

GVT/COM/V(2023)004

**Comments of the Government of the United Kingdom on the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory
Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National
Minorities by the United Kingdom
received on 7 August 2023**

Comments of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the United Kingdom

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The UK Government thanks the Advisory Committee for its constructive and informative Fifth Opinion on the UK's implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In this report, we respond to the comments and recommendations made in the Fifth Opinion.

In doing so, our response recognises that some policy areas are devolved to the governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, such as education. This underpins our belief that through devolution policies can be tailored to suit the needs and priorities of the different parts of the UK. To that end, we have included responses reflecting developments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland alongside those both in England and at a UK level.

Due to there not being an Executive in Northern Ireland at the time of writing, it has not been possible to provide as comprehensive a response covering issues in Northern Ireland as for other parts of the United Kingdom.

1. Scope of application and free self-identification

The UK will continue to maintain its broad and flexible approach to the scope of application of the Framework Convention.

As regards Ulster Scots, we welcome the recognition given to the steps taken by the UK Government to recognise Ulster Scots as a National Minority, which met the commitments we made under New Decade, New Approach¹.

2. Free self-identification and population census

There are a few factual corrections we wish to highlight.

- The Office for National Statistics are still delivering results from the Census of England and Wales².
- Data from the Census for England and Wales also shows that the number of persons identifying with either a 'Cornish' identity only or 'Cornish' in combination with 'British' increased from 66,000 in 2011 to 100,000 in 2021. A further 9,100 people identified as Cornish with at least one other UK national identity, those being English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish³.

In the lead up to Census 2021, colleagues from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) engaged with communities and encouraged people to self-identify their ethnic group as they chose either through one of the available tick-boxes or through writing it in within any of the five high-level ethnic groups.

The ethnic group question on the Census had two stages. Firstly, a person identified through one of the following five high-level ethnic groups:

- "Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh"
- "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African"

¹ New Decade, New Approach was an agreed to restore devolved Government in Northern Ireland in 2020. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade_a_new_approach.pdf

² Office For National Statistics (2023), *Release Plans*. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/aboutcensus/releaseplans>

³ Office for National Statistics (2022), *CT21_0006 - National identity: Cornish*. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/adhocs/15312ct210006nationalidentitycornish>

- “Mixed or Multiple”
- “White”
- “Other ethnic group”

Secondly, a person identified through one of the 19 available response options, which included six categories with write-in response options. Whilst “Gypsy or Irish Traveller” and “Roma” ethnic groups were included as tick-boxes within the “White” high-level category, people could also self-identify within one of the six available write-in responses within any of the high-level categories.

ONS fully recognises the need of the Cornish community for data on the characteristics and outcomes of those who identified as Cornish. The new “search-as-you-type” functionality introduced for the 2021 online census form, coupled with the local engagement and targeted marketing campaign, helped those who wanted to self-identify as Cornish understand how to do so in 2021.

As set out in the ONS’ Ethnic group national identity, and religion analysis plans⁴, a bespoke analytical report will be produced on the population who identify as Cornish on how their health, housing, work and education differs from those who do not identify as Cornish. In addition, the ONS has an ongoing programme of engagement with local authorities, which includes Cornwall Council, on topics such as the census outputs and the transformation of population and migration statistics.

For Census 2021, the self-identification questions of national identity, ethnic group, religion, language, sexual orientation and gender identity all included open write-in response options. It is important to note, that through the ONS’ work with multiple data users, collectors and processors, open text fields are not always possible due to the resources needed to process that data. This is particularly true of questions used for administrative data collection.

Moreover, the national identity question encouraged respondents to select all identities which applied providing the opportunity to express multiple national identities. In the development of the ethnic group question for 2011, the ONS considered single select vs. multiple select response options⁵. Following cognitive and quantitative research with respondents and data users, it was concluded that respondents would not find the multi-response version more acceptable or clear and that multiple-response data would be less useful for data users. As such, the ethnic group question has remained a single response option in Census 2011 and 2021.

Following the Inclusive Data Taskforce recommendations⁶, the Government Statistical Service (GSS) plans to review and update the current GSS harmonised standard for ethnicity⁷. As part of this review, the opportunity to select multiple ethnicities, whilst considering comparability, coherence and user requirements, will be further explored.

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2022), *Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion analysis plans* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/aboutcensus/censusproducts/analysis/ethnicgroupnationalitylanguageandreligionanalysisplans>

⁵ See section 6.1 in Office for National Statistics (2009), *Final recommended questions for the 2011 Census in England and Wales*. Available at: https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/final-recommended-questions-2011-ethnic-group_tcm77-183998-4.pdf

⁶ UK Statistics Authority (2022), *Inclusive Data Taskforce recommendations report: Leaving no one behind – How can we be more inclusive in our data?* Available at: <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/inclusive-data-taskforce-recommendations-report-leaving-no-one-behind-how-can-we-be-more-inclusive-in-our-data/pages/1/>

⁷ Government Statistical Service (2011), *Ethnicity harmonised standard*. Available at: <https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity-harmonised-standard/>

For the ethnic group question, a new tick-box for “Roma” was added in Census 2021. As set out in the National identity, ethnic group and religion question development for Census 2021⁸, research concluded that the new additional tick-box of “Roma” was best positioned within the high-level “White” category. This was informed through qualitative research (interviews and focus groups) with members of the Roma community around the positioning of the new tick-box.

In terms of whether or not the ethnicity question should be mandatory, the Census Act 1920 makes it compulsory for everyone in England and Wales to take part in the census in accordance with the Order and Regulations. The Act makes answering the questions mandatory. The Census (Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties) Act 2019 amended the Census Act to enable new questions on sexual orientation and gender identity to be voluntary in future censuses; the Act had previously been amended to introduce a voluntary question on religion.

Beyond the Census, the GSS harmonised standard for ethnicity sets out how to collect and report statistics on ethnicity to ensure comparability across different data collections in the Government Statistical Services. The harmonised standard provides a recommended question for use in data collection but does not set any requirement for the question to be mandatory. The Labour Market Survey, for example, asks about ethnicity but response to the question is not mandatory. As part of the review of the GSS harmonised standard for ethnicity, the ONS will be considering the placement of response options within the high-level ethnic groups.

The Office for National Statistics is working closely with other UK census offices to publish comparable data from across the UK.

Scotland

National Records of Scotland (NRS) conducted a Census Outputs consultation between October 2022 to February 2023. The consultation asked users for their views on plans for publishing Scotland’s census outputs. This engagement helps to ensure that census outputs are accessible and provided in a format which meets the needs of census data users. As part of this work, NRS set out the intended public plan for outputs which builds from an initial high level set of rounded population estimates in Autumn 2023.

National Records of Scotland will review responses and finalise plans for publishing census outputs based on user feedback. A summary report will subsequently be published on the Scotland’s Census website⁹.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the statistical authority in Northern Ireland, which is also responsible for the conduct of the Census in Northern Ireland, is a devolved body and the responsibility of the NI Executive.

⁸ Office for National Statistics, *National identity, ethnic group, language and religion question development for Census 2021*

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/nationalidentityethnigrouplanguageandreligionquestiondevelopmentforcensus2021>

⁹ *Scotland’s Census*, available at: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/>

3. Anti-discrimination institutional framework

The recognition and protection of rights are fundamental values of the UK. The UK Government very much values the important work that the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission does to champion and guard the rights of all those who live in Northern Ireland, since its establishment as part of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

In response to concerns around the functioning of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, and its ability to fulfil its statutory functions, the Northern Ireland Office and the NIHRC agreed to an independent review into the efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of the NIHRC.

This independent review was submitted to the Northern Ireland Office in December 2022, and it is now carefully considering the recommendations made before issuing a response.

The UK Government is firmly committed to upholding the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its parts, including ensuring that the NIHRC can fulfil its statutory duties.

Scotland

The Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) was established by the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006¹⁰. SHRC receives annual funding from the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body¹¹ (SPCB) and occasional small grants from other sources. The SPCB approved a resource budget of £1.294 million for financial year 2021-22, including approved contingency funding and Scottish Government funding for Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP)¹². The core cash budgets approved by the SPCB in previous years can be found in SHRC's Annual Report and Accounts.

4. Legislative developments in achieving full and effective equality

The UK Government's legislative plans allow the UK to remain party to the European Convention on Human Rights. We will always make sure that our laws work in the best interests of the people of the UK. We remain committed to protecting and respecting human rights and the rule of law at home and abroad.

The UK Government will continue to work with the devolved administrations, and across all parts of the UK, to ensure that any reforms work well in, and benefit the whole of, the UK.

The UK Government will continue to meet, and are fully committed to, our obligations under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

As set out in the Equalities Impact Assessment accompanying the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022¹³, any discriminatory impact from the PCSC Act for those of a particular race or

¹⁰ Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act (2006). Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/16/contents>

¹¹ Scottish Parliament, *Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body*. Available at:

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/how-parliament-works/parliament-organisations-groups-and-people/scottish-parliamentary-corporate-body>

¹² Scottish Human Rights Commission (2022), *SHRC Annual report 2021-22*. Available at:

<https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/2357/shrc-annual-report-2021-22-final.pdf>

¹³ UK Government (2022), *Home Office measures in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: Equalities Impact Assessment*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-equality-statements/home-office-measures-in-the-police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-equalities-impact-assessment>

ethnicity will be indirect. The new law applies to all and does not target Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities. Only those who cause damage, disruption or distress will be affected by the law. The UK Government has carefully considered whether those measures could be perceived as discriminatory against the GRT communities and believes that the new measures are a proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim. In 2017, the Race Disparity Audit published points to equality issues facing GRT groups¹⁴, which the UK Government has considered when designing new measures.

The UK Government recognises the rights of GRT communities to follow a nomadic way of life in line with their cultural heritage. Although this policy may have an effect on these groups, the offence will apply to anyone who resides or intends to reside on land illegally in the conditions set out. Enforcement action will not be taken on the grounds of race or ethnicity, and instead will be based on whether any individual chooses to reside on land without permission and causes significant damage, disruption or distress, affecting the rights of others.

