

Vol. 763
No. 13



Thursday
18 June 2015

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements.....	1
Written Answers.....	4

[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

Members who want a printed copy of Written Answers and Written Statements should notify the Printed Paper Office.

This printed edition is a reproduction of the original text of Answers and Statements, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>. Proposed corrections should be sent to holhansard@parliament.uk for review.

Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Stowell of Beeston	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office and Department for Transport
Baroness Anelay of St Johns	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Baroness Altmann	Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Whip
Lord Bates	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Bridges of Headley	Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change, Wales Office and Whip
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip
Earl of Courtown	Whip
Lord Dunlop	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Whip
Lord Faulks	Minister of State, Ministry of Justice
Lord Freud	Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Deputy Chief Whip and Spokesman for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord Maude of Horsham	Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lord Nash	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Lord O'Neill of Gatley	Commercial Secretary to the Treasury
Lord Prior of Brampton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health
Baroness Shields	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture Media and Sport
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Verma	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2015

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/

Written Statements

Thursday, 18 June 2015

EU Transport Council

[HLWS37]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Goodwill) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

I attended the second Transport Council under the Latvian Presidency (the Presidency) in Luxembourg on Thursday 11 June.

The Council adopted a General Approach on the proposed Directive laying down technical standards for inland waterway vessels. There was broad support from Member States and the Commission for both the text and the related creation of the European Committee for Inland Navigation Standards (CESNI). The Commission indicated that it would now attempt to capitalise on this success by looking to harmonise other standards in the inland waterway sector, including training for crew.

The Presidency appreciated the support of all Member States and the Commission in their efforts to reach agreement with the European Parliament on the complex technical pillar of the Fourth Railway Package.

On the market pillar, however, the Presidency was clear that more time was needed. I welcomed the improvements to date to address concerns on over-regulation but pressed that more needed to be done to ensure that competition could flourish and rail continued to be an attractive investment. In highlighting the success of the UK's liberalised and competitive rail market, I invited other Member States to visit the UK to learn from our experience. The main point of contention was the nature of possible exemptions from competitive tendering with the Commission supporting an exemption based on performance criteria while some Member States called for an exemption based on their share of the EU rail market being less than one per cent. I strongly pressed that any exemptions to competitive tendering had to be based on objective criteria and fully justified.

On Air Passenger Rights, the Presidency presented their Progress Report.

I underlined the UK's strong support for the improvements in air passenger rights whilst reinforcing our position that the balanced and proportionate trigger points of 5/9/12 hours should be maintained, a view strongly echoed by some Member States. I also voiced strong concerns on the proposed inclusion of a compensation scheme for missed connecting flights, highlighting the negative impacts for both passengers and airlines. Two Member States called for a lower trigger point of three hours with another suggesting anything other than including three hours in line with interpretative case law from CJEU rulings was a step backwards in

passenger rights. There was no discussion on the application of the regulation to Gibraltar Airport.

Under any other business, the Commission presented the conclusions of their interim evaluation on road safety, taking stock of progress towards the 50% reduction in fatalities by 2020. With regards to next steps the Commission indicated that it was considering proposing a target for reducing serious injuries.

On the Trans-European Network –Transport (TEN-T) and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the Christophersen-Bodewig-Secchi report which looks at making the best use of the new EU financial schemes for transport infrastructure projects, was presented. The authors called for urgent action to ensure the success of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) for the transport sector and presented twelve recommendations for bringing private capital to the transport sector. The Commissioner invited Member State views on these recommendations ahead of the TEN-T days set to take place in Riga on 22 and 23 June.

The Presidency presented the outcome of the third Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Transport Ministers' meeting where ASEM member countries made a strong commitment to fostering closer cooperation in the field of transport connectivity.

The Commission updated the Council on the Shift2Rail research and innovation programme. The Commission regretted the delay in the recruitment of the Executive Director but considered the remainder of the programme was on track. I joined several Member States in thanking the Commission for the update and encouraging all efforts to ensure an accelerated deployment of the programme.

