

## PARLIAMENTARY ROUND UP 13 October – 19 October 2018

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### ACCOMMODATION

#### [177302](#)

Catherine McKinnell (Lab, Newcastle Upon Tyne North) asks the Secretary of State for the Home Department (SSHD), what assessment he has made of the effect of the changes to the licenses of Houses of Multiple Occupation that took effect on 1 October 2018 on the practice of enforced room sharing as permitted under the contract for asylum accommodation.

Caroline Nokes, 15.10.18: 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, obtaining an appropriate licence if the relevant property is a House of Multiple Occupation. Advice from social services and primary and secondary care bodies is also taken into consideration on whether room sharing is inappropriate for individual cases and discussions about equality impacts form part of regular engagement with stakeholder groups.

### ACCOMMODATION

[177303](#)

Catherine McKinnell (Lab, Newcastle Upon Tyne North) asks SSHD, what assessment he has made of the likelihood of delays to the mobilization period for the new asylum accommodation and support services contracts in (a) the North East, (b) the Yorkshire and Humber and (c) Northern Ireland where compliant bids were not received in round one of the tendering process; and what arrangements have been put in place for housing asylum seekers in the transition period.

Caroline Nokes, 15.10.18: The procurement exercise for asylum accommodation and support for the North East, Yorkshire and Humber and Northern Ireland regions is underway and is based on the same set of requirements as the initial procurement. We have taken steps to mitigate the time delay that this second procurement activity will take and have condensed our procurement activity to ensure that the transition period is protected. We remain confident of delivering a fully operational accommodation contract before the expiry of the current arrangements, with sufficient time to properly transition the services.

The Home Office has designed the project to replace the current asylum accommodation and support services so as to ensure a smooth transition of services from one Provider to another. The timetable allows eight months for mobilisation and transition activities. The transition planning activity has been underway for some time, allowing the Home Office to engage with Providers as soon as the contracts are let, this is a key lesson from the previous transition. The transition plans have also built on a number of other lessons, including the creation of a team with suitable experience, expertise and understanding of the new contracts and the early engagement with enabling functions from across the Home Office to plan out the demands that will be placed on them.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

[177688](#)

Catherine McKinnell (Lab, Newcastle Upon Tyne North) asks SSHD, what steps he is taking to ensure that standards for preventing overcrowding in houses of multiple occupation under the asylum accommodation contract will be upheld above the legal minimum set by local authorities.

Caroline Nokes, 15.10.18: Accommodation providers are required to provide safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped accommodation that complies with the Decent Homes Standard in addition to standards outlined in relevant national or local housing legislation.

The use of Houses of Multiple Occupancy is commonplace across a range of sectors, including for supported asylum seekers. The contracts will require Providers to obtain the relevant licences from local authorities and remain compliant with the licensing rules and regulations.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

[178367](#)

Dan Carden (Lab, Liverpool Walton) asks SSHD, what steps he is taking to ensure that Local Authorities are consulted on the provisions of the new (a) asylum accommodation and support

services and (b) advice, issue reporting and eligibility contracts prior to their finalisation; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes, 16.11.18: In developing the structure of the contractual arrangements and the specifications within them the Home Office undertook extensive consultation with local government, devolved governments, non-governmental organisations and the market.

Engagement was both at a national and regional level, with the regional level coordinated by Strategic Migration Partnerships using their knowledge of regional stakeholders. Engagement activity used a range of approaches, including roundtable discussions, one-to-one engagement and a written exercise. Stakeholder feedback had considerable influence on the specifications in the contract, where the Home Office has adopted a host of improvements that were proposed by stakeholders.

As we approach contract award, expected to be before the end of December 2018, we will increase the engagement activity to ensure that all partners and stakeholders are aware of the new contracts and how they will work and are able to work constructively to make the services work for Service Users and local communities.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

[176284](#)

Kate Green (Lab, Stretford and Urmston) asks SSHD, whether his Department has allocated additional funding to local authorities to support asylum dispersal under the new Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contract.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: There are no current plans to directly fund Local Authorities that are dispersal areas. The Providers of accommodation will continue to contribute to Local Authority funds through the payment of council tax, which our providers report was over £10m for the financial year 17/18.

The Ministry for Housing, Local Government and Communities has provided funding to Local Authorities in England, through the Controlling Migration Fund, for the provision of Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

[176285](#)

Kate Green (Lab, Stretford and Urmston) asks SSHD, whether the new Asylum Accommodation contracts and attendant Statement of Requirements and Performance Management regime include mechanisms for levying financial penalties on providers who fail to meet contractual obligations.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: The Home Office has a rigorous contract compliance regime in place to ensure that the required performance standards expected of all providers, as defined in the contracts, are met. More specifically:

The Provider shall perform the Services to meet or exceed the Performance Standards defined in the Statement of Requirements and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined within the Performance Management Regime.

Service Credits associated with Provider performance failures against the KPI targets, shall be applied by the Authority from the Contract Effective Date.