It is the UK Government's view that the offence and accompanying seizure power, as well as the amendment of existing powers under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA) are a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aims of prevention and investigation of crime and the protection of the rights of others (notably those of the occupier and the local community). The offence only applies when there has been or there is likely to be, significant damage, disruption or distress and where a person resides or intends to reside on land without the consent of the occupier of the land. The changes to the CJPOA are similarly proportionate. Enforcement action (directing people away) is proportionate to the lower level of harms committed, i.e., in the amendments to the CJPOA, arrest and seizure powers can still be exercised only where someone fails to comply with a direction.

The use of the new power, as is the case with all existing powers available to the police, is discretionary and is an operational matter for the police. Individual cases will be considered by the police and by the courts on their individual merits and it is expected that police will aim to liaise with local authorities before taking a decision on enforcement action with regard to temporary accommodation and safeguarding the vulnerable. The police, when making decisions around how to exercise their powers are obliged to pay due consideration to their public sector equality duties (under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) and to exercise their powers in a way that is compliant with an individuals' rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The UK Government has published statutory guidance¹⁵ explaining the new and amended powers as well as the expectations as to their fair use, including welfare and equalities considerations.

The Home Office is monitoring the impact of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 on groups with particular protected characteristics, as stated in the Equality Impact Assessment¹⁶ published alongside the Bill. No single measure in the Act is expected to be the overarching solution to the problems with the current system; the UK Government therefore needs to consider the cumulative impact, including through an assessment of multiple measures. The UK Government is monitoring and evaluating the

¹⁴ UK Government (2017), *Research and analysis: Race Disparity Audit*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-disparity-audit>

¹⁵ UK Government (2022), *Statutory Guidance for Police on Unauthorised Encampments a summary of available powers*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086073/E02764577_Unauthorised_Encampments.pdf

¹⁶ UK Government (2021), *Nationality and Borders Bill: Equality Impact Assessment*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-equality-impact-assessment>

data and information which is available, this includes through the government's published migration statistics, which forms the basis of the analysis.

As stated in the Equality Impact Assessment published, the UK Government is already taking steps to minimise identified impacts (i.e., training) and will continue to do so where further impacts are identified. The UK Government is also committed to engaging with all external stakeholders to explore any trends or issues.

The power to deprive a person of British citizenship does not target ethnic minorities or people of particular faiths. It is used where a naturalised person has acquired citizenship fraudulently, or where it is conducive to the public good. Deprivation on the ground it is conducive to the public good is used sparingly and against those who pose a serious threat to the UK or whose conduct involves high harm. The changes in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 concern the process of notifying a person that they are to be deprived of their British citizenship, where notice cannot be given because for example, they are in a war zone or to do so would give away intelligence sources.

It is solely a person's behaviour which determines if they should be deprived of British citizenship, not their ethnicity or faith. Decisions are made following careful consideration of individual cases and always come with the right to appeal.

Northern Ireland

Consensus, including between the Northern Ireland parties, is needed before any agreement can be reached on what a Bill of Rights should include for Northern Ireland. This approach was always envisaged in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

The New Decade, New Approach Agreement on the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland contained a commitment to establish an Ad-Hoc Assembly Committee to consider the creation of a Bill of Rights that is faithful to the stated intention of the 1998 Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. The Committee has made its final report and this was brought to the Assembly on 14 February 2022.

It is the joint responsibility of all the parties to implement those commitments made within the New Decade New Approach Agreement to ensure the political institutions deliver for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme is entirely compatible with the UK Government's commitments under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and to the reciprocal rights and privileges provided to British and Irish citizens under the Common Travel Area (CTA).

As now, the UK Government will not operate routine immigration controls on the CTA. There will be none whatsoever on the Northern Ireland-Ireland land border. In announcing the roll out of the ETA scheme in March 2023, the UK Government also confirmed that those legally resident in Ireland will not need an ETA when travelling to the UK from within the CTA.

The UK Government is committed to the CTA's effective operation. The UK Government and the Government of Ireland will continue to work closely together to ensure that crucial, reciprocal rights to live, work, study, access healthcare and more, are protected.

Scotland

The Scottish Government is reviewing the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in Scotland. It ran a public consultation from December 2021 to April 2022, containing a series of detailed and ambitious proposals for changes to the PSED regime. The independent analysis of the responses

to the consultation was published 30 November 2022. During 2023, it will engage further with stakeholders to ensure that revised regulations – and the implementation environment around them – can help to deliver its goal of better outcomes for those who continue to experience inequality. It intends for regulatory changes to come into effect in 2025, in line with the current reporting period for most listed authorities. The equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy will also be a vehicle to take forward some of the non-legislative changes being consulted upon.

5. Anti-discrimination measures

The UK government's ground-breaking Inclusive Britain strategy, which is focused on closing outcome gaps between people from different ethnic backgrounds, is based on a robust analysis of the available data. Often the causes for disparities are complex and multi-faceted and not actually rooted in discrimination or prejudice. The UK is an open and diverse nation that welcomes and includes people of all backgrounds into society, with some of those in the highest offices of state, such as the UK Prime Minister, Scottish First Minister, and Mayor of London, being from ethnic minority backgrounds.

A good example of this is the UK Government's work to understand why COVID-19 had such a disproportionate health impact on ethnic minorities¹⁷. While stakeholder engagement initially suggested that racism was the cause of the disparities in outcomes, a more in-depth analysis showed that these disparities were driven by a range of socio-economic factors such as occupation (particularly for those in frontline roles), living with children in multigenerational households, and living in densely-populated urban areas with poor air quality and higher levels of deprivation. This analysis allowed the UK Government to tailor its response and to introduce measures to mitigate these risks.

The UK Government produced an update report in April 2023¹⁸ which sets out the progress made in delivering the Inclusive Britain action plan since it was published in March 2022. The actions have been embedded in White Papers, policy initiatives, and delivery plans across government.

We have, to date, completed 32 of the actions and continue to make progress in delivering the remainder. Particular highlights include:

- Publishing new guidance for employers on how to measure, report on and address any ethnicity pay gaps within their workforce
- Funding a national recruitment campaign to find more adoptive parents, including those from an ethnic minority background, to improve adoption rates for ethnic minority children
- Supporting a number of police forces to trial the effect of an automatic 'opt-in' for children to receive independent legal advice in police custody, which we hope will lead to better outcomes for young people
- Publishing our ambitious schools white paper and providing targeted support for those pupils who need it, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Publishing updated guidance on positive action so employers who use this measure to widen opportunities can do so in a way that is consistent with equalities legislation.

¹⁷ UK Government (2021), *Final report on progress to address COVID-19 health inequalities*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities/final-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities>

¹⁸ UK Government (2023), *Inclusive Britain Update Report*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-britain-update-report/inclusive-britain-update-report>

Scotland

The Scottish Government works closely with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to support and facilitate a local Leaders Network to build capacity and raise awareness of Gypsy/Traveller culture among locally elected representatives. The Scottish Government funds a range of activities supporting third sector groups to tackle discrimination and racism for the Gypsy/Traveller Community. The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring the voices of Gypsy/Traveller communities are reflected in policymaking spaces as well as in key decision-making forums to ensure the work reflects the needs and culture of Gypsy/Traveller communities.

On 14 September 2021, the Scottish Government published the Immediate Priorities Plan (IPP) focused on delivering an equal recovery from COVID-19 for minority ethnic people in Scotland. The immediate priorities are rooted in the delivery of the recommendations of an Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity (ERG). Specifically, these actions cover the ongoing work to implement the data and systemic recommendations of the Expert Reference Group (ERG) for COVID-19 and Ethnicity, as agreed to by the Scottish Government in November 2020. They also include continuing work on race equality across government.

A short-term Anti-Racism Interim Governance Group to Develop National Anti-Racism Infrastructure (AIGG) was established in April 2022 concluding in May 2023 with the establishment of an Observatory to provide a range of functions, including oversight and governance. The AIGG is an independently chaired group of public appointees whose role is to scrutinise the Scottish Government's delivery of equal outcomes for minority ethnic people in Scotland and to provide recommendations on how the Scottish Government can embed programmes to tackle racial inequality into the infrastructure of government. The Scottish Government states that the establishment of the Observatory will represent a significant step in its ambition to bring about meaningful system change for minority ethnic communities that will result in equity.

6. Support for national minority cultures, languages and identities

The UK Government recognises that indigenous and minority languages form an important part of the heritage and cultural wealth of the United Kingdom, and are a means of cultural expression for communities across the UK.

There is a range of languages spoken across the UK and beyond. As such, the UK Government takes a tailored approach to minority languages, considering their protection and promotion within their specific circumstances. Policy responsibility for minority languages is split across departments, with each considering the needs of the communities under their respective policy areas, and relevant legal duties and obligations.

The UK Government takes a pragmatic, proportionate and tailored approach to protect and promote these languages in the communities where they are used. A flexible approach avoids implementing a rigid and centralised framework on a system which, by nature, evolves over time with the evolution and movement of people, communities and identity.

Most of these minority languages are spoken by communities within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Whilst minority language policy is a devolved matter, the UK Government works closely with the Devolved Governments to ensure minority languages are appropriately protected, and public services are inclusive in their communication.

The UK Government also works with Cornwall to support the Cornish priorities. The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities has provided significant capital and revenue funding to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Councils.

This includes the following:

- The Community Renewal Fund is supporting Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly with £1.4 million of funding for projects including Tresorys Kernow/Cornish Treasure to explore how town centre footfall can be increased through heritage outreach and bringing creative activities to young people and the high street.
- The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP has benefited from £93 million through the Local Growth and Getting Building Funds, delivering projects including the Hall for Cornwall which helped create a purpose-built and accessible theatre in Truro.
- The Levelling Up Fund is supporting Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly through an allocation of £48 million to the Isle of Scilly to protect the sea links between the islands and mainland Cornwall and £50 million to the Cornwall Metro project to improve the railways linking Newquay, St Austell, Truro and Falmouth.
- A further £99 million has been allocated to Truro, St. Ives, Penzance and Camborne, as part of the Towns Fund to support town centre regeneration.
- Additionally, the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund allocation of £132 million is supporting Cornwall to invest in the programme's pillars of people and skills, supporting local business and community and place, enabling Cornwall to deliver on its priorities.