The Luxembourg Minister for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure presented the work programme of their upcoming Presidency stating their focus would remain on the Fourth Railway Package and achieving a General Approach on the market pillar by the October Transport Council. He invited Ministers to an Informal Council on 7 October focussing on cycling, followed by the formal Council on 8 October where there would be a policy debate on the Commission's review of its transport white paper. At the December Council there would be a policy debate on social conditions in road transport.

Local Planning

[HLWS36]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Greg Clark) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am today setting out new considerations to be applied to proposed wind energy development so that local people have the final say on wind farm applications, fulfilling the commitment made in the Conservative election manifesto.

Subject to the transitional provision set out below, these considerations will take effect from 18 June and should be taken into account in planning decisions. I am also

making a limited number of consequential changes to planning guidance.

When determining planning applications for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines, local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if:

- the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and

- following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.

In applying these new considerations, suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. Maps showing the wind resource as favourable to wind turbines, or similar, will not be sufficient. Whether a proposal has the backing of the affected local community is a planning judgement for the local planning authority.

Where a valid planning application for a wind energy development has already been submitted to a local planning authority and the development plan does not identify suitable sites, the following transitional provision applies. In such instances, local planning authorities can find the proposal acceptable if, following consultation, they are satisfied it has addressed the planning impacts identified by affected local communities and therefore has their backing.

Onshore Wind Subsidies

[HLWS35]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Amber Rudd) has today made the following statement.

The Government is committed to meeting objectives on cutting carbon emissions and the UK's 2020 renewable energy targets. Onshore wind has deployed successfully to-date and is an important part of our energy mix. We now have enough onshore wind in the pipeline, to be subsidised by bill payers through the Renewable Obligation or Contracts for Difference, for onshore wind to play a significant part in meeting our renewable energy commitments. The Government was elected with a commitment to end new subsidies for onshore wind and to change the law so that local people have the final say on onshore windfarm applications. We are now giving effect to these changes in full through the introduction of an Energy Bill this session. The Energy Bill will devolve powers out of Whitehall so that applications for onshore wind farms are considered by democratically elected councils.

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is today making a statement on onshore wind development and local planning in England. This will set out new considerations to be applied to proposed wind energy development so

that local people have the final say on wind farm applications.

I am now setting out proposals to end new subsidies for onshore wind, specifically in relation to the Renewables Obligation (RO). Onshore wind is currently subsidised through three schemes: Contracts for Difference (CfDs) introduced by the last Government, and the Renewables Obligation and Feed-in-Tariffs introduced previously.

With regard to CfDs, we have the tools available to implement our manifesto commitments on onshore wind and I will set out how I will do so when announcing plans in relation to further CfD allocations. I will also shortly be considering options for continued support for community onshore wind projects through the feed-in tariff (FITs) as part of the review that my department is conducting this year.

The RO supports the overwhelming majority of current and future onshore wind capacity. Unlike CfDs, which introduce competition for subsidy and therefore drive costs down more quickly, the RO is demand-led and so poses more risk of pressure on consumer bills from increased demand for the subsidy. I am therefore announcing today that we will be introducing primary legislation to close the RO to new onshore wind from 1st April 2016 – a year earlier than planned.

My department's analysis indicates that, after taking into account an early closure, onshore wind deployment under the RO will be in the region of 11.6GW. In addition to the 0.75GW of onshore wind that has secured a CfD, this puts us above the middle of the range set out in the EMR Delivery Plan, our best estimate of what we would need to meet our 2020 targets. It is therefore appropriate to curtail further deployment of onshore wind, balancing the interests of onshore wind developers with those of the wider public.

To protect investor confidence in the wider renewables sector, I am proposing a grace period which would continue to give access to support under the RO to those projects which, as of today, already have planning consent, a grid connection offer and acceptance, and evidence of land rights for the site on which their project will be built. I believe this draws the line in the right place but I want to hear views from the industry and other stakeholders before framing the terms of the legislation.

I intend that any final proposals are applied across Great Britain and I am in the process of consulting with Scottish and Welsh Ministers on this matter. Since energy policy is devolved in Northern Ireland, I am currently in discussions with Ministers there to agree how our commitments on onshore wind will be implemented in Northern Ireland.