Service Credits will be applied in the event of performance failures against KPIs, at a level commensurate with the Provider's degree of failure against the relevant KPI. The agreed Service Credit Payment (SCP) for each Service Area will be deducted from the Monthly Service Payment which would otherwise be payable to the Provider for the relevant Payment Period.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

[176205](#)

Caroline Lucas, (Green, Brighton Pavillion) asks SSHD, if his Department will take steps to improve its communication with local authorities, community organisations and the Third Sector on decisions relating to the location of asylum accommodation; and what progress his Department is making in recognising each of those groups as key stakeholders in such decisions.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: The COMPASS contracts place an obligation on accommodation Providers to consult Local Authorities on the procurement of any new properties to be used for the purposes of asylum accommodation.

The Home Office fund Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships. These partnerships bring together the national, regional and local public sector to coordinate activity to deal with effects of the immigration system on local economies and communities.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

[179224](#)

Stuart C McDonald (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) asks SSHD, whether he plans to involve local authorities in existing dispersal areas in the process of finalising the new asylum accommodation contracts with providers.

Caroline Nokes, 18.11.18: The transition of the contracts is not a point at which we intend to revisit or revise the contractual arrangements with new accommodation providers.

Regional Transition Leads are working in partnership with local authorities via the Strategic Migration Partnerships (SMPs) to ensure appropriate liaison and engagement leading up to contract award. This proactive engagement will result in local authorities shaping the narrative around placements of asylum seekers in their communities but also form the beginnings of Joint Partnership Boards which will monitor and manage the transition to the new contracts.

## ACCOMMODATION

[179243](#)

Stuart C McDonald (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) asks SSHD, when he plans to publish the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report on Asylum Accommodation and the Government response to that report.

Caroline Nokes, 18.10.18: The Asylum Accommodation report and Government response will be published in due course.

## ACCOMMODATION

[177768](#)

Helen Hayes (Lab, Dulwich and West Norwood) asks SSHD, whether provisions will be included in the new asylum accommodation contracts to ensure that service providers that fail to meet specified standards will be held to account.

Caroline Nokes, 19.10.18: The Home Office has a rigorous contract compliance regime in place to ensure that the required performance standards expected of all providers, as defined in the contracts, are met. More specifically:

The Provider shall perform the Services to meet or exceed the Performance Standards defined in the Statement of Requirements and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined within the Performance Management Regime.

Service Credits associated with Provider performance failures against the KPI targets, shall be applied by the Authority from the Contract Effective Date.

Service Credits will be applied in the event of performance failures against KPIs, at a level commensurate with the Provider's degree of failure against the relevant KPI. The agreed Service Credit Payment (SCP) for each Service Area will be deducted from the Monthly Service Payment which would otherwise be payable to the Provider for the relevant Payment Period.

## DECISION MAKING / RELIGION AND BELIEF

House of Lords, 2.37pm 15 October 2018, Asylum Applications read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Baroness Berridge (Con): **To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve the assessment by the Home Office of asylum applications made on the grounds of religious or belief based persecution.**

- thanks Minister for work since publication of report co-authored by the All-Party Parliamentary Group drawing attention to the problems with assessing these claims [..]
- Will the Minister outline what plans the department has to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of [..] training so that in a few years' time we are not facing the same difference between training and the decisions being made?

Baroness Bakewell (Lab):

- considerable publicity around case of Pakistani humanist Hamza bin Walayat who failed his asylum application in part, it is thought, because he failed to identify Plato and Aristotle as humanists.
- What steps will the Home Office take to ensure that asylum assessors are better educated about the beliefs of non-religious people, including humanists?

Baroness Hussein-Ece (Lib Dem):

- Minister will be aware of report [Still Falling Short](#), which was produced recently by the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration group highlighting that LGBT+ asylum seekers were routinely disbelieved by Home Office decision-makers, and were falling short of the legal standard required in asylum applications.
- For example, one applicant was told that LGBT+ people cannot possibly follow a religion and that their application was rejected. What is being done to address this failure?

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench):

- Visited Pakistan [...], saw first-hand abject, festering conditions in which many of the country's religious minorities live, and having heard accounts of abduction, rape, the forced marriage of a nine year-old, forced conversion, death sentences for so-called blasphemy [...] in one case, children being forced to watch as their parents were burned alive
- how can the Home Office in all those circumstances continue to say that what is happening in Pakistan to religious believers and humanists is merely discrimination, not persecution?

Lord Elton (Con):

- how long will it take from rollout for the whole of the relevant force of people to receive the training?
- What oversight will there be to make sure that it has been understood and implemented?

Lord Rosser (Lab):

- media reports [...]staff considering asylum applications are rushed because there is a backlog to deal with, and that in addition staff have targets to meet in respect of the number of decisions they have to make each week on whether to grant or refuse asylum seekers.
- Is there still a backlog of people waiting for an asylum decision or for an appeal to be heard?
- If so, how big is that backlog?
- What targets in reality are staff making asylum decisions expected to meet each day, week or month?

Lord Bishop of Leeds:

- before training is rolled out, will some religious leaders [...]be consulted on what sort of training might be appropriate, and the sort of questions that may be asked of asylum seekers? [...]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford** (Minister of State, Home Office): [...]all asylum decision-makers undertake a bespoke training package on how to assess religious and belief-based persecution claims. UK Visas and Immigration is currently working with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief to develop a specialist considering religion or belief in the asylum claim training course. This will be introduced in the new year and will enhance asylum decision-makers' religious literacy in dealing with these complex issues.