Scotland

The Scottish Government provides around £500,000 in support of Scots. The Advisory Committee's Fifth Opinion only references two bodies and though the Scots Language Centre and Dictionaries get a combined total of £310,000 there are several important organisations that provide essential support for Scots in education, including Scots Hoose and Yaldie Books. In addition, Scots Radio provides an essential service through podcasts to Scots listeners.

In 2022/23, Bòrd na Gàidhlig received an additional £500,000 of funding to allow them to expand a network of Gaelic Development officers across Scotland. These officers provide a variety of services in support of local Gaelic communities. The funding was also used to strengthen staffing within the Bòrd which has helped in a number of areas including Gaelic Language Planning.

7. Support for the culture and identities of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

The UK Government's Levelling Up White Paper sets out 12 ambitious missions to 2030 (living standards, R&D, transport, digital connectivity, education, skills, health, wellbeing, pride in place, housing, crime, local leadership) for reversing this country's striking geographical inequalities and radically improving the United Kingdom¹⁹. Addressing these disparities will be a long-term project

¹⁹ UK Government (2022), *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

across central and local government, the private sector and civil society. The UK Government will report on progress against these missions annually, and will underpin this requirement in legislation.

To support our ambitions, we launched a £10 million capital fund for 2022/23 to support local authorities in building new and refurbish transit and permanent traveller sites, and provide temporary stopping places and facilities for travellers²⁰. This fund will help improve travellers' life chances, by giving them easier access to local services including healthcare, education, and employment. Providing more and better places to stay will also reduce tensions between travellers and the settled community, and the high costs of tackling unauthorised encampments.

We have also provided £1.4 million in targeted educational support in some local authority areas for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people²¹. We partnered with Bradford, Central Bedfordshire, Essex, Hillingdon, Surrey local authorities and Open Doors Education and Training organisation to deliver the programme which is providing a wide range of targeted support for pre-school children, pupils in primary school and those transitioning to secondary school thereby reducing drop-out rates, supporting young people not in education, employment or training as well as helping adults needing literacy support and improving teachers cultural understanding and knowledge of GRT communities.

Scotland

The Scottish Government celebrates and recognises various national and international events which raise awareness of the cultural identities of the GRT community, such as GRT History Month and Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. The Scottish Government supports organisations who recognise the cultural diversity of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

The Scottish Government has issued a tendering opportunity for research into the historic settlement scheme. This research will help us understand who was responsible and the impact of decisions as well as allow an opportunity for the community to share their experiences. The Scottish Government understands the harmful impacts this policy has had on Gypsy/Traveller communities and is determined to better understand what this entailed.

The Scottish Government provides core funding to a range of organisations who support GRT communities to realise their full potential. Funding has enabled improved outcomes across participation in policymaking, health, education and accommodation. The Scottish Government is open to working with all organisations including Romano Luv and is happy to engage with them to offer support and advice on funding options.

8. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation – England

The UK Government is currently considering the recent Court of Appeal judgment which focused on the definition of a gypsy and traveller.

²⁰ UK Government (2022), *Traveller Site Fund 2022/23*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traveller-site-fund-202223>

²¹ UK Government (2021), *£1 million education programme for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children announced*.

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1-million-education-programme-for-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-children-announced>

As outlined in section 7, the 2022/23 Traveller Site Fund²² provided funding to nine local authorities to increase the number of pitches provided and to improve the standards of others.

Further information on the UK Government's support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can be found in section 7.

9. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation – Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Scotland

In December 2022, the Scottish Government published a consultation²³ seeking views on a proposed definition of 'Gypsies and Travellers' for specific planning purposes. The consultation closed in February 2023 and the responses informed the drafting of the final definition that was laid within Development Planning regulations²⁴ in Scottish Parliament on the 24 March 2023. The definition also includes Gypsy/Travellers who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently.

The Scottish Government does not gather data on Gypsy/Travellers centrally. Local authorities are required under the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS), setting out the strategic vision for the delivery of housing and housing related services, including meeting the needs of Gypsy/Travellers. The LHS is supported by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), providing an evidence-base that includes the need for specialist provision and related services for people who share a protected characteristic. In 2023 the Scottish Government plans to commission research on an accommodation needs toolkit with a practical focus, aimed at improving the way that Housing Need and Demand Assessments, Local Housing Strategies (LHS) and Development Plans reflect the needs of Gypsy/Travellers and help Local Authorities meet their duties under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 in relation to Local Development Planning and Evidence Reports.

The Scottish Government is continuing progress with the Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund with projects now confirmed in six local authorities in line with the Interim Site Design Guide²⁵ for Gypsy/Traveller sites, developed in conjunction with local authorities and with input from members of Gypsy/Traveller communities. It has commissioned an evaluation of the Fund and Design Guide which will aim to gather the key points of learning from the demonstration projects to inform future projects and a final Site Design Guide.

10. Intercultural dialogue and mutual respect

The UK is an open, tolerant and welcoming country. UK Government's vision for 2030 is to level up the country, closing outcome gaps between ethnic groups in education, employment, and criminal

²² Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022), *Traveller Site Fund 2022/23*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traveller-site-fund-202223>

²³ Scottish Government (2022), *Local development plans – defining Gypsies and Travellers: consultation*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-development-plans-defining-gypsies-travellers-consultation/pages/4/#:~:text=%22For%20the%20purposes%20of%20section%2016B%20%2814%29%20of,cultural%20tradition%2C%20whatever%20their%20race%20or%20origin%2C%20including->

²⁴ *The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulation 2023*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2023/101/made>.

²⁵ Scottish Government (2021), *Interim Gypsy/Traveller site design guide*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/interim-gypsy-traveller-site-design-guide/>

justice. The measures in the Inclusive Britain action plan will help to achieve this vision and to tackle the drivers of ethnic and racial disparities.²⁶

The action plan was developed following months of cross-government work, careful examination of the facts and evidence, and conversations with experts across the country. The actions include:

- Working with a new panel of academics and businesspeople to promote fairness in the workplace
- Developing a new, national framework for how the use of police powers, such as stop and search, are scrutinised at a local level in order to enhance trust and strengthen relations between police forces and local communities
- Issuing guidance to employers on how to measure and report on differences in ethnicity pay
- Conducting new research to understand why some ethnic minority pupils perform better than others at school
- Publishing new White Papers on governing and regulating AI and tackling and driving up literacy and numeracy standards for the most disadvantaged pupils
- Introducing the ground-breaking Online Safety Bill to clamp down on racist abuse online.

Ofcom is the UK's regulator for broadcasting and by law carries out its duties independently of the UK Government. The UK Government is committed to a free and independent media and cannot interfere with Ofcom's regulatory or operational decisions, including how content is regulated.

Ofcom is required by legislation, and accountable to Parliament, to draw up and enforce a Broadcasting Code for television to ensure that audiences are adequately protected from harm. Within the Code, there are rules in place on hatred and abuse, and specifically restrictions around the inclusion of material that contains abusive or derogatory treatment of individuals, groups, religions or communities.

Broadcasters and the wider media play a vital role in UK society and therefore have an important responsibility to reflect 21st Century Britain.

The UK Government is committed to supporting the broadcasting and TV sector - both on- and off-screen - to ensure it is representative of the country in which we live and a place where people from all backgrounds can achieve.

The UK Government's Online Safety Bill will help to ensure social media companies are held to account for the safety of their users. Under the Bill, all user-to-user and search services will need to proactively tackle priority illegal content, including racially or religiously aggravated public order and harassment offences.

Major (Category 1) user-to-user services must also ensure their terms of service are clear, easy to understand and consistently enforced. Where these platforms say they will remove or restrict legal content - such as abusive content - or suspend users, they must have systems and processes in place to ensure they follow through on their promises.

Ofcom will have a suite of enforcement powers to deal with non-compliance. This includes the ability to fine social media companies up to £18 million or ten percent of annual global turnover, whichever

²⁶ UK Government, Race Disparity Unit (2022). *Inclusive Britain action plan: updates*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inclusive-britain-action-plan-updates>

is higher. In the most extreme cases, Ofcom will have the power to limit or prevent the ability of the company to operate in the UK.

Scotland

A free, independent and strong media is the bedrock of a well-functioning democracy. The Scottish Government supports Article 10 of the Human Rights Act which protects freedom of expression. The Scottish Government believe this right is of particular importance to journalists and news publishers, who must have the freedom to criticise the government and public institutions and hold them to account. Broadcasting is a reserved matter.

11. Community relations – Northern Ireland

The UK Government is determined to deliver better outcomes for those most affected by the Troubles, while helping society to look forward. The current mechanisms for addressing legacy issues are providing outcomes to a very small number of those affected, whilst failing to provide either justice or information for the vast majority of families, victims, and survivors.

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy & Reconciliation) Bill will establish an Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) to conduct reviews into Troubles-related deaths and serious injury, with the primary objective of providing information to families, and victims and survivors. The Commission will have all the necessary powers to conduct criminal investigations as part of any review, ensuring compliance with the UK Government's international obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. The legislation also ensures that the prospect of criminal justice outcomes remains. Individuals who do not cooperate with the Commission's inquiries can be prosecuted in the normal way if sufficient evidence exists.

The UK Government also recognises that the legislation is challenging. This reflects the inherent complexities and sensitivities of dealing with legacy issues, but in order to deliver better outcomes for those most affected by the Troubles, we must acknowledge the difficult but practical realities that exist. This includes measures taken as part of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement that have set a significant precedent by fundamentally altering the criminal justice model for Troubles-related offences, such as the early release of prisoners, restricting prison time to just two years for Troubles-related offences, an amnesty for the process of secretly decommissioning paramilitary weapons, and the immunity provided to individuals who share information with the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains.

As a result of the engagement that continues to take place with interested parties, the UK Government tabled several amendments to the Bill at Committee and Report Stages in the House of Lords which seek to address several key concerns that have been raised, including by victims and survivors. This demonstrates the UK Government's ongoing commitment to working with all interested parties regarding their concerns and how these might be addressed as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

The UK Government notes the Advisory Committee's recommendation at paragraph 130 on the need to foster integration in society. The UK Government firmly believes in the importance of integrated education for reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and is pleased that the advisory committee has recognised the UK Government's action to support and promote integration in education elsewhere in the report.

