETENTION

Home Affairs Select Committee, 11 September 2018, 3.00pm oral evidence Immigration Detention, HC913 read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Evidence given by Stephen Shaw CBE, author of the follow-up report to the Home Office on the assessment of government progress on the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons.

Stephen Shaw:

- welcomes the tone of the Government's response, calls for more work with Ministry of Justice, and further work on voluntary returns, more independence in casework, welcomes pilot on automatic bail
- Detailed discussion of Adults at Risk Policy and Rule 35. States Adults at Risk policy not delivering reduction in the number of vulnerable people in detention, recommends options for improvement; Rule 35 reports do not have confidence of people working in system, greater independence needed in caseworking decisions.
- Discussion of the question of time limits put on detention and reference to the practice in other European countries, Home Secretary's review of this question

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- Discussion of mental health and restrictions of internet use in detention, need to lift restrictions across detention estate
- Discussion of wrongful or unlawful detentions and the costs associated with them
- Discussion of Government's approach to removing foreign national offenders with extensive ties to UK (Stephen Shaw: "frankly shameful")
- Discussion of availability of information on number of self-inflicted deaths in immigration detention
- Discussion of staffing and standards in different Immigration Removal Centres
- Discussion of whistleblowing procedures
- Lack of clarity on whether there are people seeking asylum in the immigration detention estate, and whether any such people made their asylum claim before being detained
- Discussion of detention gatekeeper process
- Discussion re robustness of Shaw recommendations
- Discussion re healthcare provision in IRCs
- Discussion re ongoing detention of pregnant women
- Discussion composition of casework panels reviewing detention and need for independent element
- Reference to pilot on immigration bail
- Reference to number of cases encountered where parents had been separated from children by detention process

Stephen Shaw: "The first report has contributed to a substantial reduction in overall detention. What it had not achieved was a substantial reduction in vulnerable people in detention. In that sense, the various ways in which the Home Office operationalised my proposals, certainly at the time of the second review, were not achieving what they should do.

To some extent, I am now taking the new Home Secretary at his word that he wants to—what was the phrase?—push forward the pace of reform. Two or three years down the line, we may be able to make a judgment about this." [...]

I tried to report back to the Home Office as I was going along, and it was a surprise to them. It goes back to the thing about assurance. There was a sense in which administrative reforms had been put in place, and significant investment of time and money to back them up. That is one of the reasons I do not decry Adults at Risk, because it has meant a real, genuine focus on vulnerability. But that does not matter; what matters is what is the end result of all this. The end result at the time I carried out this review—it may still be the case today, but I could not tell you because it is six months on—was very disappointing."

DETENTION

[HL9959](#)

Baroness Hamwee (Lib Dem) asks HMG how many children in the UK had one or both parents placed in immigration detention in each calendar year since 2010; what were the ages of those children; for what period were they separated from one or both parents; and if such records are not kept, why not.

Baroness Williams of Trafford 13.9.18: Providing the information requested would require a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

DETENTION

[172556](#) [172560](#) [172561](#)

Paul Blomfield (Lab, Sheffield Central) asks SSHD:

1. pursuant to his [Oral Statement of 24 July 2018](#), Official Report, column 909, on Immigration Detention: Shaw Review, if he will publish the findings of the review of how time limits work in other countries.
2. pursuant to his [Oral Statement of 24 July 2018](#), Official Report, column 909, on Immigration Detention: Shaw Review, what the timeframe is for the conclusion of the review of how time limits on detention work in other countries.
3. pursuant to his [Oral Statement of 24 July 2018](#), Official Report, column 909, on Immigration Detention: Shaw Review, what the process is for (a) charities and (b) people with experience of being detained to be consulted on review of how time limits on detention operate.

Caroline Nokes, 13.9.18: My Rt. Hon. Friend the Home Secretary commissioned a fact-finding project to understand how time limits on immigration detention work in other countries and how they relate to any other protections within their immigration detention systems. We are inviting other countries to engage on this project. The timetable for delivery will be driven by their availability.

The focus of this review is to gather facts and information from the Governments concerned. There are no plans for charities and people with experience of having been detained to be directly involved. Once the review is complete, my Rt. Hon. Friend will consider the next steps.