Questions for Written Answer - 2014/15 Session

[HLWS39]

Baroness Stowell of Beeston: Further to the commitment made by my predecessor to publish annually the performance of departments on their promptness in

dealing with QWAs (HL Deb 8 May 2014, col 1575), I am today publishing data on departmental performance in answering Questions for Written Answer for the 2014/15 session.

Written questions are an important way in which Members hold the Government to account, and the House has agreed that they should be answered within 10 working days (Procedure Committee, 3rd Report, Session 2009-10). I take very seriously my responsibility as Leader of the House to ensure that responses are timely and accurate. I am pleased, therefore, that overall 91% of Questions for Written Answer were answered within 10 working days in the last session.

Nevertheless, we must always strive to do better. In that spirit I will write to the five departments with the greatest proportion of late responses to make clear the House's expectations and to stress the importance of timely responses. I will also continue to publish departmental performance data on an annual basis to enable performance to be compared over time. My office will continue to work with all departments to ensure prompt and comprehensive responses to all Questions for Written Answer.

Due to size constraints, full details are set out in the attached table.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

QWA-data-2014-15-session [QWA Data - 2014_15.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2015-06-18/HLWS39/>

Palace of Westminster (Restoration and Renewal)

[HLWS38]

Lord Sewel: An independent appraisal of options for the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster is published today. It was requested by the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee in the last Parliament following a pre-feasibility study and preliminary strategic business case which was published in October 2012.

The new study has been carried out by a consortium consisting of Deloitte Real Estate, AECOM and HOK. The Independent Options Appraisal (together with two volumes of detailed supporting materials) is available on the Parliament website at www.restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk.

The restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster will be a major challenge facing Parliament in the coming years and is certain to be a matter of public interest. The process to establish a Joint Committee, which will make recommendations to both Houses on how to proceed, is already under way. It will be for the Joint Committee to decide how best to carry out its task.

Written Answers

Thursday, 18 June 2015

Channel Tunnel: Safety

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to undertake, in conjunction with the government of France, an independent study into the safety of open lorry shuttle wagons operating through the Channel Tunnel. [HL294]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government continues to work closely with our French counterparts through the Channel Tunnel Intergovernmental Commission to supervise and monitor the safety of the Channel Tunnel. The design of HGV Shuttles is only one aspect of the technical and operational measures that have been put in place and regularly reviewed to ensure the Channel Tunnel remains an acceptably safe operation.

Charter of the Forest

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mark and celebrate the 800th in 2017 anniversary of the granting of the Charter of the Forest. [HL272]

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will mark the 800th anniversary in 2017 of the granting of the Charter of the Forest in a similar way to that in which the Magna Carta is being marked this year. [HL273]

Lord Faulks: The Charter of the Forest was an important document in its own right when it was issued by Henry III in 1217 at the same time as a re-issue of Magna Carta. The Charter re-established rights of access to the forest for free men that had been eroded over the time. However, although the provisions of the Charter of the Forest remained in force for a number of centuries, it has not enjoyed the same lasting and worldwide recognition as Magna Carta, which has had an enduring significance on the development of the concept of the rule of law.

Consequently, while the Government is actively supporting the celebration of the 800 anniversary of Magna Carta this year, it has no plans to mark and celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest.

Children: Day Care

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Nash on 3 June (HL Deb, col 413),

what format the funding review of the early-years childcare proposal will take; and whether the details will be available prior to the second reading of the Childcare Bill. [HL327]

Lord Nash: The Government has committed to increasing the average rate that providers are paid for the entitlement. At oral questions on 15 June 2015, My Hon Friend the member for East Surrey, Sam Gyimah confirmed that a cross-Government review of the cost of providing childcare is underway.

A call for evidence to inform the review was launched on 15 June and will close on 10 August. This is part of a process of gathering the necessary evidence which will inform the outcome of the review and will report in the autumn.

The call for evidence document is attached.