To Baroness Berridge:

- [...]The new specialist course will form part of a continuous training package for asylum decision-makers, technical specialists and senior caseworkers.
- UKVI expects to roll it out in early 2019.
- UKVI has an internal audit process to assess the quality of decisions and interviews and the application of policy.
- Allowed appeals are also regularly analysed. In addition, independent audits are carried out by the operational assurance and security unit.

To Baroness Bakewell:

- [Baroness Bakewell] outlines precisely why training in religious literacy and, indeed about those who have no beliefs or are humanists, which is a belief in and of itself, is required [...]

To Baroness Hussein-Ece:

- [...] you can be LGBT and have a religion.
- The care with which asylum case decision-makers make their judgments is very important, as are the sensitivities around interviewing LGBT people and those who are persecuted for their faith.

To Lord Alton:

- Would not disagree [...] Sadly, the laws in Pakistan are quite different from the laws here; unpalatable though we might find them, they are the laws there.
- Nevertheless, each application to our asylum system should be dealt with in terms of the persecution that people might face.

To Lord Elton:

- [...]We are expecting to roll it out in 2019.
- With regard to quality assurance, the audits are going to be carried out by an operational security unit for both the quality of the decision and the application of the policy.

To Lord Rosser:

- important that decisions made are [...]right.
- Could not comment on decisions being rushed, but I can go back to the department to ask that question.
- There are certainly a lot of decisions to be made, because people want to come to this country and I can try to ascertain a figure for the backlog.

To Lord Bishop of Leeds:

- might also struggle with questions on my religion. Religious leaders have been engaged.
- What is to be established is the reason for persecution, therefore religious literacy is needed for the assessors—it is not a test of religious facts.

## **DECISION MAKING**

[179080](#)

Dr David Drew (Lab, Stroud) asks SSHD, what recent discussions has he had with the House of Bishops on the criteria used by the immigration authorities to assess whether a person has satisfactory grounds for using conversion to Christianity as a reason to be granted leave to remain.

Caroline Nokes, 18.10.18: Home Office policy is clear that when considering asylum claims based on religious belief or lack of belief, caseworkers must ask appropriate and sensitive questions based on an understanding of religious concepts, philosophical viewpoints and forms of persecution a person may be subjected to in their country. Where caseworkers need to establish credibility of a conversion to any faith, the approach taken is to explore with that individual their personal experiences and journey to their new faith, both in their country and in the UK, rather than test their knowledge of religious facts.

Home Office officials regularly discuss religious-based claims with a broad range of faith groups to ensure we are considering such claims appropriately. This includes working closely with the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on International Freedom of Religion or Belief and engaging with a range of groups in order to improve our policy guidance and develop specialist training for caseworkers to drive further improvement in this important and complex area. The Home Office has not engaged directly with the House of Bishops on this matter.

## **DETENTION / HEALTH**

[177281](#)

Luciana Berger (Lab, Liverpool Wavertree) asks Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the mental health of women held in detention centres in the UK.

Matt Hancock (Secretary of State for Health and Social Care), 15.10.18: The only immigration removal centre for women in England is Yarl's Wood in Bedfordshire and women are not held in other immigration removal centres.

## **DETENTION**

[HL10688](#)

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Lib Dem) asks Her Majesty's Government (HMG) what action they are taking to prevent any verbal or physical abuse of detainees at immigration detention centres.

Baroness Williams of Trafford 18.10.18: The Government takes detainee welfare very seriously and expects the highest standards from those who manage the detention estate on its behalf.

A comprehensive complaints system ensures that all complaints made by detainees are investigated by the relevant supplier in accordance with published guidance. All allegations of serious misconduct are referred to the Home Office Professional Standards Unit for investigation. If a detainee, or someone on behalf of a detainee, alleges that a member of staff has committed an offence against them the police will automatically be notified, even if the detainee does not wish the matter to be reported or to make a formal complaint. For detainees who are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled, there is an avenue of escalation to the independent Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

Independent scrutiny makes a vital contribution to assurance that immigration removal centres are secure and humane. The Government will continue to implement action in response to recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the Independent Monitoring Boards.

## **DETENTION**

[177778](#) [177779](#)

Wera Hobhouse (Lib Dem, Bath) asks SSHD:

1. what assessment his Department has made of the psychological effect on immigrants of detention without a time limit.
2. what steps the Government plans to take to tackle overcrowding in immigration detention centres

Caroline Nokes, 19.10.18: The health and welfare of detainees is of utmost importance. Although there is no statutory time limit on immigration detention under Immigration Act powers, the law does not allow indefinite detention.

Under the adults at risk in immigration detention policy – which is part of the Government's response to Stephen Shaw's review of the welfare of vulnerable people in immigration detention - the consideration of any vulnerability, including mental health, is based on a case-by-case assessment of the appropriateness of detention for each individual. All individuals detained also have ready access to medical professionals and health care, including mental health services. In all cases, detention is kept under regular review to ensure that it is necessary, appropriate and takes into account the welfare of those detained.

The Home Office has published guidelines on acceptable room capacity in immigration removal centres, which build on requirements set out in secondary legislation. Capacity across the detention estate is kept under regular review.

In line with the [Home Secretary's statement on immigration detention on 24 July](#), the practice of accommodating three detainees in rooms designed for two has now ceased.