HEALTH

[169657](#) [169658](#) [169659](#) [169660](#)

Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) asks Secretary of State for Health and Social Care:

1. pursuant to Answer of 10 July 2018 to [Question 160799](#) on Health Services: Foreign Nationals, what processes his Department has put in place to monitor the effectiveness of NHS care providers in relation to determining the eligibility of patients; and what steps he has taken to ensure that the eligibility criteria does not result in discrimination.
2. pursuant to Answer of 10 July 2018 to [Question 160799](#) on Health Services: Foreign Nationals, what steps he has taken to ensure that urgent care is not withheld from patients.
3. pursuant to the Answer of 10 July 2018 to [Question 160799](#) on Health Services: Foreign Nationals, whether he has received representations from (a) asylum seekers, (b) vulnerable migrants and (c) organisations representing (i) migrants and (ii) asylum seekers on urgent care being withheld from patients.
4. pursuant to Answer of 10 July 2018 to [Question 160799](#) on Health Services: Foreign Nationals, what processes his Department has put in place to monitor the effectiveness of NHS care providers in relation to determining the eligibility of patients; and what steps he has taken to ensure that the eligibility criteria does not result in discrimination.

Stephen Barclay, Minister of State (Department of Health and Social Care), 11.9.18: The National Health Service is a residency-based healthcare system, with a requirement to be ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom in order to access NHS-funded healthcare. Providers of relevant NHS services

are required to make and recover charges from overseas visitors where relevant services have been provided to them and no exemption applies.

The Department does not mandate any specific processes to determine the residence or chargeable status of patients. In order to identify those who may not be entitled to NHS-funded treatment, and to do so in a way that avoids racial profiling and discrimination, all patients need to be asked baseline questions to indicate whether they are ordinarily resident in the UK or if they may be an overseas visitor who should be assessed for charges.

However, it is up to providers of NHS care to assure themselves that they are doing everything reasonable to determine the eligibility of patients who are entitled to receive free NHS care, an entitlement based on residency not nationality.

The Department has published extensive guidance on implementing the overseas visitor charging regulations. This guidance is for use by all frontline staff providing National Health Service funded services, as well as the providers and commissioners of those services. It is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-overseas-visitors-hospital-charging-regulations>

The guidance clearly sets out that urgent or immediately necessary care must never be withheld, regardless of an individual's ability to pay for the treatment. Clinicians are required to make the decision on whether treatment is urgent or immediately necessary for those patients identified as not eligible for NHS-funded care, taking into account a realistic expectation of when the individual is expected to leave the UK. As a result of the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 patients are required to pay in advance if treatment is decided by a clinician to not be non-urgent. The Department has been carrying out a review of these Amendment Regulations, with evidence submitted by 31 organisations or individuals representing vulnerable migrants. The evidence is currently being considered and stakeholders will receive an update in due course.

It is also worth noting that that the Charging Regulations already have extensive safeguards in place for the most vulnerable. Refugees, asylum seekers, some state supported failed asylum seekers and victims of modern slavery are all exempt from the Charging Regulations.

IMMIGRATION BILL

House of Commons, Business of the House, 13 September 2018, 1206pm, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Valerie Vaz [...] when will the immigration Bill be published? [...]

Andrea Leadsom: [...] In terms of Brexit legislation, we have introduced seven Brexit Bills this Session, including the Agriculture Bill, which was introduced yesterday. Four Brexit Bills have had Royal Assent already [...] we will bring forward the remaining Brexit Bills, as the hon. Lady mentions, on immigration, fisheries and the withdrawal agreement. We hope to do so later this year when the House returns and that final deal is negotiated.[...]

INTEGRATION / MOVE ON / SUPPORT

[169326](#)

Bridget Phillipson (Lab, Houghton and Sunderland South) asks SSHD, whether he has plans to extend the length of time that newly recognised refugees can continue to claim asylum support after a decision to grant leave to remain.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: Newly recognised refugees can continue to claim asylum support for a further 28 days after the grant of their status. There are no plans to extend this period.