12. Hate crime and hate speech

The UK Government asked police forces in England and Wales to use consistent standards for disaggregating racially or religiously aggravated offences by race from 1 April 2021. This data was published for the first time in 2022, as part of the annual statistics on hate crimes recorded by police. This is part of the Government's efforts to improve our understanding of hate crimes and builds on the successful disaggregation of religious hate crimes by religion.

The UK Government has worked with the police to fund True Vision, an online hate crime reporting portal, designed so that victims of hate crime do not have to visit a police station to report. As part of this, the UK Government also funds the National Online Hate Crime Hub²⁷, which is a central capability designed to support individual local police forces in dealing with online hate crime. The Hub provides expert advice to police forces to support them in investigating these offences.

The College of Policing provides operational guidance for police officers and staff at all levels of the police service to deliver a consistent, proportionate and robust policing response to hate crime and non-crime hate incidents. This operational guidance was last updated in 2022 and an updated version will be published shortly.

The police and three civil society organizations involved in monitoring hate incidents (Community Security Trust, Tell MAMA and Galop)²⁸ have entered Information Sharing Agreements, thereby enabling the exchange of data about incidents recorded by each organisation and providing a more holistic picture of hate crime.

The UK Government welcomes the recent report of the UK Government's Independent Antisemitism Adviser, Lord Mann, and will continue efforts to reduce antisemitism. It is also funding On Your Side, a third-party reporting and support service for all East and Southeast Asian communities in the UK, to find support and make a report if they experience or witness racism or any other form of hate.

Scotland

The Scottish Government's Hate Crime Strategy, published March 2023, sets out the key priorities for tackling hatred and prejudice in Scotland, including implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021. The Strategy makes several commitments including ensuring improved support for victims of hate crime, improving data and evidence on hate crime and developing effective approaches to preventing hate crime. A delivery plan, setting out the immediate and longer-term activity in support of the Strategy's commitments, will be published later this year.

The Scottish Government is driving forward a programme of work to improve availability of data on hate crime. On 24 January 2023, the Scottish Government published an Updated Study into the Characteristics of Police Recorded Hate Crime in Scotland, which provides a very detailed insight into the characteristics of recorded hate crime in Scotland.²⁹ This report presents updated information on the number of hate crimes recorded by the police in Scotland during 2020-21 and 2021-22. It also includes new details on the characteristics of hate crime, based on a random sample of cases recorded by the police in 2020-21. The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act makes provision requiring

²⁷ UK Government (2017), *Press Release: Home Secretary Announces New National Online Hate Crime Hub*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-new-national-online-hate-crime-hub>

²⁸ <https://cst.org.uk/>, <https://tellmamauk.org/> and <https://galop.org.uk/>

²⁹ Scottish Government (2023), *Police Recorded Hate Crime - Characteristics: Updated Study*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/updated-study-characteristics-police-recorded-hate-crime-scotland/>

information about police recorded hate crime and convictions data to be published annually, and with greater detail where known.

The Scottish Government is working closely with justice partners to ensure effective implementation of the Hate Crime Act, with a commencement period of early 2024.

13. Relations with law enforcement and criminal justice

The UK Government, with policing partners, remains committed to driving forward good progress and improving trust in policing. The UK police workforce is more diverse than ever before, and there have been major improvements in the way the police deal with racist crimes. However, we know there is much more to do: that is why attracting more officers from a wide range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds is a core ambition of the UK Government's drive to recruit an extra 20,000 officers.

The UK Government is committed to supporting the police to use their powers without fear or favour to keep streets safe. The use of any power is at the discretion of the officer, but the government is clear that when officers use their powers to achieve a lawful objective, such as making an arrest, acting in self-defence or protecting others, that their use of those powers must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the circumstances.

No one should be subject to powers such as stop and search, use of force or different treatment for protest related powers or strip searching, based on their race or ethnicity. Extensive safeguards such as statutory codes of practice and body worn video exist to ensure that this does not happen.

It is essential that we use data to provide greater clarity and context on stop and search to reassure the public about its use. That is why the UK Government committed to improve the way this data is reported and to enable more accurate comparisons to be made between different police force areas.

Therefore, we included new analysis in our Police Powers statistical bulletin in October 2022 which allows users to compare stop and search rates between the 43 police forces. A higher rate should not automatically be regarded as a problem, but the reasons should be transparent and explicable to local communities.

The UK Government has stated its intention, within the Inclusive Britain report, to enhance these safeguards through the development of a national framework for scrutiny of police powers by local communities, and consideration of any unnecessary barriers to increased use of body worn video.

Scotland

The Scottish Government recognises that whilst stop and search is a valuable tool in combating crime and keeping people safe, balance between protecting the public and recognising the rights of individuals must be ensured.

The Stop and Search Code of Practice³⁰ in Scotland was developed following the work of an Independent Advisory Group, chaired by John Scott QC. It was approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into force on 11 May 2017, setting out rules for when and how police in Scotland can use stop and search. The Code has been designed to ensure searches are carried out with fairness,

³⁰ Scottish Government (2017), *Stop and Search of the Person in Scotland: Code of Practice for Constables*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-practice-exercise-constables-power-stop-search-person-scotland/>

integrity and respect and contains specific guidance on searches of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Code also specifies that personal factors alone can never support reasonable grounds for suspicion, with specific reference to a person's physical appearance in relation to relevant protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, section 149. The Independent Advisory Group on Stop and Search reported on 13 June 2019, that the reforms have resulted in a more reliable and accurate recording system, allowing for greater confidence in the data and more robust independent scrutiny.

The 2019 report looked at concerns about the use of stop and search with regards to individuals with protected characteristics. It concluded that whilst it was “difficult to draw robust conclusions about any ethnic disparity in the use of stop and search due to small numbers and constraints in the availability of reliable population data” nevertheless “the overall ethnic profile of searches largely matches the population profile for Scotland and rates of search had declined, while detection rates had increased, across all ethnic groups”.

In Scotland, of the people stopped and searched in the year ending 31 March 2022, 94.4% were white people, 1.2% were African, or Black, 1.8% were Asian, and 0.8% were people with mixed ethnicity³¹.

14. Minority languages and the media

The UK Government agrees with the Advisory Committee's comment that the availability of media content in the UK's regional and minority languages is important. The UK Government believes that regional and minority language broadcasting has a role to play in the UK's broadcasting ecology, providing not only an opportunity for speakers to access content in a language familiar to them, but a means of cultural expression for communities across the UK.

That is why the UK Government is ensuring the value of regional and minority language content is accurately reflected in legislation. As the Advisory Committee has noted, the UK Government intends, for the first time, to make the importance of programmes broadcast in the UK's indigenous regional and minority languages clear in legislation by including it in our new public service remit for television. It will be made clearer that public service broadcasters must contribute to this remit and will be accountable for the extent of their contributions. This commitment forms part of the changes described in the Broadcasting White Paper, *Up Next*.³² We have now also published the draft Media Bill, which will deliver on several the commitments set out in *Up Next*. The UK Government remains committed to introducing the Media Bill when Parliamentary time allows.

The UK Government is supportive of the Welsh Government's ambition to reach the target of one million people in Wales being able to speak Welsh by 2050, and the UK Government remains committed to supporting Welsh institutions such as S4C to achieve this ambition. S4C will benefit from the proposals set out in *Up Next* and the Media Bill. In addition to those proposals already mentioned, the Government intends to update S4C's public service remit to include digital and online services and remove the current geographical broadcasting restrictions, allowing S4C to broaden its reach and offer its content on a range of new platforms across the UK and beyond. S4C will also benefit from greater clarity on its ability to invest and generate commercial revenue.

³¹ Police Scotland (2022), *national stop and search database: quarterly report 2021/22*. Available at: <https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/stop-and-search/data-publication/>

³² UK Government (2022), *Up Next - The Government's Vision for the Broadcasting Sector*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/up-next-the-governments-vision-for-the-broadcasting-sector>

As the Committee notes, the BBC Charter sets out the BBC's objective to reflect the UK's diversity and support its regional or minority languages. This sets out the expectation that the BBC must reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all the United Kingdom's nations and regions, and it must support the regional and minority languages of the United Kingdom, through its output and services and through partnerships with other organisations. In addition to this, the UK Government has set out a further set of responsibilities in the Framework Agreement, which require the BBC to support the provision of output in the Welsh language in Wales, the Gaelic language in Scotland and the Irish language and Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland, on television, radio and online. The BBC's Charter and Framework Agreement will include provision for the support and promotion of regional and minority language media for the years to come.

The Government has also placed a commitment on other public service broadcasters in the existing legislative framework. The Communications Act 2003 sets out that public service broadcasters (other than the BBC) must make an adequate contribution to the public service remit, which includes producing (collectively) "a sufficient quantity of programmes that reflect the lives and concerns of different communities and cultural interests and traditions within the United Kingdom, and locally in different parts of the United Kingdom". Channel 3 licensees must in particular provide "a suitable range of programmes (including regional news programmes) which are of particular interest to persons living within the area for which the service is provided". This includes programming about the traditions and history of ethnic minority groups in the UK.

Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom also has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to employment in the broadcasting sector, and has powers to ask broadcasters to provide information about their equal opportunities policies and the make-up of their workforce which they report on annually. They published their latest report in November 2022 which found that the overall representation of ethnic minority groups has increased across the eight broadcasters who provide workforce diversity data to Ofcom. As well as diversity and inclusion initiatives set up by individual broadcasters, there is also 'Project Diamond' - an industry-wide body created by the Creative Diversity Network - which also collects, monitors and reports on diversity data (both on and off-screen) collected from across the main UK broadcasters (including the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, and Channel 5) on the programmes they have commissioned.

The UK Government notes the Advisory Committee's concerns about the exclusion of the Cornish and Scots languages from the BBC Charter and Framework Agreement. The UK Government is not considering any changes to the definition of regional and minority languages in the Charter and Framework Agreement at this time. However, as set out in the UK Government's proposed Cornwall Devolution Deal, published in December 2022, the UK Government committed to including Cornish in any list of regional and minority languages that appears in forthcoming legislation where appropriate, to enable greater awareness and use of the Cornish language. This commitment was reflected in the wording of the draft Media Bill.

Scotland

The Scottish Government has supported Gaelic broadcasting and media initiatives largely through its funding of MG ALBA. MG ALBA, in partnership with the BBC, delivers the channel, BBC ALBA.