## **IMMIGRATION BILL**

[176527](#)

Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) asks SSHD, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September to Question 169672 on Migrant Workers: Visas, whether he has plans to publish a White Paper on Immigration before the conclusion of negotiations for the UK to the EU.

Caroline Nokes: 16.11.18: We will put in place a new single immigration system that treats EU countries the same as non-EU countries. We will publish a White Paper on the future border and immigration system later in the autumn.

## **INTEGRATION / FAMILY REUNION**

House of Commons, 15 October 2018, 6.05pm Loneliness Strategy read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Alison Thewliss (SNP, Glasgow Central): [...] the loneliest people I see in my surgeries are those with immigration status issues. I met an incredibly sad young man at my surgery who was awaiting his wife coming here from very dangerous circumstances. Will the Minister look into what can be done to speed up these processes? It is incredibly debilitating and a cause of loneliness for many people I see at my surgeries when their spouse or family member is so far away and they are not able to reach them.

Tracey Crouch (Parliamentary Under-Secretary Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) A colleague from the Home Office is part of the group [steering the Government's Loneliness Strategy]. Refugees and others within the immigration system were actually considered as part of the strategy, so I encourage the hon. Lady to look at [the report](#) in detail to see how we are tackling that particular issue. Like her, I commend all the organisations out there that are getting together in imaginative and creative ways to reach parts of the community through a variety of initiatives, including drama classes.[...]

## **INTEGRATION / MOVE ON / RIGHT TO WORK**

[177179](#)

John Spellar (Lab, Warley) asks SSHD, what steps is his Department taking to ensure that people permitted to reside and work in the UK have the ability to (a) open bank accounts and (b) obtain employment while his Department are in possession of their passports.

Caroline Nokes, 15.10.18: Where migrants need to undergo a right to work check while their immigration application is outstanding and their documents are with the Home Office, their status can be confirmed by the employer contacting the Home Office employer checking service. Those applying to extend their stay in the UK are likely to have opened bank accounts already.

From November 2018, the majority of immigration applicants who apply to confirm or extend their stay in the UK, or apply for citizenship, will be managed by the Home Office's new commercial partner Sopra Steria on behalf of UK Visas and Immigration. As part of this new service applicants will be able to retain their passport and supporting evidence as part of the application process.

## **INTEGRATION / MOVE ON**

[176554](#)

Stephanie Peacock (Lab, Barnsley East) asks SSHD, what changes were made between versions 2.0 and 3.0 to the section on study conditions in his Department's [guide to immigration bail for staff](#); and for what reasons those changes were made.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: An additional three rows were added to the table in the section 'study condition: quick guide on usage' in version 3.0 of the immigration bail guidance for staff. The rows contain additional guidance for Border Force staff regarding individuals granted immigration bail at the border.

## LEGAL AID

[176681](#) [176682](#) [176683](#)

Sandy Martin (Lab, Ipswich) asks the Secretary of State for Justice:

1. whether he is taking steps to ensure that legal aid is available for immigration cases in Suffolk; and if he will make a statement.
2. whether the Legal Aid Agency plans to provide contracts for immigration legal aid to advisers in Ipswich.
3. what plans he has to ensure an adequate level of legal support and advice to provide for the projected increase in unaccompanied child asylum seekers dispersed to Ipswich under the National Transfer Scheme.

Lucy Frazer (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Ministry of Justice), 15.10.18: The LAA will shortly complete the procurement process for new civil legal contracts which included immigration advice. The majority of contracts commenced on 1 September 2018 however there are still a small number of contracts that have not yet commenced.

Once the procurement process is completed the LAA will assess whether there are any gaps in provision and what steps need to be taken to fill the gaps. We are aware of the concerns raised in relation to access in the East of England and have had this under review for some time. This is one of the first areas that we will consider once all the contracts have started.

## SUPPORT / CHILDREN / EDUCATION

[HL10482](#)

Lord Greaves (Lib Dem) asks HMG what help they provide to asylum seeker families whose children are allocated places at schools too close to their homes to qualify for free transport but where the additional cost of travel fares is unaffordable; and what assistance they provide for obtaining school uniforms.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 17.10.18: Asylum seekers and their dependants who would otherwise be destitute are provided with accommodation and a weekly cash allowance to cover their other essential living needs. The level of the allowance is reviewed each year using a methodology that takes account of the costs of reasonable travel and of purchasing clothes, including school uniforms.

The level of the allowance does not take account of the costs of children travelling to school because these are generally covered by the local authority if the family does not live within reasonable walking distance of the school. However, where an asylum seeker or their dependant have a need for additional funds for travel purposes they can apply for it exceptionally. The applications are considered on a case by case basis.

Further information about how the level of the cash allowance provided to asylum seekers is assessed and about how they can apply for additional funds can be found in the reports published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applications-for-additional-support>

## **CHILDREN / DUBS**

### [178357](#)

Peter Kyle (Lab, Hove) asks SSHD, pursuant to the [Answer of 5 September 2017 to Question 6773](#), when Government plans to meet its commitment to transfer 480 unaccompanied child refugees to the UK.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: In line with the legislation, we are fully committed to relocating the specified number of 480 children under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 as soon as possible. Over 220 children are already in the UK and transfers are ongoing.