The grant of refugee status means refugees are eligible to apply for mainstream benefits. If they would like assistance with the application an early appointment at a local job centre is arranged for them. This process is designed to ensure that refugees receive the first payment of any benefit they are entitled to before the 28 days period expires, either by full payment of the benefit or through an advance payment.

INTEGRATION / MOVE ON / ESOL

[HL10007](#)

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Lib Dem) asks HMG, what advice they provide to asylum seekers aged 19 or older who are eligible for a 50 per cent contribution to the costs of English language classes through the adult education budget about where they can obtain funding for the remaining 50 per cent.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 13.9.18: Home Office policy is not to provide asylum seekers with publicly funded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. They may access courses on a fee-paying basis. Asylum claimants awaiting a decision for over six months are eligible for a 50% contribution to the cost of ESOL courses through the Adult Education Budget. We also know that many ESOL providers use their discretion to set lower fees.

Those granted refugee status by the Home Office and in receipt of certain work-related benefits are eligible for fully funded ESOL courses.

We encourage asylum claimants (adults and dependants of an adult asylum seeker) to contact the Asylum Help helpline for free and independent advice (telephone: 0808 8000 630, <https://www.gov.uk/asylum-helplines>).

INTEGRATION / ACCOMMODATION / ENFORCEMENT

[169467](#)

Thangam Debbonaire (Lab, Bristol West) asks SSHD, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that refugees are not excluded from the private rented sector as a result of the introduction of the right to rent scheme.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The right to rent scheme has been developed to ensure that those with lawful immigration status, such as refugees, can demonstrate it easily. Refugees are issued with a Biometric Residence Permit which provides confirmation of their status. However, there is a broad range of documents that potential tenants can use to demonstrate their right to rent. These are not based solely around passports or immigration documents. Details of acceptable documents can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573057/6_1193_HO_NH_Right-to-Rent-Guidance.pdf

Landlords can also use the Home Office Checking Service where a prospective tenant is unable to present documents, because they have submitted them to the Home Office. This is a simple and efficient, case-specific service which can be accessed online, or via a dedicated helpline, to check whether a tenant or prospective tenant has a right to rent.

INTEGRATION / MOVE ON

House of Commons, 12 September 2018, 11.54pm, Topical Questions (Oral Answers to Questions, Cabinet Office) read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Patrick Grady (SNP, Glasgow North): Will the Minister join me in welcoming the Scottish Government's proposed electoral franchise Bill, which will protect the voting rights of EU citizens and refugees for Holyrood and local government? Does he agree that we should protect people's rights and extend the Westminster franchise for EU citizens and refugees?

David Lidington (Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster): The Government have put forward a package of measures that give enhanced rights to EU citizens lawfully resident in the United Kingdom. We believe that that is a fair and generous offer, and it is currently the subject of negotiations.[...]

INTEGRATION / MOVE ON

[169281](#)

Caroline Lucas (Green, Brighton Pavillion) asks SSHD, when the contract to provide the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Biometric Service will commence; where that service will be located; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The new service will commence in early November 2018. The majority of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) customers in the UK will be able to complete their immigration application at new fixed service points across the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) or through temporary or mobile services. Sopra Steria will deliver this service on behalf of UKVI.

UKVI will also provide an in-house service for customers requiring more support and face to face interaction with Home Office staff. They will book appointments at one of the UKVI Service and Support Centres (SSC) across the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

We will continue to offer the Post Office biometric service throughout the transition period.

INTEGRATION / MOVE ON

[169846](#)

Karen Lee (Lab, Lincoln) asks SSHD, whether his Department provides financial support to people on low incomes to apply for indefinite leave to remain.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The Home Office does not provide direct financial support for people applying for indefinite leave to remain. However, no fee is payable for Indefinite Leave to Remain children in Local Authority care and children are also eligible for fee waivers in a set of specified Human Rights cases.

LEGAL AID

[167958](#)

Kate Green (Lab, Stretford and Urmston) asks SSHD, what steps his Department is taking with the Ministry of Justice to ensure that legal aid availability meets the needs of asylum seekers.

Caroline Nokes, 10.9.18: 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.