The Scottish Government recognises that this channel and many of the projects and initiatives associated with it make an important contribution to the use and learning of the Gaelic language in Scotland. MG ALBA also adds value to many areas of Gaelic activity including skills, training, education, arts, adult learning and more.

15. Minority language policy – Northern Ireland

The UK Government is committed to fulfilling the provisions in New Decade, New Approach relating to identity and language. The UK Government has also undertaken to update the UK Parliament every six months on the implementation of the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022, and most recently did so on 6 June 2023.

The UK Government adopted the title of the Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British Tradition to recognise the existence of two separate distinct groups. The Act also does not require the guidance issued by the Commissioner to apply uniformly to both groups, rather the Commissioner has the ability to tailor guidance as they see fit.

The St Andrews Agreement requires the Northern Ireland Executive Committee to adopt strategies for the Irish language and the Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture.

16. Minority language policy

Scotland

The Scottish Government has carried out a consultation on the Future of Gaelic and Scots. The analysis of the responses is now underway and will shape policy on both languages for the future. The analysis of the consultation report was published on 7 June 2023.³³

The draft of the next reiteration of National Gaelic Language Plan has been submitted by the Bòrd for Ministers to consider.³⁴ It is expected that the Plan will reflect several current actions in support of Gaelic language communities.

17. Topographical indications

The requirements for signs used in England to be in English only are specified in the Traffic Signs and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD). The aim is to provide consistency for road safety and efficient traffic management. Traffic signs placed in Wales and Scotland allow for both Welsh and Gaelic respectively, and the responsibility for specifying such bilingual signs is a devolved matter.

Northern Ireland

³³ UK Government (2023), *Analysis of Consultation Responses for the Gaelic and Scots Commitments relative to the Scottish Languages Bill*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-analysis/2023/06/analysis-consultation-responses-gaelic-scots-commitments-relative-scottish-languages-bill/documents/analysis-consultation-responses-gaelic-scots-commitments-relative-scottish-languages-bill/analysis-consultation-responses-gaelic-scots-commitments-relative-scottish-languages-bill/govscot%3Adocument/analysis-consultation-responses-gaelic-scots-commitments-relative-scottish-languages-bill.pdf>

³⁴ The Bòrd na Gàidhlig is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development, including providing advice to Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues.

Local councils in Northern Ireland have the discretion to approve numbers, name streets and provide street signage including street names expressed in languages other than English. Each local council will decide their own methods of consultation with communities.

18. Intercultural education

All state-funded schools in England have a duty to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their pupils and to prepare them for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. Furthermore, schools are required to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

It is important that all pupils are taught a broad and balanced curriculum, that supports their wider development, including:

- Citizenship education which provides a framework for pupils to learn about the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding.
- Relationships education which is compulsory for all schools and has a clear focus on healthy relationships and teaches pupils the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them, make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.

The National Curriculum sets out the subjects and programmes of study which schools are obliged to cover for children of compulsory school age in maintained schools in England. Within a broad statutory framework – set out in subject-specific programmes of study – schools have considerable flexibility to organise the content and delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of the majority of their pupils. In addition to meeting their statutory duties, schools are also free to include other subjects or topics they deem relevant for their pupils, as part of the school's wider curriculum.

Regarding the Advisory Committee's comments in paragraph 172, the UK Government is fully committed to Holocaust education. The curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom to decide how to teach the subject and what resources to use to support an understanding of the Holocaust and the experiences of the all the victims of Nazi persecution, including the Roma and Sinti victims. The UK Government further supports school pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust by providing funding for the following: the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project³⁵, £2.126 million for the programme in 2022-2023; University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education³⁶, £500,000 in 2022-2023 match funded by the Pears foundation.

As part of Holocaust education, significant resources are available to help teachers explain the persecution by the Nazis of different groups of people, and above all, the attempts to eliminate all Jewish people. Both Lessons from Auschwitz and the knowledge and training provided by the Centre for Holocaust Education include information and resources to support an understanding of the Holocaust and the Nazi's persecution of Jewish people and other groups, importantly including the genocide of the Roma.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils in England should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain. Teachers can teach about black history across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the curriculum. This can

³⁵ Holocaust Educational Trust website. Available at: <https://www.het.org.uk/lessons-from-auschwitz-programme>

³⁶ Centre for Holocaust Education website. Available at: <https://holocausteducation.org.uk/>

be done by reflecting the contribution of black people across the ages in the UK and more widely. This can include historical examples of black Romans, Tudors, Stuarts, Georgians and Victorians. It can also include the role of the countries of the former British Empire in both world wars, and the part black people have played in shaping the UK in the 20th Century. There is scope to include black history and experience in other subject areas too, such as English, Citizenship and PSHE.

Similarly, it can include the voices of people belonging to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities with opportunities to teach about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history, and specifically within the history curriculum there is flexibility across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the Programmes of Study. Schools can access several resources to help them do this. For example, the Historical Association have produced curriculum resources for schools to enable children to learn about Gypsy Romany culture as part of British society. GRT communities themselves have also produced resources that schools can access.

The Department for Education also convenes a GRT stakeholder group, chaired by a member of the House of Lords, and which meets three times a year. The group is comprised of around 20-25 representatives of the GRT community and other groups who are not technically GRT but who have a similar lifestyle (like Showmen). The group has proved to be a very useful forum in enabling policy teams to consult directly with the GRT community. It is also an opportunity for the community to express its views to the Department.

Although we know there is a lot of good teaching in schools in this area, we also know we can do more to support the teaching of a high-quality, knowledge-rich and diverse history curriculum, which is why we are developing a Model History Curriculum, a non-statutory guidance document to support the National Curriculum. We will be consulting history curriculum experts, historians and school leaders about this and they will guide us in refining the Model History Curriculum.

The Department for Education published a blog on Black History Month last year, where it suggested some sites that schools could use for resources and highlighted how important it is to celebrate the contribution black communities and individuals have made over the centuries in shaping the dynamic and diverse country that exists today.³⁷ The decision on which celebratory months to mark rests with schools, but the UK Government knows many schools already celebrate Black History Month.

There is significant scope for the teaching of black history within the subject content at GCSE, and three exam boards – OCR, AQA and Pearson – provide options to study migration in Britain, and how the UK's history has been shaped by the black and minority ethnic communities in the past. It is for awarding organisations themselves to develop specifications for GCSE and A level history that meet those requirements and for Ofqual, the independent qualifications regulator, to ensure those requirements are correctly met. As such, the Department for Education does not make assessments of the modules or module content offered by awarding organisations.

The UK Government knows the teaching profession is becoming more diverse. UK Government development programmes, like the Early Career Framework and National Professional Qualifications, will ensure that all teachers, regardless of background, develop the skills, expertise and confidence they need to thrive in the classroom, stay in the profession and achieve promotion.

³⁷ UK Government, Department for Education (2022) *Black History Month: How black history is taught in our schools*. Available at: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/10/03/black-history-month-how-black-history-is-taught-in-our-schools-2/>

Apply for Teacher Training³⁸, the new application service for initial teacher training (ITT) in England, will also allow for greater data collection, providing better insights into candidate behaviour and the behaviour of providers of teacher training so that barriers can be identified and addressed. The UK Government will continue to work closely with ITT providers to explore, design and test new interventions to ensure teaching is an inclusive career that is open to candidates from all backgrounds.

It remains for individual accredited providers to design and deliver initial teacher training courses that are appropriate to the needs of trainees and for the subject, phase and age range that the trainees will be teaching. In addition to the content detailed in the ITT Core Content Framework, it remains a statutory requirement of providers to ensure that their curricula fulfil these statutory duties, including ensuring trainees are fully aware of their duties in respect of safeguarding and equalities legislation.

Scotland

There is a factual correction to the report that we wish to highlight:

- The former Race Equality and Anti-Racism in Education Programme (REAREP) should be updated to AREP (Anti-Racism in Education Programme).

In November 2018 Professor Rowena Arshad published her “Teaching in a Diverse Scotland” report. She recommended that by 2030 the number of minority ethnic teachers in Scotland’s schools should be at least 4%, in line with the Scottish population at the time of the 2011 census. The Scottish Government recognise the clear benefits for all learners of having a diverse education workforce and through the Diversity in the Teaching Profession and Education Workforce Subgroup of the Anti-Racism in Education Programme, is taking forward several actions aimed at supporting the education system to meet Professor Arshad’s target.

Education Scotland provide support to educators to embed inclusion and diversity across the curriculum, and guidance on Promoting and Developing Race Equality and Anti-Racism in Education underpins that with associated resources amplifying the importance of a curriculum that:

- meaningfully recognises and fairly represents the rich and diverse communities in Scotland and beyond.
- supports understanding and enquiry into Scotland’s role in historical world events, including trans-Atlantic enslavement and colonial histories, and their continuing impact today.
- includes learning about and investigating past and present events in a way that amplifies under-represented perspectives and stories.
- challenges discrimination and prejudice through an understanding and awareness of the behaviours, practices and processes that create injustice in the world.

Wales

The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan³⁹, published in June 2022, sets out several goals and actions which aim to embed non-discrimination on the grounds of race within Wales’ education system and create sustainable and long-term change for up to 2030 and beyond. The Plan includes sections which apply to schools, further education and higher education, and also includes specific actions in relation to Welsh medium education.

³⁸ UK Government. *Apply for Teacher Training*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training>

³⁹ Welsh Government (2022), *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan>

The Action Plan brings together work across education, including:

- robust professional learning for teachers and senior leaders (via the Diversity and Anti-Racism Professional Learning (DARPL) project);
- improving the levels of recruitment, retention and progression into leadership of teachers from ethnic minority communities; and
- ensuring that teaching reflects the histories and experiences of diverse communities in Wales.

The Action Plan was developed via open and dynamic dialogues within and between the Welsh Government, local government, academics, activists, the trade union movement, community group leaders, religious leaders and individuals from the breadth of the racial and ethnic minority groups in Wales.

Diversity is a cross-cutting theme within the new Curriculum for Wales, introduced in September 2022. It is mandatory to teach Black, Asian and ethnic minority histories, contributions and experiences, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, as part of the story of Wales, in the curriculum.