Children: Poverty

Asked by Lord Ouseley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest estimate of how many children live below the poverty line; and what assessment they have made of the impact of living below the poverty line on the future well-being of those children. [HL357]

Lord Nash: Estimates of the number and proportion of children in relative and absolute low-income are published in the National Statistics 'Households Below Average Income' (HBAI) series. The latest publication estimates that 2.3 million children (17%) lived below the relative low income line in 2012/13, measured on a before housing costs basis. We have made progress on this, there are 300,000 fewer children living in relative poverty since 2010 and the number of children growing up in workless families is at a record low.

The government recognises the importance of action to drive real change in children's lives, by tackling the root causes of poverty: entrenched worklessness, family breakdown, problem debt, and drug and alcohol dependency. Evidence suggests that children who are raised in low income families are more likely to end up as poor adults.

Council Tax

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of recipients of council tax support are in employment. [HL292]

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated number of (1) working households, and (2) non-working households, previously in receipt of 100 per cent council tax benefit that are now required to pay council tax; and what is the total respective amount that each group is required to pay as a result of changes to council tax benefit. [HL438]

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated number of (1) working households, and (2) non-working households, previously in receipt of partial council tax benefit that are now required to pay more council tax as a result of changes to council tax benefit. [HL439]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: This data is not held centrally.

Council Tax Reduction Schemes

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the impact of changes to the council tax reduction scheme, in particular on (1) the extra amounts now payable by people hitherto receiving (a) full or (b) partial rebates, and (2) arrears of council tax. [HL291]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: These are local schemes and it is for local authorities to consider the effect on specific groups of council tax payers.

Council tax collection rates in England remain high at 97% in 2013-14.

This is a devolved matter in Scotland and Wales; council tax does not operate in Northern Ireland.

Derelict Land

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what flexibility the National Planning Policy Framework gives to local authorities to prioritise the development of brownfield sites over greenfield land in local plans; and whether they propose to amend the National Planning Policy Framework in order to allow local authorities to strengthen such local policies. [HL279]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government wishes to ensure that brownfield land is prioritised and used as much as possible for new development. We will require local authorities to have a register of suitable brownfield sites and ensure 90 per cent of suitable sites have planning permission for housing by 2020. Our planning guidance stresses the importance of bringing brownfield land back into use and encourages councils to use other local plan policies to promote the viability of brownfield across the local area.

Doctors: Qualifications

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many practising doctors received their qualifications (1) in the United Kingdom, and (2) elsewhere. [HL289]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The information requested about the number of practising medical doctors with

qualifications received in the United Kingdom and elsewhere is not held centrally.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of medical doctors in the UK and is responsible for doctor registration. Information provided by the GMC on the number of doctors registered with a licence to practise as at 9 June 2015, broken down by whether their primary medical qualification was gained in the UK or elsewhere, is shown in the following table. However, it should be noted that although these doctors have a licence to practise, they may not be actively practising.

	Total	Qualified in the UK	Qualified Elsewhere
Number of doctors registered with a licence to practise	232,931	153,306 (66%)	79,625 (34%)

Source: The General Medical Council

Note: The 'qualified elsewhere' column includes those qualified in the European Economic Area (EEA) excluding the UK and those trained outside of the EEA.

Electoral Register

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the number of people currently not on the electoral register and the reported risk that this will increase with the implementation of individual registration, how much they plan to spend in the current financial year to support local authorities to ensure that the register is as complete as possible. [HL271]

Lord Bridges of Headley: Over £14million has been invested over the last two financial years to support activities aimed at increasing the completeness and accuracy of the register, including in the run up to the General Election. In addition, Electoral Registration Officers have been provided with grant funding in the current financial year of £20million. The Electoral Commission is due to publish its latest analysis of the electoral register later this month, including the impact of activity to promote registration before the election, and it is important to consider any further steps in light of this report.

Employment: Disability

Asked by Lord Touthig

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to end the disability employment gap. [HL268]

Baroness Altmann: In the last 12 months there has been an increase of 238,000 disabled people in work. That is really positive, but there is more to do.