LEGAL AID / CHILDREN

[HL10008](#) [HL10101](#)

Lord Roberts of Llandudno asks HMG

1. how many unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum have accessed exceptional case funding for legal aid in each year since 2012.
2. what percentage of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum who have applied for exceptional case funding for legal aid since 2012 have been successful.

Lord Keen of Elie (Lords Spokesperson, Ministry of Justice): (HL10008) A total of 57 Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) Immigration cases have been granted to applicants under the age of 18 who were described as 'unaccompanied or separated' children.

(HL10101) This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

SUPPORT / DESTITUTION

[169802](#)

Dan Carden (Lab, Liverpool Walton) asks SSHD, how many asylum seekers in (a) Liverpool City Region, (b) Liverpool local authority area and (c) Liverpool Walton have been refused support under section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1999 in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The Home Office continue to provide accommodation and support to those failed asylum seekers and their dependents who are temporarily unable to leave the UK because of a practical or legal obstacle through the Section 4 provisions.

Information on numbers of cases who have been refused S4 support broken down by area of the UK, is unavailable and could be produced only at a disproportionate cost. The Home Office publishes data on the number of applications for S4 support in the quarterly transparency data available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-august-2018>

RIGHT TO WORK

[169648](#)

Kemi Badenoch (Con, Saffron Walden), asks SSHD, if his Department will bring forward proposals to assess the skills of people seeking asylum in the UK at the point of entry.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The primary purpose of the asylum system is to decide claims in line with our international obligations and the 1951 Refugee Convention.

CHILDREN / CALAIS / DUBS / FAMILY REUNION

[HCWS961 HLWS929](#)

Written Statement made in House of Commons by Caroline Nokes, and in House of Lords by Baroness Williams (Minister of State, Home Office), 13.9.18:

As part of the clearance of the Calais camp in October 2016 the Government transferred 769 unaccompanied children to the UK, all of whom claimed Asylum in the UK. The Government acted decisively at this time to remove vulnerable children from a dangerous situation where they were at risk of violence and abuse. The unique situation in Calais and unprecedented action we took to safeguard children demonstrated the Government's commitment to supporting the most vulnerable children affected by the migration crisis.

Of the 769 cases, 220 cases were transferred in accordance with s67 Immigration Act 2016 ("the Dubs amendment), and formed the first tranche of these cases. Some of these cases did not qualify for Refugee or Humanitarian protection under the existing rules, as such, in June 2018 we introduced a new form of leave (section 67 leave) for these cases.

The remaining 549 cases were transferred to reunite with family members already in the UK. These cases have been considered carefully and on their individual merits, and a large proportion of these cases have been recognised as refugees.

It is our view that all those 549 transferred from Calais to the UK to reunite with family should be able to remain here with their family members. In keeping with our commitments to family unity,

we do not consider that it would be in their best interests to separate children from their families, having received significant support from UK authorities to reunite and integrate.

It is our intention to introduce, by laying a new Immigration Rule, a new form of leave for any of these cases that have not already been considered refugees. This leave will only be available for those that were brought over as part of the Calais clearance exercise in October 2016, who were under the age of 18 at this time, and who had recognised family ties in the UK. Individuals who qualify for this leave will have the right to study, work, access public funds and healthcare, and can apply for settlement after ten years.

CHILDREN / DUBS / DUBLIN

[HL9973](#)

Lord Hylton (Lab, Crossbench) asks HMG how many (1) unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and (2) refugees of all ages, with close family members in the UK have so far been identified by UK immigration liaison officers sent to France, Italy and Greece; and how many have reached the UK as a result.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 13.9.18: The role of the UK liaison officers is to facilitate good working co-operation between EU Member States, including Italy, France and Greece, on asylum and immigration matters with the UK. Liaison officers are not involved in identifying children under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, as it is a matter for our partner states to refer children who meet the criteria and where it is in their best interests to transfer to the UK. Liaison officers are not involved in the identification of applicants with qualifying family members either as this is also a matter for the competent national authorities of Dublin states.