In October 2021, the Welsh Government published the Initial Teacher Education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Recruitment plan⁴⁰ to increase recruitment of people from ethnic minority backgrounds into Initial Teacher Education (ITE). In February 2023, the Welsh Government also introduced the Ethnic Minority ITE Incentive⁴¹ – a financial incentive to attract entrants from ethnic minority communities onto ITE courses, to increase the number of ethnic minority teachers so that learners in Wales have a more diverse teaching workforce.

DARPL (Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning)⁴² is one of the new professional learning areas supported by Welsh Government as part of the new National Professional Learning Entitlement⁴³. The training is crucial to delivering the Curriculum for Wales and achieving high standards and aspirations.

DARPL is a learning and resource hub for those working in education and childcare to develop an understanding and development of non-discrimination on the grounds of race. The Welsh Government's vision is to ensure that those working within education, childcare and play develop the tools and carry out non-discriminatory practice that supports the aim of being a Wales which is fully non-discriminatory on the grounds of race by 2030.

19. Integrated and shared education – Northern Ireland

Consistent with its commitments in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the UK Government has a role to play in supporting reconciliation, integration and a peaceful society in Northern Ireland. The UK Government firmly believes that greater integration within education is a key aspect of the

⁴⁰ Welsh Government (2021), *Initial Teacher Education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Recruitment plan*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/initial-teacher-education-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-recruitment-plan-html>

⁴¹ Welsh Government (2023), *Ethnic Minority Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Incentive: guidance for students*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/ethnic-minority-initial-teacher-education-ite-incentive-guidance-students>

⁴² DARPL website. Available at: <https://darpl.org/>

⁴³ Welsh Government. *National Professional Learning Entitlement*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/national-professional-learning-entitlement/>

reconciliation process in Northern Ireland. It continues to work to support a more reconciled, integrated and peaceful society in Northern Ireland.

The UK Government notes the advisory committee's comment that the mixing of pupils from different backgrounds remains low across Northern Ireland. The UK Government wants to see progress in this space and for every parent to be able to have a proper choice of schools, including an integrated school for their children if they so wish.

The UK Government is pleased that the advisory committee have recognised its support for integrated and shared education, through the government's £500 million programme of capital building projects, and the July 2022 announcement of £1.9 million to support integrated education.⁴⁴ These programmes support the report's recommendations of increasing school places in integrated schools and incentivising parents, pupils and schools to give consideration to the benefits of integrated status.

20. Effective access to education

There is a factual correction to the report that we wish to highlight:

- Please note the corrected figures for Footnote 193 on page 35: Data based on England. For a suspension: In 2020/21 academic year, 15% for Gypsy/ Roma pupils, and 11.22% for Irish Traveller.

Education plays a vital role in promoting integration and preparing children and young people for life in a modern and diverse Britain. With education settings often at the heart of communities, the UK Government's aim is to ensure they are inclusive environments, where children, pupils and students, are able to gain the skills and knowledge they need, and build positive relations, including through the breaking down of barriers to access.

Promotion of fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs, forms part of the Ofsted inspections framework. All education settings must also comply with relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Behaviour in schools is a priority for the UK Government. There are no 'right' number of permanent exclusions. Head teachers use suspensions and permanent exclusions when required as part of creating calm, safe and supportive environments that bring out the best in every pupil. Schools should only use permanent exclusion as a last resort, and the Department for Education supports teachers in taking proportionate and measured steps to ensure good behaviour in schools.

The Department for Education is aware that some groups of children have a greater likelihood of suspension and permanent exclusion than others. The updated Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance⁴⁵ has set out that schools, local authorities, and local partners should work together to understand what lies behind local trends. Local leaders should use this understanding to plan and put in place additional and targeted action based on their own context. If they identify any gaps, they should act to ensure those who work with children have the support they need to address them.

⁴⁴ UK Government (2022), *Press release: Secretary of State for Northern Ireland boosts integrated education in NI with £1.9m funding package*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/secretary-of-state-for-northern-ireland-boosts-integrated-education-in-ni-with-19m-funding-package>

⁴⁵ UK Government (2012), *Statutory Guidance: School Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

This is in line with the commitment made in the Inclusive Britain strategy to “consult on and publish new and improved guidance on behaviour in schools and on suspensions and permanent exclusions in 2022”⁴⁶. Both sets of guidance will help local leaders identify and address any disparities that might exist within suspension and permanent exclusion rates.

Children and young people who are suspended or permanently excluded from school are often the most vulnerable and are at higher risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of serious violence incidents. To ensure that local authorities receive real-time data on all suspensions regardless of length, the UK Government through the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 requiring all schools to share suspension data with local authorities ‘without delay’⁴⁷. This also fulfilled recommendations from the Crime and Justice Task Force and feeds into the SAFE (Support, Attend, Fulfil and Exceed) taskforces to assist local authorities and safeguarding agencies to successfully support the most vulnerable children.

As set out in the Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance which outlines advice and responsibilities⁴⁸, all schools should have an attendance policy which accounts for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. The policy should be applied fairly and consistently but in doing so schools should always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of their policy, schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

All schools are legally required to have a behaviour policy with measures to prevent all forms of bullying and have the freedom to develop their own anti-bullying strategies appropriate to their environment and are held to account by Ofsted.

The Department for Education provides advice for schools, which outlines schools’ responsibilities⁴⁹. The advice makes clear that schools should make appropriate provision for a bullied child’s social, emotional and mental health needs. Over £3 million of funding is being provided between 2021 and 2024 by the UK Government to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. The UK Government has deliberately focused this grant programme on preventing and tackling bullying of pupils with protected characteristics. The training and resources provided cover hate-based bullying, including resources specifically relating to the bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.

The Department for Education has also published, Respectful School Communities⁵⁰, a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline. This can combat bullying, harassment and prejudice of any kind, including hate-based bullying.

⁴⁶ UK Government (2022), *Inclusive Britain: Government Response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-britain-action-plan-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/inclusive-britain-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>

⁴⁷ UK Government (2022), *UK Statutory Instruments. The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/788/contents/made>

⁴⁸ UK Government (2022), *Guidance: Working together to improve school attendance*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

⁴⁹ UK Government (2013), *Guidance: Preventing bullying*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

⁵⁰ Educate Against Hate. *School Leaders’ Resources, Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool*. Available at: <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/>

There is no legal requirement on schools to record and report incidents of bullying and there never has been. Requiring schools to record bullying incidents would not actually help them to tackle bullying any more effectively but would rather place another data collection requirement on schools. Schools should develop their own approaches for monitoring bullying and exercise their own judgement as to what will work best for their pupils. For some schools, that will mean recording incidents so that they can monitor incident numbers and identify where bullying is recurring between the same pupils. Other schools may prefer to take a different approach, such as surveying their pupils anonymously to identify bullying trends and gauge how safe pupils feel at school.

As part of the Inclusive Britain action plan, the Department for Education has published two evidence notes on ethnicity disparities in school attainment⁵¹ and post-16 education outcomes⁵². This is an important area of analysis for the Department for Education, and it will continue to build an evidence base to better understand these disparities.

The Department for Education does not target specific educational interventions based on ethnicity. Many of the Government's education reforms are designed to ensure that all pupils in England can attain well at school. The Schools White Paper⁵³ was clear about how we will improve attainment in England: ensuring an excellent teacher for every child; high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance; targeted support for every child who needs it; and a stronger and fairer schools system.

One of the most significant factors affecting pupil attainment, cutting across all ethnicities, is economic disadvantage. Through the pupil premium, the UK Government continues to provide additional funding to help schools in England improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

The UK Government recognises that certain groups of pupils, such as Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are more likely to require a school place in-year. In England, all parents can apply for a school place at any school, at any time outside the normal admissions round. However, it can be more difficult to secure a school place when applying for a place in-year as schools may already be full at this point. Therefore, local authorities are required to have a Fair Access Protocol (FAP), which the mainstream state-funded schools in their areas must participate in, to ensure that for in-year admissions, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. GRT children are all eligible for consideration under the FAP, if they have struggled to secure a school place through the usual in-year admissions process. All admission authorities must comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010 when undertaking admissions functions.

Comments regarding teacher training can be found under the 'Intercultural education' section.

Scotland

The work of the Racism and Racist Incidents subgroup of the Anti-Racism in Education Programme (AREP) is focussed on supporting schools and school staff to improve the understanding of racism and to ensure that these issues are properly identified and addressed. The primary role of the working group is to develop, in collaboration with the other AREP working groups where relevant, resources

⁵¹ UK Government (2022) Research and analysis: Outcomes by ethnicity in schools in England.

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outcomes-by-ethnicity-in-schools-in-england>

⁵² UK Government (2022), *Research and analysis: Post-16 education outcomes by ethnicity in England*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-education-outcomes-by-ethnicity-in-england>

⁵³ UK Government (2022), *Policy paper: Opportunity for All: Strong Schools with Great Teachers for Your Child*.

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>

for schools to prevent and respond to racism and racist incidents, including strengthening approaches to recording and monitoring.

The Scottish Government has commissioned research into the educational experiences of Gypsy/Traveller children and their families. This is expected to be completed in Spring 2023 and will help inform improvement in the way this community is supported into and through their education.

The Scottish Government funds the Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)⁵⁴, which provides a programme of staff training, seminars and network events. Recently these have included 'CLD, youth awards and adult literacy', 'Culturally-relevant, play-based learning and teaching' and 'Evaluating anti-racism in education' with contributions from the Gypsy/Traveller community. STEP also published a guide to effective practice for staff supported by a national and three regional training events.

STEP, with input from young people from the Gypsy/Traveller community, developed a transitions toolkit to support access to education and post-school destinations. Guidance was produced encouraging parents and schools to work together to support visits to secondary schools so children and young people can make informed choices. Staff training was also offered to help build relationships with pupils to reduce anxiety. A Digital Rapid Assessment Guide (D-Rag)⁵⁵ was produced ensuring teachers can access pupil attainment levels quickly, avoiding gaps in learning following travelling. The materials in the Guide are culturally relevant to Gypsy/Traveller families.

Wales

The Welsh Government is committed to equality of opportunity and equity of provision, ensuring that all learners are properly supported to achieve their full potential.