We are working very closely with participating States and partners to deliver the scheme in line with their national laws. Relocation of children to the UK is also dependent on the availability of appropriate local authority care placements.

## **ENFORCEMENT / STOKE ON TRENT**

### [176515](#)

Gareth Snell (Lab, Stoke on Trent Central) asks SSHD, for what reasons the decision was taken to close the immigration reporting centre in Stoke-on-Trent; and if he will publish the business case which led to that decision.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: To ensure the needs of our reporting population are managed effectively it is critical that Immigration Enforcement has its resource in the right places. As a result, a small number of staff moves and closures of police reporting locations have taken place to ensure we effectively serve the reporting cohort.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

### [176516](#)

Gareth Snell (Lab, Stoke on Trent Central) asks SSHD, how many immigration reporting centres have been (a) closed and (b) relocated since May 2015.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: Home Office reporting centres have not been closed. We have rationalised some of our police reporting locations in England and Wales to some of our Home Office reporting centres or larger regional police stations to effectively manage the reporting population.

**ENFORCEMENT / SUPPORT**

[176517](#)

Gareth Snell (Lab, Stoke on Trent Central) asks SSHD, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people subject to reporting requirements are not disadvantaged financially if the nearest immigration reporting centre is closed.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: Those who are eligible for help with travel costs will have a fixed amount added to their support account in order to purchase tickets to enable them to travel to their new reporting location. The facility for those not automatically entitled to travel expenses, but who are required to report and are destitute, to apply for expenses under 'exceptional needs' will remain

**ENFORCEMENT / SUPPORT / STOKE ON TRENT**

[176518](#)

Gareth Snell (Lab, Stoke on Trent Central) asks SSHD, what assessment he has made of the effect on asylum seekers in Stoke-on-Trent of the closure of the immigration reporting centre in that city.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: Asylum seekers aren't required to report until they have had a negative decision on their case. The new location is considered to be within a reasonable travelling time. To minimise the impact on those that are required to travel for longer periods we are reducing some individuals reporting frequencies to minimise disruption.

**ENFORCEMENT / STOKE ON TRENT**

[179263](#)

Ruth Smeeth (Lab, Stoke on Trent North) asks SSHD, what options were considered when taking the decision to close the Stoke reporting and offender management centre.

Caroline Nokes, 18.10.18: The Home Office have been unable to find a suitable location in Stoke for staff and the reporting population so utilised police stations. Staffordshire Police have subsequently rationalised their estate and could not provide the Home Office with accommodation to conduct the full range of functions required.

In the absence of any suitable accommodation in the area, which also took into account security, safety of signers and staff, the reporting function was moved to Manchester reporting centre.

**ENFORCEMENT / STOKE ON TRENT**

[179264](#)

Ruth Smeeth (Lab, Stoke on Trent North) asks SSHD, what assessment he made of the needs of asylum seekers in Stoke-on-Trent when the decision to close the Stoke Reporting Centre was taken.

Caroline Nokes, 18.10.18: The Home Office assessed the needs of all types of reportees, not only asylum seekers.

The assessment looked at travel times and reporting frequencies of individuals as well as those with special needs, such as pregnant subjects or those recovering from surgery and how we could reimburse eligible individuals for travel.

## **ENFORCEMENT / IRAN**

[179081](#)

Dr David Drew (Lab, Stroud) asks SSHD, how many people have been returned from the UK to the Iran in each of the last five years having exhausted the appeals process; and how many cases of such returns are pending an appeals process.

Caroline Nokes, 18.10.18: The number of returns from the UK to Iran is published in table rt\_04\_q (returns data tables, volume 4) in 'Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2018'. The data are available from the GOV.uk website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2018>

HM Courts and Tribunal Service publishes appeals data on a quarterly basis which can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2018>

Individuals who have had their claims certified may only exercise their appeal rights once they have left the United Kingdom. Cross referencing those individuals against those with extant appeals could only be achieved at disproportionate cost.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

[HL10689](#)

Lord Dubs of Llandudno (Lab) asks HMG how many immigrants were removed in (1) 2010, (2) 2014, and (3) 2017 to (a) Somalia, (b) Afghanistan, and (c) the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 18.10.18: Information on the number of people that have been returned from the UK by nationality, is available in table rt\_05 (returns data tables, volume 5) in 'Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2018', available from the GOV.uk website at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/734186/returns5-jun-2018-tables.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734186/returns5-jun-2018-tables.ods)

[..]

## **ENFORCEMENT**

[178272](#)

Caroline Lucas (Green, Brighton Pavillion) asks SSHD, pursuant to the [Answer of 9 October 2018 to Question 174681 on Deportation: West Africa](#), how many of the 60 people who were due to be returned on the charter flight to Nigeria and Ghana on 28 March 2017 have subsequently been deported and on what dates; whether each of the 60 people were informed by his Department (a) between 28 March 2017 and 15 April 2018 of the rights to stay which are conferred to Commonwealth citizens under the 1971 Immigration Act and (b) of the Windrush Taskforce after 16 April 2016; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes, 16.10.18: Of the 60 people due to be returned on the charter flight to Nigeria and Ghana on 28 March 2017, 49 have since been removed. The table below shows the dates of removal. In the table below, we have included all types of removal including those who may have been deported.