On 30 November, the Government published data on the numbers of children transferred to the UK from the Calais camp clearance under both the Dublin III Regulation and section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. The data can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transfers-of-children-to-the-uk-from-the-calais-operation-november-2017>

On 22 February 2018, the Home Office published data on the number of transfers into the UK from other Dublin states. The relevant statistics can be found at as_22_q, asylum volume 5 at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2017-data-tables>. 2018 Dublin data will be published in February 2019.

We remain fully committed to delivering our commitment to transfer the specified number of 480 children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 and are working very closely with participating States, to deliver the scheme in line with their national laws. Over 220 children are already in the UK and transfers are ongoing. We will not provide a running commentary on numbers and will publish the details once all children are in the UK.

CHILDREN / DETENTION/ ENFORCEMENT

House of Lords, Immigration Policy, Children and Parents, 10 September 2018 read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Lab): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which the implementation of immigration policy has led to the separation of children from their parents.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: [...]the family Immigration Rules and the policy on exceptional circumstances provide a clear basis for considering applications to remain in the UK. Individuals with no leave to remain are expected to leave voluntarily. We may enforce their removal if they do not. Our family separation guidance makes clear that staff must consider the best interests of any children, including their needs and caring arrangements, before taking enforcement action.

Debate centres on queries re the number of children separated from parents as a result of detention / enforcement action. Interventions by Baroness Hamwee (Lib Dem), Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab), Lord Bassam of Brighton (Lab)

ENFORCEMENT / ZIMBABWE

[169341](#)

Paul Blomfield (Lab, Sheffield Central) asks SSHD, how many failed asylum seekers have been deported to Zimbabwe in each of the last 10 weeks.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The number of enforced returns from the UK to Zimbabwe is published in table rt_05 (returns data tables, volume 5) in 'Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2018', available from the GOV.uk website at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734186/returns5-jun-2018-tables.ods

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns which are enforced either following a criminal conviction or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. Information on those deported is not separately available and therefore the published statistics refer to all enforced returns.

The data include asylum and non-asylum cases. Asylum cases relate to those who have claimed asylum at any stage as well as those seeking asylum whose application is rejected.

The Home Office do not publish data for individual weeks.

ENFORCEMENT / ZIMBABWE

[169342](#)

Paul Blomfield (Lab, Sheffield Central) asks SSHD, what assessment he has made of the implications of reports of the detention of opponents of the Government of Zimbabwe in that country since the recent election there for his policies on returning failed asylum seekers.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: All asylum and human rights claims from Zimbabwean nationals are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations.

Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw. These are reflected in country policy and information notes, which are published on the gov.uk website and kept under regular review. Our most recent update on 'Zimbabwe: Opposition to the government' was issued in April 2018.

We have been monitoring the situation in Zimbabwe before, during and after the election process, including the treatment of political opponents, and will update the country policy and information note in due course where we can consider the longer-term significance of these events and ultimately make a full and informed decision about the situation.

However, the situation before, during and after the election does not suggest a fundamentally different one to the difficulties faced by opponents of the ruling ZANU-PF party, which is reflected in the current country policy and information note.

ENFORCEMENT

[171732](#)

Annaliese Dodds (Lab, Oxford East) asks SSHD, whether his Department has paid damages under its hostile environment immigration policy on condition that the recipient did not publicise that payment since October 2010.

Caroline Nokes, 12.9.18: Further to my response to [UIN 160359](#) of 4 July 2018 stated that since 2010 the Home Office had paid £12,360 in ex-gratia payments in relation to 8 cases where compliant environment measures had been applied.

Home Office records indicate that since 2010 there have been no payments for damages relating to compliant environment measures.

FAMILY REUNION

House of Commons, 10 September 2018, 3.39 pm Urgent Question: Idlib, Syria read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Tom Brake (Lib Dem, Carshalton and Wallington)

[...] would not the biggest contribution that the UK Government could make be to expand the family reunion scheme so that we could support more vulnerable Syrian refugees? [...]