The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan includes specific actions and goals to tackle racist bullying and harassment in education settings, including:

- updating the statutory anti-bullying guidance to better reflect the impact of racist bullying and harassment
- expecting every education institution to effectively record – and act on – incidents of racist abuse
- publishing updated guidance for schools to support children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

The Welsh Government's 2019 'Rights, respect, equality'⁵⁶ statutory anti-bullying guidance outlines its expectation that all maintained schools in Wales have a specific anti-bullying policy, and sets out how education settings should record and monitor incidents to take pro-active steps to challenge bullying. This guidance is currently in the process of being updated to include increased guidance for education practitioners to tackle racist bullying and harassment.

While education settings in Wales are required to record and respond to all racist incidents, the Welsh Government acknowledges that recording is currently inconsistent and there is a need for a more robust reporting and monitoring system to record incidents of bullying and harassment across Wales. This is reflected in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.

⁵⁴ Available at: <https://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/>

⁵⁵ STEP. *The D-RAG (Digital Rapid Assessment Guide)*. Available at: <https://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/teachers/digital-rapid-assessment-guide-d-rag-for-nomadic-learners/>

⁵⁶ Welsh Government (2019), *Rights, respect, equality: guidance for schools*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-schools>

The Welsh Government is also in the process of updating the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller guidance for schools. This has been created following engagement with learners from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and will include specific guidance on tackling gypsyism, as well as guidance for teachers to support and celebrate learners from these communities.

The Welsh Government continues to provide dedicated funding to support improved outcomes for children and young people from ethnic minority communities, via the MEGRT grant. For 2022-2023, the Welsh Government have funded a total of £11 million to local authorities, and a total of £11 million is again being provided in 2023-24. This funding recognises the important work that local authority services provide, including support for learners with English as an Additional Language.

21. Minority language education

The UK Government is committed to increasing the number of pupils studying languages to GCSE level, including languages that are commonly spoken in modern day Britain. It is for this reason that teaching of languages is in the national curriculum from age 7 to 14. The Department for Education does not, however, inscribe any specific languages into the national curriculum. Schools are free to decide which languages are taught as part of their curriculum, both at primary and secondary school, and the UK Government does not specify which languages should be taught or how to teach them. When deciding which languages to offer their pupils, schools are likely to consider the needs of the community in which they serve.

As part of the Department for Education's Language Hubs programme⁵⁷, the National Consortium for Languages Education (NCLE) will seek to improve access to, and the profile of, home, heritage, and community languages (HHCL). There are no specific languages included as part of this, but NCLE will promote and support greater access to accreditation through GCSE and other suitable qualifications for HHCL and pedagogic advice on how to support pupils.

In recognition of the continuing need to recruit languages trainees to teaching, the Department for Education has increased the languages (including ancient languages) bursary for the 2023/2024 academic year to £25,000.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Department of Education remains under a legal duty to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education.

Scotland

The Scottish Government has continued to sustain the funding of Gaelic Education for Local Authorities at the level in the report. Local Authorities across Scotland continue to access these funding streams with growing interest in Gaelic capital projects. Some Local Authorities, like East Renfrewshire, have accessed funding as they are at the early stages of delivering Gaelic Primary provision.

The Scottish Government welcomes the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding action on teachers. The Scottish Government is very much aware of the needs of the sector and working with partners, including the Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Universities, to increase routes into Gaelic Medium

⁵⁷ UK Government (2022), *Guidance: Access Support From School Hubs*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-support-from-school-hubs>

Education and to ensure these individuals have the right level of support to help them succeed in their chosen field.

22. Participation in public life

UK Government has negotiated a number of devolution deals since setting out our commitment to English devolution in the Levelling Up White Paper. These deals represent meaningful progress towards achieving that commitment to extend, deepen and simplify devolution across England and make progress on our local leadership mission: to ensure that, by 2030, every part of England that wants a devolution deal will have one with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution with a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

A Level 3 devolution deal was provisionally agreed between Cornwall Council and UK Government on 2 December 2022. However, on 4 April 2023, the Leader of Cornwall Council recommended that the Council no longer pursues the implementation of the Level 3 deal. UK Government will continue to work with Cornwall Council to consider how best we can deliver on our shared commitment to devolution in Cornwall.

UK Government engagement with Cornwall Council is longstanding and extensive, including representing Cornwall on the British-Irish Council Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages Work Sector.

Scotland

The Scottish Government is committed to inclusive engagement with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The Scottish Government work closely with representative stakeholders to ensure their needs and voices are reflected within policymaking structures. The Scottish Government host regular community conversations to allow a chance for community members to question decision makers about the progress of the Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan and to also discuss ongoing live concerns affecting their communities.

23. Participation in economic and social life

At the end of 2022 there were 4.7 million individuals from an ethnic minority background in employment. This was an increase of 384,000 on the year. The ethnic minority employment rate was 69.0%, an increase of 0.4% on the previous year, and 2.2% above the pre-COVID-19 rate.

The UK has been doing more to support people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The UK Government's strategy for increasing ethnic minority employment is based on providing access to mainstream services that are designed to be flexible to meet local needs and circumstances. The UK Government is also taking action in local authority areas with high ethnic minority population and high ethnic minority employment gap, identified from the Race Disparity Audit, updated annually since 2017. Together they represent over half of the national ethnic minority employment gap.

The UK Government has also launched the In-Work Progression offer for low paid Universal Credit claimants⁵⁸. The UK Government knows certain ethnic minority groups are overrepresented in lower-skilled and lower-paying occupations and underrepresented at more senior levels, meaning that they face additional challenges to moving out of low-paid work. The UK Government estimate that around 1.6 million low-paid benefit claimants will be eligible for help to progress into higher-paid work. To expand the impact of this support, from September 2023 onwards, it will start to be a requirement that some claimants engage with this offer.

The UK Government is committed to delivering the genuinely affordable, safe housing that people in England require. That is why through the Affordable Homes Programme, the UK Government are spending £11.5 billion to help deliver tens of thousands of homes for rent and sale right across the country.

The UK Government's Levelling Up White Paper committed to providing more social rent homes, and a significant volume of the homes delivered through the AHP will be made available for Social Rent. This directly helps those more economically vulnerable members of the community, or those who are at risk of homelessness.

Whilst increasing levels of Social Rent will have a net positive impact across all sections of society, increasing levels of Social Rent may specifically benefit those from minority ethnic backgrounds who benefit disproportionately from social housing, this is particularly true in London.

Since 2010, the UK Government has delivered over 659,500 new affordable homes, including over 458,700 affordable homes for rent, of which 166,300 are homes for Social Rent.

Scotland

The most recent ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) statistics for Scotland show:

- the employment rate for minority ethnic groups aged 16 to 64 was estimated at 67.6 per cent in January – December 2022, lower than the rate for white groups (74.9 per cent)
- the employment rate gap was 7.4 percentage point in 2022; the lowest employment rate gap since the series began.

On 9 December 2022, the Scottish Government published its new A Fairer Scotland for All: An Anti-Racist Employment Strategy⁵⁹, setting out the actions the Scottish Government will take and how it will support employers to help make Scotland's workplaces more diverse, fair and inclusive.

The Scottish and UK Governments formally signed Full Deal for the Islands Growth Deal on 20 January 2023. This represents a ten-year programme of economic investment to the Outer Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney. The Deal is led by regional partners, and the first Deal projects entered delivery in Spring 2023. Following agreement of Heads of Terms in 2021, regional partners are also developing proposals to shape investment in the Argyll and Bute Growth Deal, which will focus on strengthening communities by making Argyll & Bute a more attractive place to live and work.

Additionally, the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) was established in

⁵⁸ UK Government (2021), *Research and analysis: Supporting Progression Out of Low Pay: A Call to Action*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-progression-out-of-low-pay-a-call-to-action>

⁵⁹ Scottish Government (2022), *Anti-Racist Employment Strategy - A Fairer Scotland for All*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-anti-racist-employment-strategy/>

December 2021, to bring together regional interests, focus and align resources, and develop a long-term economic strategy for the region to identify and maximise economic opportunities and trends. It aims to enable inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic growth throughout the region, and includes a specific remit to understand sub-regional economic dynamics and, where appropriate, formulate solidarity actions to ensure that no part of the Highlands and Islands is left behind.

The Islands Programme is spending £25.8 million of Infrastructure Investment Plan capital funding over the period of this Parliament to support delivery of the National Islands Plan and the commitments that it delivers. The Scottish Government has committed £4 million capital Islands Programme in 2023/24, supporting a range of areas, including tourism, infrastructure, innovation, energy transition and skills. As part of the Scottish Government's Emergency Budget Review, it announced a new £1.4 million Island Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2022/23 and the Carbon Neutral Islands (CNI) project will support six islands in Scotland to become carbon neutral in a just way by 2040. To support the CNI project, six Community Climate Change Action plans have been launched for the relevant island communities (Yell, Hoy, Barra, Raasay, Islay and Great Cumbrae).

As one part of a robust governance structure the National Islands Plan Delivery Group was established in June 2021. This supports implementation of the National Islands Plan (NIP)⁶⁰ and ensures that work is driven forward in a collaborative way that truly involves island communities. The Group stems from Strategic Objective 13 of the National Islands Plan and from the Scottish Government's commitment to establish a group to closely monitor the delivery of the Plan and the accompanying Implementation Route Map⁶¹. The group meets regularly to examine progress and help to identify critical priorities in order to work towards meeting the commitments within the NIP. Delivering a fair, integrated, green and inclusive plan requires strong collaboration and partnership, and the NIP Delivery Group provides this collaborative working space. Membership of the group comprises Scottish Government, local authorities, Third Sector representation, community groups, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, COSLA, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, relevant academics and subject experts.

24. Access to housing – second homes

The UK Government notes the Advisory Committee's recommendation at paragraph 230 on the housing issues affecting persons belonging to the Cornish national minority. The UK Government recognises the impact that high numbers of second homes and short-term holiday lets can have.

The UK Government is providing powers to municipal authorities across England, including Cornwall, by introducing a discretionary power to allow councils to apply a council tax premium of up to an additional 100% on second homes. This is being delivered through legislation (Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, LURB).

The premium will provide local leaders with additional flexibility to help address the impacts of second homes and improve the sustainability of local services where they consider that appropriate. The Bill is currently passing through Parliament and, subject to receiving Royal Assent, the first second home premiums could come into effect from April 2025.