<b>Date of removal</b>	<b>Number removed</b>
30 March 2017	33
31 March 2017	1
2 April 2017	1
4 April 2017	1
7 April 2017	1
10 April 2017	1
15 April 2017	1
18 May 2017	1
23 May 2017	4
28 June 2017	2
29 June 2017	1
23 August 2017	1
27 September 2017	1

Prior to any enforced removal, all individuals are notified of their liability for removal. This informs them of the reason why they are liable to removal, the destination for removal, advises the migrant to seek early legal advice and places them under a duty to raise with the Home Office any asylum, human rights or European free movement reasons why they believe they are entitled to stay. It also sets out the options for voluntary departure as well as the consequences of not doing so. All individuals are provided with a minimum of 72 hours in which to access legal advice prior to action being taken to enforce their return.

Any individual who believes they are protected under the provisions of the 1971 Immigration Act is able to contact the Windrush Taskforce, who will help to identify their current status. Information on the Windrush Taskforce is readily available on the Home Office website. None of the individuals have contacted the Taskforce.

## **ENFORCEMENT / HEALTH**

[177355](#) [177356](#) [177359](#)

Vicky Foxcroft (Lab, Lewisham, Deptford) asks the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care:

1. how many people were mistakenly charged for NHS treatment due to errors in the interpretation of their immigration status in (a) England and (b) London in (i) 2016-17 and (ii) 2017-18.
2. what estimate his Department has made of the number of women who gave birth at an NHS hospital and were charged for that treatment because of a misunderstanding of their immigration status in (a) England and (b) London in (i) 2016-2017 and (ii) 2017-2018.
3. what assessment his Department has made of the effect of charging for secondary NHS maternity care on the number of migrant women giving birth in NHS hospitals.

Stephen Barclay Minister of State (Department of Health and Social Care), 17.10.18: The Department does not hold data on the number of people who were mistakenly charged for National Health Service treatment or the numbers of migrant women giving birth in NHS hospitals.

## EU

### [HCWS1022 HLWS990](#)

Justice and Home Affairs post Council Statement, made on 18 October 2018 in the House of Commons by David Gauke (Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice) and in the House of Lords by Lord Keen of Elie (the Lords Spokesperson)

David Gauke: I attended the Justice and Home Affairs Council for Justice Day on Thursday 11 October in Luxembourg.[....]

The Home Secretary attended Interior day.

The Commission set out ambitious plans for a stronger, more effective European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) including a standing corps of 10,000 officers, which would provide substantial support to Member States in protecting the external border. Member States underlined their support for a stronger Frontex, but expressed concerns about the size of the standing corps, its impact on national authorities and the consequences for Member State competence on border protection.

The Commission briefly presented the new Return Directive recast and Member States discussed accelerated borders procedures, linking the asylum and returns processes, with asylum claims processed as close to the border as possible and, if refused, the failed asylum seeker returned fast and smoothly. Some Member States focused on the need to maximise third country cooperation on returns and readmission of own nationals. Member States were divided on the mandatory nature of the border procedures. Some Member States supported manifestly unfounded claims at the border leading to an entry refusal rather than a returns decision.

Over lunch, Ministers discussed the EU's comprehensive "whole of route" approach to tackling illegal migration. The Home Secretary focused on strengthening the EU's response to human traffickers and smugglers advertising online, and boosting our work with African partners on economic development, strategic communications and behavioural insights to prevent migrants from starting dangerous journeys to Europe.

Ministers also discussed the balance between solidarity and responsibility. The Presidency, supported by some Member States, proposed broadening the idea of ‘solidarity’ to avoid compulsory reallocation of refugees to Member States who reject this, but who are content to make substantial contributions to other aspects of migration management, including external partnerships with third countries.

The Council discussed the JHA funding programmes within the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework. The UK will not participate in these programmes as a Member State. The Presidency called on Member States to establish a strong steering structure to ensure the optimal use of funds. Member States supported provisions to step up cooperation with third countries on migration, but raised questions around flexibility and allocations to Member States.

The Presidency updated on progress on the files within the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) package. The Dublin IV proposal, as it links to the issue of solidarity and burden sharing, will be discussed among Leaders at the October European Council.

## **FAMILY REUNION**

### [HL10556](#)

The Marquess of Lothian (Con) asks HMG how many applications they have received for UK visas for family settlement to reunite with a partner or parent who is in the UK as a refugee or with humanitarian protection in each year since 2010; and of those, how many have been granted.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 17.10.18: The available information is given below.

Family reunion applications from dependants of those with refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK (made under Part 11 of the Immigration Rules) are included in the ‘Family: Other’ category within the published Home Office ‘Immigration Statistics’ visa tables, latest edition at, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2018/list-of-tables#visas>.

The vast majority of the ‘Family: Other’ category relate to family reunion and hence the published figures provide a good indication of trends for family reunion cases.