Alistair Burt (Minister of State for the Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office): On reunion, the United Kingdom will see resettled the 20,000 refugees that were accepted by the United Kingdom, and that programme is proceeding well. We have done a great deal to settle people in the area and to see them returned. The big issue at the moment in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey is not sending people to the United Kingdom; it is how safe they will be when they get back to Syria, which is where most of them want to go. There needs to be an adequate programme in relation to that. That is where the focus of our efforts is now, but that can come about only if there is a safe and secure Syria, where certain guarantees have been given by the state so that those who fled will not have reason to flee again.

FAMILY REUNION

[173568](#) [173569](#)

Nicky Morgan (Con, Loughborough) asks SSHD ,

1. what proportion of visas granted in 2017 for refugee family reunion under part 11 of the Immigration Rules were used.
2. how many visas for refugee family reunion were granted outside the rules in 2017.

Caroline Nokes, 14.9.18: Statistics on refugee family reunion can be found in Home Office Asylum tables volume 5, table as_21_q –

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734178/asylum5-jun-2018-tables.ods

Information can also be found in the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration re-inspection of the family reunion process, focusing on applications received at the Amman Entry Clearance Decision Making Centre:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/737724/Final_Artwork_Reinspection_Family_Reunion_Amman.pdf

RESETTLEMENT / CHILDREN

[168944](#) [168945](#)

Tom Brake, (Lib Dem, Carshalton and Wallington) asks SSHD

1. whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme beyond 2020.
2. whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of expanding the geographic reach of the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.

Caroline Nokes, 11.9.18: The Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme is the largest resettlement effort aimed specifically at children at risk from the MENA region. There are no plans to increase its geographical reach at this time.

Looking to the future, we have begun work with key stakeholders and international organisations on our future Asylum and Resettlement Strategy, which includes consideration of the UK's resettlement offer beyond 2020.

RESETTLEMENT / SYRIA

[170888](#)

Preet Kaur Gill (Lab, Birmingham, Edgbaston) asks SSHD, how many Syrian refugees of each religious group his Department has (a) recommended to be resettled by the UN; and (b) agreed to resettle in the UK in each quarter of each of the last four years.

Caroline Nokes, 10.9.18: The UK's resettlement programmes follow the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality, which means that we resettle solely based on needs identified by UNHCR through their established processes, rather than on the basis of ethno-religious origin.

We believe that one way to protect the privacy of those being resettled and support their recovery and integration is to limit the amount of information about them that we make publicly available.

We therefore do not routinely publish a religious and ethnic breakdown of those who have been resettled, however internal management information indicates that the majority of Syrian refugees referred by UNHCR, and resettled to the UK are Muslim, with Christians and other religious groups represented in smaller numbers.

RESETTLEMENT / SYRIA / WHITE HELMETS

[HL9939](#) [9940](#) [9941](#)

Baroness Cox (Crossbench) asks HMG

1. whether members of the White Helmets and their families evacuated from Syria via Israel have arrived in the UK.
2. where in the UK members of the White Helmets group evacuated from Syria via Israel (1) have been, and (2) will be settled.
3. how many of the White Helmets group and their families evacuated from Syria via Israel are now in the UK.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 13.9.18: 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, Business of the House, 13 September 2018, 1206pm, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Thangam Debbonaire (Lab, Bristol West) At the UN General Assembly later this month, the global compact on refugees will hopefully be agreed. I know that the Government wish to promote themselves as friends to refugees—I have heard that answer before—but may we have a debate in Government time, after the House returns from conference recess, on how we will implement the global compact on refugees?

Andrea Leadsom: The hon. Lady will be aware that this is an important issue for the Government. We have International Development questions on the Wednesday of the first week back after recess; I encourage her to take up the matter directly with Ministers.[...]

COUNTRY SITUATIONS

House of Lords, 13 September 2018, 4.18pm Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity read [here](#) watch [here](#)

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Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to change the way formal international declarations of genocide or crimes against humanity are made and to further the expeditious prosecution of those responsible.

Debate covers past genocides, current refugee producing situations including in Darfur, Nigeria, Iraq, Burma Myanmar, Syria, the international framework for the prevention of genocide, and UK action in this regard.

BAHRAIN

House of Commons, Westminster Hall, 11 September 2018, 9.30am, Bahrain read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...]