⁶⁰ Scottish Government (2019), *The National Plan for Scotland's Islands*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>

⁶¹ Scottish Government (2022), *National Islands Plan: Implementation Route Map 2022*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-implementation-route-map-2022/>

Alongside the issues raised by the Advisory Committee for second homes, short-term or furnished holidays lets available through online platforms have similar impact on national minorities in Cornwall.

The UK Government committed to better understand this issue by introducing a registration scheme for short-term lets through the LURB. A registration scheme could deliver much needed data on short-term lets, helping areas with highly affected housing markets. Further details on how the registration scheme will operate will be explored through a public consultation.

The UK Government is also consulting on the introduction of a new planning use class for short-term lets. Where an area is seeing impacts from the proliferation of short term lets, that area may choose to require a planning application for any further changes of use. If that is the case, homeowners would be required to seek planning permission where there is a material change of use to a short term let.

The UK Government wants to ensure communities in Cornwall thrive and have access to homes in their community. Through legislation in the LURB, the UK Government is strengthening the powers available to councils to encourage empty homes back into use. The LURB will empower councils to apply the existing 100% council tax premium on properties left empty after a year, rather than the current two years.

The premium will provide local leaders with additional flexibility to help address the impacts of empty homes and improve the sustainability of local services where they consider that appropriate.

Since 2010, the UK Government has delivered over 9,600 affordable homes in Cornwall.

The UK Government believes these measures along with the commitment to devolve further powers at the local level will help to address the housing crisis affecting persons belonging to the Cornish national minority.

The UK Government has supported the development of the Cornish housing stock through the Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund and Towns Fund, contributing to housing provision and enabling infrastructure to unlock development.

Scotland

In Scotland, the Housing to 2040 Strategy⁶², published in 2021, committed to make best use of existing housing stock, as well as giving local authorities the powers to manage the numbers of second homes where these are a problem. This work is progressing through a new Joint Working Group with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to consider sources of Local Government Funding and Council Tax, including the provision of powers to allow local authorities to increase the rate of Council Tax on second and empty homes to support best use of existing housing stock. The Housing to 2040 Strategy outlines a range of action to increase the supply of affordable homes so they are available for the people who need them.

Wales

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government commitments frame several interventions through changes to the planning, local taxation, statutory licensing of all visitor accommodation and on empty homes. These are aimed at providing ability for the Welsh Government and local authorities to better manage the balance of second homes and long-term empty properties and enhance affordability. Measures include an increase in the maximum permitted level of discretionary council

⁶² Scottish Government (2021), *Housing to 2040 Strategy*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040-2/>

tax premium both on second homes and long-term empty properties; changes to the letting thresholds for holiday lets to be listed for non-domestic rates (requiring them to be let for a minimum 182 days in a twelve-month period); changes to the Use Class Order, establishing classes of primary residence, secondary home and short-term holiday let and the introduction of to the planning framework.

25. Access to healthcare

It is vital that everyone has access to the health and care they need. The UK Government is proud of the proactive steps taken during the pandemic to improve outcomes for ethnic minority groups, including efforts to disseminate information about COVID-19 in minority languages.

The UK Government recognises there is still more to do, and the gap in the number of years people live in good health is stark and unacceptable. Health disparities exist across a wide variety of conditions from cancer to mental health and contribute to the unacceptable variation in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.

Not only is this important for individuals but a healthy population reduces pressure on the NHS and wider public services and supports a strong economy through increased productivity and labour market participation. The ambition to improve healthy life expectancy by five years by 2035 and reduce the gap between areas where it is highest and lowest by 2030, committed to in the Levelling Up White Paper, is UK Government policy.

The UK Government recently announced plans to publish a Major Conditions Strategy, and an interim report will be published in summer 2023. The strategy will set out a strong and coherent policy agenda that sets out a shift to integrated, whole-person care. Interventions set out in the strategy will aim to alleviate pressure on the health system, as well as support the UK Government's objective to increase healthy life expectancy and reduce ill-health related labour market inactivity.

The UK Government understands the importance of data and notes the Advisory Committee's recommendation to improve data gathering, particularly in relation to Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities. To improve both the quality of data collected within NHS services and our ability to link data across NHS services, the Department of Health, and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England are exploring how data concerning people's protected characteristics could best be standardised. In carrying out this work, it will be critical that DHSC and NHS England work closely with the Government Statistical Service (GSS) harmonisation team in the Office for National Statistics, who are developing updated harmonised standards for ethnicity data collection across government (as well as long-lasting health conditions data and mental health data). Milestones and timelines for GSS work are set out in the harmonisation workplan published in February 2022⁶³.

Devolution in the UK allows local places to take tailored approaches to tackle common challenges. This means it offers important opportunities to learn about what works in different contexts. That is why in our Levelling Up White Paper, the UK Government committed to working with the devolved governments and local leaders across the UK to bring together evidence, helping to empower leaders across the UK to make the best decisions for their citizens, providing greater insight and opportunities to improve our public services.

⁶³ Government Statistical Service (2022), *Harmonisation Team Workplan*. Available at: <https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/gss-harmonisation-team-workplan/>

Learning about what works in different contexts is underpinned by coherent data from across the UK. We are supporting the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to deliver on the aims of the Statistics Concordat. Refreshed in 2021 between the UK Government and devolved administrations, the concordat sets out how the administrations will work together to deliver an agreed suite of coherent, reliable, consistent and timely statistics about and across the UK. The ONS are working with the devolved administrations to bring together new UK-wide datasets in several priority areas, enabling new insights not previously possible.

Scotland

In response to the health inequalities and inequity highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government established the Racialised Health Inequalities & Health Equity team to support targeted improvements for specific groups, with an explicit early focus on minority ethnic communities. The team has established the 'Racialised Health Inequalities in Health & Social Care Steering Group' to oversee progress against recommendations made by the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 & Ethnicity; the health-related commitments included in the Scottish Government's Race Equality Immediate Priorities Plan⁶⁴ and Race Equality Framework⁶⁵, as well as steering wider health and social care policy around racialised health inequalities. The team is also working to support the development of an overarching policy around health ethnicity data collection and use to support and monitor action to address inequalities in health outcomes as well as access to and experience of health services.

In relation to the Gypsy/Traveller community, Scottish Government is taking a collaborative approach to address the health inequalities they face and to improve health outcomes of Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. Scottish Government are continuing work on progressing the actions set out in the Gypsy Traveller Action Plan⁶⁶, published in 2019, that includes a range of cross cutting commitments. There has been significant progress on the health commitments included in the Action Plan, with a focus on supporting targeted approaches that directly address issues and barriers that the community have raised as areas of concern. Scottish Government have a strong focus on removing the barriers this community faces when accessing health services, for example, by providing 'GP Access cards' which ensure that easily understandable information on how to register with a GP practice is available. Scottish Government have also worked closely with the community to ensure there is widespread awareness of their rights in relation to accessing treatment and health services, supported by the introduction of a specific agreement between Health Boards and the Gypsy/Traveller community⁶⁷.

The Scottish Government has also supported the introduction of specific projects that encourage increased engagement and dialogue with the community aimed at removing barriers that limit access to health and care services. This includes providing funding to recruit, train and support Gypsy/Traveller Community Health Workers. The Community Health Workers provide information and support on a wide range of health and social care issues, as well as gathering and sharing other valuable qualitative data on issues being experienced by those in the Gypsy/Traveller community. This

⁶⁴ Scottish Government (2021), *Race Equality: Immediate Priorities Plan*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/immediate-priorities-plan-race-equality-scotland/>

⁶⁵ Scottish Government (2016), *Race equality framework for Scotland 2016 to 2030*.

Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/>

⁶⁶ Scottish Government (2019), *Improving the lives of Gypsy/Travellers: 2019-2021*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-lives-scotlands-gypsy-travellers-2019-2021/>

⁶⁷ Public Health Scotland (2020), *Our Health, Our Right, Our NHS*. Available at: <https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Our-Health-Our-Right-Ours-NHS.pdf>

work is not only improving health outcomes but also facilitating improved relationships and providing improved intelligence on issues affecting the community.

The reporting of vaccine uptake by ethnicity and areas of deprivation by Public Health Scotland (PHS) demonstrates where uptake continues to be lowest, such as in the Polish, Gypsy/Traveller, African, and Black/Caribbean ethnic groups. Health Boards use this data, along with local knowledge, to target outreach work to reduce barriers to vaccinations in these and other under-served communities.

Wales

Welsh Government's recently published National Immunisation Framework (NIF)⁶⁸ has a strong focus on equity. The Wales COVID-19 equity report includes coverage of minority ethnic groups with a view to highlighting the causes of unequal uptake of vaccine amongst minority groups and developing policy to address this.

Within the NIF Implementation, plans are in train to develop a Mobile Vaccination Unit fleet for Wales and a Community Level Provision project. These efforts relate to all 'hard to reach' communities, including the Traveller community.

Similar initiatives to target vaccine-related communication in minority languages (as mentioned in paragraph 232) were also undertaken in Wales to increase the uptake of vaccination in those communities.

The Welsh language has equal status to English in Wales, and as such the production of Public Health information in the Welsh language is routine.

26. Bi- and multilateral cooperation

The British-Irish Council is established by Strand Three of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, and its membership is specified in this treaty.

Northern Ireland

The UK Government has demonstrated its firm commitment to minority languages in Northern Ireland and across the UK. In relation to Irish and Ulster Scots, in the last eighteen months alone, the UK Government has overseen the enactment of the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022⁶⁹, delivered £2 million of additional funding for Irish language and Ulster Scots broadcasting, and provided £4 million of capital funding for the Irish Language Investment Fund (An Infheistíochtá Gaeilge)⁷⁰. The UK Government also fully recognises and appreciates the importance of the North-South Language Body and continues to engage with them, including in relation to the implementation of the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022.

The UK Government is committed to the restoration and effective working of all three strands of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, including the North South Bodies, of which language is an important part.

⁶⁸ Welsh Government (2022), *National immunisation framework for Wales*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/national-immunisation-framework-wales>

⁶⁹ UK Government (2022), *Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022*. Available at: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3168>

⁷⁰ *The Irish Language Investment Fund*. Available at: <https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-details/?regid=103641&subid=0>