The table below provides the latest data:

### **'Family: Other' entry clearance visa applications and outcomes: 2010 to 2017**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Applications</b>	<b>Resolved</b>	<b>Granted %</b>	<b>Refused</b>	<b>Withdrawn/Lapsed</b>	
2010	6,111	6,654	4,887	73%	1,664	103
2011	5,143	5,536	4,306	78%	1,093	137
2012	5,135	5,318	3,710	70%	1,479	129
2013	6,064	6,108	4,211	69%	1,797	100
2014	5,639	6,658	4,596	69%	1,931	131
2015	8,477	8,283	4,887	59%	3,267	129
2016	8,610	9,620	6,098	63%	3,472	50

2017 7,439      7,543      5,237      69% 2,253      53

**Notes:** Applications made in a given year may be resolved (granted, refused, withdrawn or lapsed) in a later year.

**Source:** Home Office 'Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2018', Visas data tables volume 1, table vi\_01\_q.

## RESETTLEMENT / CHILDREN

### [HL10405](#)

Lord Dubs (Lab) asks HMG what discussions they have had with the Crown Territories, in particular the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey, about the possibility that they will take part in receiving (1) unaccompanied child refugees in Europe, and (2) refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey under existing schemes for refugee families.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, 15.11.18: In the early stages of developing the UK's response to the refugee crisis, conversations were held between the UK Government and the Crown Dependencies to explore whether the infrastructure and capacity existed in the Crown Dependencies to support the resettlement of refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Any offers of capacity and support for the UK schemes now or in the future are welcome.

## RESETTLEMENT

### [177610](#)

Maria Eagle (Lab, Garston and Halewood) asks SSHD, pursuant to the [Answer of 23 July 2018 to Question 167142](#) on UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Expenditure, how much funding his Department has allocated to the Liverpool Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in each year since its launch.

Caroline Nokes, 19.10.18: Local authorities claim a tariff from the Government for the refugees they resettle under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The first 12 months of a refugee's resettlement costs are funded by central government using the Official Development Assistance budget which amounts to £8,520 per person.

For years 2-5 local authorities receive £12,000 per person overall; tapering from £5,000 in year 2, to £3,700 in year 3, to £2,300 in year 4 and £1,000 in year 5. 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.

## COUNTRY SITUATIONS

### AFGHANISTAN

#### [177772](#)

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Lab, Tooting) asks SSHD, if he will reassess the case of Afghan interpreter Mohammed Nabi Wardak who translated for British armed forces on the front line in Helmand province between 2008 and 2011 and has been denied relocation to the UK.

Caroline Nokes, 19.10.18: The Government recognises the vital role interpreters and local staff played in operations in Afghanistan. That is why there are two dedicated schemes designed to help local staff: the Ex-gratia redundancy scheme and the Intimidation policy. Responsibility for administering these schemes sits with the Ministry of Defence.

Where an individual chooses to leave Afghanistan outside of these schemes, our position is that they should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

BURMA MYANMAR / BANGLADESH /ROHINGYA

[HL10414](#)

Baroness Helic (Con) asks HMG, whether they support the creation of an ad hoc international criminal tribunal for crimes under international law committed in Myanmar, including alleged genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, 15.10.18: The Foreign Secretary visited Burma in September and saw for himself the destruction caused by the Burmese Army brutal clearance operations in Rakhine. We want justice to be done for crimes under international law committed in Burma. We will continue to work with our international partners to ensure this, exploring all options. We are working in the UN Security Council to ensure accountability, including by looking at the option of an ad hoc tribunal, while also pushing for accelerated progress on refugee returns. We assess that there is not currently sufficient support within the Security Council for the creation of an ad hoc tribunal.

BURMA MYANMAR / BANGLADESH /ROHINGYA

[176564](#)

Hugh Gaffney (Lab, Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) asks the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Government of Myanmar on human rights abuses against the Rohingya since his appointment.

Mark Field 16.10.18: In his meeting with Burma's State Counsellor (and Foreign Minister) Aung San Suu Kyi on 20 September, the Foreign Secretary made clear that holding to account those responsible for atrocities was of critical importance. He underlined that giving refugees hope of a safe return and future in Rakhine depending on accountability for human rights violations. He expressed his grave concerns about Burma's refusal to grant access to the UN Fact Finding Mission.

BURMA MYANMAR / BANGLADESH /ROHINGYA

[176346](#)

Dr Lisa Cameron (SNP, East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) asks the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of steps the Government of Myanmar must take to ensure conditions are safe for Rohingya to return.

Mark Field, 16.10.18: The UK, working with EU partners and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, secured a UN Human Rights Council Resolution on 27 September that sets out the detailed steps the Government of Burma should take to support the return of Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons. The resolution stresses that the returns process needs to be in consultation with

the populations concerned and in accordance with international law and standards. It calls for the Government of Burma to provide returnees with freedom of movement, unimpeded access to livelihoods and social services; abandon policies and practices that marginalize the Rohingya economically; prevent the destruction of property and loss of rights to property; and address the root causes of their vulnerability and forced displacement.

#### BURMA MYANMAR / BANGLADESH / ROHINGYA

House of Lords, 16 October 2018, 2.45pm, Official Development Assistance read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Baroness Jenkin of Kennington (Con) [...] Will my noble friend update the House on what is happening to the Rohingya refugees, many of whom have had to leave their homes and are currently ending up in Bangladesh?

Lord Bates (Minister of State (Department for International Development)): I am grateful for the opportunity to do that. My noble friend Lord Ahmad and I had the opportunity to brief interested Peers on the situation there. How we operate there demonstrates what is great about this country. Not only are we at the forefront in delivering aid in cash terms—at £129 million, one of the largest commitments of any country—but we are also leading the charge with our diplomatic and security efforts at the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Commission. It is that spectrum of reach which makes our aid so effective.