Rehman Christi (Con, Gillingham and Rainham): [...] On 17 August, I visited and engaged with the ambassador for Bahrain—I am my party's vice-chairman for communities, and I engage with diplomats across the board. When I came out of that meeting, I was followed by individuals outside, chased down the road and shouted at [...] Members of Parliament should not be treated in that way; we should be engaged with. If people want to come to the United Kingdom and claim asylum, they should claim it according to the criteria, but they should respect individuals and how democracy works, and not treat parliamentarians in that way—I make that very clear.

BELGIUM

[169759](#)

Paul Girvan (DUP, South Antrim), ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the flow of undocumented migrants through Belgian ports.

Sir Alan Duncan, 11.9.18: The Government is working closely with Belgian colleagues to prevent illegal migrants travelling, and to undermine the business model driving organised illegal immigration. Joint investigations and operational cooperation have seen a number of successes in disrupting organised crime groups. We are also working to tackle people smuggling through the People Smuggling Amplification Plan. We are cooperating with Belgian, French and Dutch law enforcement agencies to share information and build capacity as part of those efforts.

BURMA MYANMAR / ROHINGYA

[169547](#)

Louise Haigh (Sheffield, Heeley) asks the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political and security situation in Myanmar.

Mark Field, 11.9.18: The situation in Burma remains of real concern. On 27 August, the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission declared that the conduct of the military in Rakhine in August and September 2017 constituted grounds for the prosecution of members of the Burma military for crimes against humanity and genocide. The Foreign Secretary intends to visit Burma and convene a meeting at the UN General Assembly to press for accountability for human rights violations and the creation of conditions in Rakhine State that would allow refugees to return.

BURMA MYANMAR / ROHINGYA

Burma, Humanitarian Situation, House of Commons, 13 September 2018, 4.27pm read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Adjournment debate brought by Catherine West (Lab, Hornsey and Wood Green) covers situation in Burma / Myanmar, situation of Rohingya and conditions in Cox's Bazaar

COLOMBIA / VENEZUELA

House of Commons, Westminster Hall, 12 September 2018, 3.15 read [here](#), watch [here](#)

Debate brought by Chris Bryant (Lab, Rhondda) covers the peace process, the extent of displacement caused by the conflict and the arrival of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

[170866](#)

Layla Moran (Lib Dem, Oxford West and Abingdon) asks the Secretary of State for International Development, what (a) representations her Department has made to and (b) what recent discussions his Department has held with the (i) EU and (ii) World Bank on funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in light of the decision of the US to withdraw its funding to that Agency.

Alistair Burt, 10.9.18: The UK has made official level representations to the EU and World Bank on the position of UNRWA in recent months, and will continue to work with UNRWA and our international partners to ensure essential services are maintained despite the US withdrawal of funding.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

[170427](#)

Christine Jardine (Lib Dem, Edinburgh West) asks the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the USA withdrawing funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency on the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Alistair Burt, 10.9.18: Any disruption to the essential services delivered by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) undermines the stability and economy of Gaza, which worsens living conditions and increases humanitarian needs. My officials and I are working with UNRWA and our partners to ensure essential services are maintained in Gaza and UNRWA's other fields of operation, despite the US withdrawal of funding. The UK has announced £17 million of funding over the past four months, in addition to our original budget of £28 million, to protect UNRWA's vital services. The Government has also increased humanitarian support to Gaza this year in light of the deteriorating conditions.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

[HCWS590](#)

Informal meeting of European Union (EU Foreign Ministers) (Gymnich): 30 – 31 August 2018:
Written Statement made 12 September 2018

Sir Alan Duncan (Minister of State for the Foreign Office):

[...] Ministers reiterated that a two state solution was the only realistic option, confirmed the EU's support for the United Nations' and Egypt's work on Gaza and commitment to continuing support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). [...]

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

[HL9978](#)

Lord Judd (Lab) asks HMG what action they are taking to ensure that the schools for Palestinian children operated by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees can continue their work throughout the coming academic year.