#### BURUNDI

##### [HL10406](#)

The Lord Bishop of Durham asks HMG what are their latest assessments of (1) food, (2) health, and (3) political, security in Burundi.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon 15.10.18: (1) We assess that there has been modest improvement in the food security situation but that it remains extremely fragile.

(2) Chronic malnutrition is of particular concern, as is the limited access to basic services such as health and education.

(3) The UN Commission of Inquiry on the Burundi Report of August 2018 found that serious human rights violations persist. The Commission was particularly concerned by the growing number of violations where the ruling party's youth league, the Imbonerakure, had played a role. We are working with UN, EU and African Union partners to support an inclusive, negotiated solution to the political crisis.

Since 2015, the Department for International Development has provided significant humanitarian support both inside Burundi and to Burundian refugees in the region, supporting around 300,000 refugees in Rwanda and Tanzania since the crisis began. In 2017, the UK committed up to £12 million to support humanitarian needs in Burundi until 2020.

#### MOROCCO / MEDITERRANEAN

##### [177645](#)

Emily Thornberry (Lab, Islington South and Finsbury) asks the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Moroccan counterpart on the shooting of the immigrant Hayat Belkacem on 25 September.

Alistair Burt, Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) We are aware of Hayat Belkacem's death. However, we frequently discuss migration-related issues with the Moroccans, most recently at a briefing hosted by the Moroccan Foreign Minister last week. Through our development programmes we are also supporting Moroccan efforts to address the root causes of migration. The UK remains committed to a comprehensive, "whole-of-route" approach, involving targeted interventions at each stage of a migrant's journey. This is the most effective long-term solution to unmanaged, irregular migration. We will play an active role in the Global Compact meetings in Marrakech in December as we work with the international community on this issue.

#### NIGERIA

[176522](#)

Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) asks SSHD, what assistance her Department is providing to support Borno refugees and internally displaced persons to return home.

Harriet Baldwin, 15.10.18: My department is supporting Refugees and internally displaced persons in Borno to rebuild their lives and return home when it is safe for them to do so. We are providing livelihoods and basic services support throughout the region. In 2017 we ensured 213,000 could plant crops and we are educating 100,000 children affected by conflict. We are concerned by a recent push to return people back to insecure areas in recent months, and are working closely with the Borno State Government to support returns which are voluntary, safe, and sustainable.

#### OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

House of Commons, Prime Minister's Questions, 17 October 2018, read [here](#) watch [here](#)

[...] Alistair Carmichael (Lib Dem, Orkney and Shetland): The Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar in the occupied Palestinian territories faces imminent demolition and is currently being swamped with sewage from the nearby settlement of Kfar Adumim. Just this morning Israeli forces have tasered and pepper-sprayed activists there. Will the Prime Minister make it clear to the Prime Minister of Israel that this is occupied territory, that these are refugees—protected people whose forcible removal would constitute, as the United Nations has stated, a war crime?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Minister for the Middle East met the Israeli ambassador on 11 October. He made clear the UK's deep concerns about Israel's planned demolition of the village of Khan al-Ahmar. Its demolition would be a major blow to the prospect of a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital, and I once again call on the Israeli Government not to go ahead with its plan to demolish the village, including its school, and displace its residents.[..]

#### SYRIA / JORDAN

House of Lords, 16 October 2018, 3.06pm, Syria / Jordan Border, Rukban Camp read [here](#) watch [here](#)

Lord Hylton (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to prevent deaths from starvation at the Rukban camp on the Syria-Jordan border.

Lord Bates (Minister of State, Department for International Development): My Lords, the conflict in Syria has resulted in the worst humanitarian catastrophe of this century so far. We remain immensely concerned by the ongoing situation at the Rukban camp in southern Syria. It is just another example of the Assad regime's systematic and blatant disregard for international humanitarian and human rights law and for the well-being of its people.

The UK has been a leading voice among donors on this issue and we continue to raise it with the UN on a regular basis. In particular, we continue to lobby all parties for full humanitarian access to the camp to enable regular aid deliveries to take place. As a result of this lobbying, we understand that a humanitarian convoy from Damascus to Rukban later this month has now been approved. We call on all parties to ensure that this takes place to provide the assistance that these people so desperately need.

Debate further covers extremely serious situation in camp, actions of Syria, Jordan, Russia, UN, role of ICRC, urgent need for humanitarian access, UK foreign policy and role in conflict.

SYRIA / JORDAN

[179093](#)

Roger Godsiff (Birmingham, Hall Green) asks the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to facilitate aid deliveries to Rukban camp in Syria; and what representations have been made to his counterparts in (a) Syria and (b) Jordan on conditions in that camp.

Alistair Burt (Minister of State Department for International Development), 18.10.18: The UK has been a leading voice among donors highlighting the plight of displaced Syrians at the Rukban camp. In particular, we continue to lobby all parties for full humanitarian access to the camp, to enable regular aid deliveries. We understand that a humanitarian convoy from Damascus to Rukban has now been approved to deliver life-saving aid to people in need at Rukban Camp over the coming weeks. We call on all parties to ensure this takes place and provides the assistance these people badly need. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.