Lord Bates, 13.9.18: The UK is committed to ensuring that the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) continues to deliver a high-quality education to over 500,000 children across the region. The UK has announced £17 million of funding over the past four months, in addition to our original budget of £28.5 million, to protect UNRWA's vital services, including education. We continue to work with international partners to help unlock further funding for UNRWA.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

[HL9961](#)

Baroness Helic (Con) asks HMG what representations they have made to the government of the United States following the announcement that the US government will no longer fund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency; and whether they intend to continue to provide funding to that Agency.

Lord Bates, 13.9.18: The UK remains unequivocally committed to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The US has consistently been UNRWA's single largest donor. When the US announced their intention to withhold a planned disbursement to UNRWA in January, we were sympathetic to their concerns over the need for a broader donor base for UNRWA, but made clear to them that we did not consider a sudden cut in planned funding was the right way to address this. My officials and I continue to raise this with our US counterparts.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES / UNRWA

Kate Osamor (Lab, Edmonton) asks the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the press release, [New UK aid package to meet immediate needs of Palestinians through UN Relief and Works Agency](#), published on 4 September 2018, whether she plans to allocate additional funding for Palestinian refugees as a result of the US administration's decision to cut its funding to the UNRWA.

Penny Mordaunt (Secretary of State for International Development), 13.9.18: The UK has announced £17 million of funding over the past four months, in addition to our original budget of £28.5 million, to protect UNRWA's vital services. We continue to work with international partners to help unlock further funding for UNRWA and are considering the UK's plans to help continue meeting the needs of Palestinian refugees across the region.

SYRIA

House of Commons, 10 September 2018, 3.39 pm Urgent Question: Idlib, Syria read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru, Arfon): What consideration have the Government given to using UK sovereign bases in Cyprus to provide a safe haven for refugees from Idlib?

Alistair Burt (Minister of State Foreign and Commonwealth Office): As I indicated earlier, the issue is not necessarily moving people across the sea to areas either in Europe or elsewhere. We have already seen the difficulties of displaced populations. The effort is appropriately directed towards ensuring that people are immediately safe but then that they are returned to a safer Syria. What the area wants is not more refugees, either in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan or elsewhere, but the means and mechanisms for people to be returned to their home areas safely. That will take further negotiation and the absolute commitment of the Syrian regime that people should be safe, so there is a lot to be done. I am not certain that there is any need to evacuate people to UK sovereign bases, because there will be other areas nearby where people would be safer, but it is much easier for people to return to their homes when they have been settled closer to home after displacement than when they have been overseas.

VENEZUELA

[170895](#)

Preet Kaur Gill (Lab, Birmingham Edgbaston) asks the Secretary of State for International Development, what support the Government provides to Venezuelan refugees living in other Latin American countries.

Alistair Burt (Minister of State Department for International Development) 10.9.18: The UK Government is very concerned by the growing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and the region. The UK is already providing support to the crisis through our core funding to key UN humanitarian agencies and the Red Cross Movement, and DFID will shortly be deploying two humanitarian advisors to the region to explore how best we may complement international humanitarian aid efforts within Venezuela and the wider region.

VENEZUELA

[170730](#)

Helen Goodman (Lab, Bishop Auckland) asks the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he had had with his Latin American counterparts on their response to Venezuelan refugees.

Sir Alan Duncan, 10.9.18: We are deeply concerned by this crisis, which is self-inflicted and has caused huge pressure on the region. I spoke on 6 September with the Peruvian Foreign Minister, Nestor Popolizio, to discuss the situation, to receive an update on the recent Andean Community (Peru, Colombia and Ecuador) meeting in Lima, and on the Ecuador-convened "regional technical meeting" on Venezuela that took place in Quito on 3-4 September to discuss the migration crisis.

The Foreign Secretary also discussed the crisis with the Colombian Foreign Minister in New York on 24 August.

YEMEN

House of Commons, 12.42pm 11 September 2018 read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Alison Thewliss (SNP, Glasgow Central): [...] The Bureiqa migrant detention centre in Aden, run by Security Belt forces, held many Eritrean, Ethiopian and Somali migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, some of whom had been in Yemen for many years, who have been subject to rape—mass rape—as well as sexual abuse, humiliation and torture. All those things are going on in this country, and we are not getting in there in order to play our role in stopping it.[...]