We have been very clear that the gap between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people remains too big and have committed to halving it.

Government cannot achieve this ambition alone so we are working closely with disabled people, their organisations, employers and employment support providers to develop our strategy to enable more disabled people to get into, remain in and progress in work.

The Disability Confident Campaign, which actively promotes the Access to Work scheme, is key to supporting employers in working with Government to halve the disability employment gap.

Eritrea: Refugees

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the United Nations estimate that in total 360,000 refugees have fled Eritrea. [HL359]

Baroness Verma: We are concerned by the United Nations report that 360,000 refugees have fled Eritrea, particularly given that they report the numbers of people leaving increased sharply towards the end of 2014, and given the vulnerability of refugees leaving by land and by sea. Our Ambassador in Asmara closely monitors events in Eritrea and Foreign Office and DFID staff work closely with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees throughout the Horn of Africa.

EU Aid

Asked by Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the new transparency and accountability framework, The European Union International Cooperation and Development Results Framework. [HL337]

Baroness Verma: The UK strongly welcomes the publication of the EU Results Framework. This will provide much needed accountability and transparency for EU taxpayers, and has the potential to transform EU development spending – allowing programmes to deliver much better value for money and development results.

The attachment 'Explanatory Memorandum, Launching the EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework' contains detail on the UK position on the Staff Working Document, which can also be found online at: <http://europeanmemoranda.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/memorandum/commission-staff-working-document-launching-the-eu-international-cooperation-development-results-framework>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Explanatory Memorandum [Explanatory Memorandum, Launching the EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2015-06-08/HL337>

Fuel Direct Scheme

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the affordability of a standard Fuel Direct rate of £3.70 for direct payments for arrears on fuel bills; and whether in setting that rate they considered (1) allowing some customers to pay a lower rate of direct deduction, and (2) allowing customers to pay by Fuel Direct for ongoing bills when they are not in arrears. [HL394]

Baroness Altmann: Third Party Deduction is a long standing scheme of last resort where all other means of budgeting have been exhausted. Where the Secretary of State decides that it is in the claimant's best interests to order repayment of the arrears he can do so. The scheme was introduced in the 1970's to protect the vulnerable and their family, whilst not adding to their financial burden.

Fuel Direct is set in legislation at 5% of their Personal Allowance, which is a fixed deduction of £3.70 for each element of fuel debt. This is considered to be the most appropriate level of repayment in order to clear the fuel debt arrears and to prevent enforcement action.

Each year the amount of Third Party Deduction is reassessed as part of The Social Security Up-rating Order.

Once the arrears have been paid a person will usually be taken off the Fuel Direct scheme. In exceptional circumstances a person may be allowed to remain on the Fuel Direct scheme to help ensure that they don't get into debt again.

However Fuel Direct is not intended as a budgeting aid and the Government's main objective is to help people into employment, whilst encouraging them to be responsible for their own financial affairs, whether they are on benefit or not.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Sheffield

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what cost-benefit analysis has been conducted on the impact on the economic performance of South Yorkshire of siting the HS2 station at (1) Sheffield City Centre, and (2) Meadowhall; and whether they will publish the results of any such study. [HL453]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In March 2012 the Government received a report from HS2 Ltd: 'Options for Phase Two of the High Speed Rail Network', which considered the various station location and alignment options for a station in South Yorkshire, from a demand and appraisal perspective. The report found a station at Meadowhall would provide the best overall value for money.

A further demand and appraisal report in 2013: 'Demand and appraisal report by the MVA consultancy for phase 2 of the High Speed Two (HS2) rail network' re-examined costs and demand at potential stations in Sheffield. The study re-affirmed Meadowhall as the optimal location for South Yorkshire.

The reports were published at the time and are available on the GOV.UK website.

Languages: Qualifications

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the written answer by Lord Nash on 4 June (HL94), when they expect Ofqual's work with awarding organisations on the future of the relevant community languages to be completed and a decision to be taken on whether to launch a consultation. [HL328]

Lord Nash: The Department for Education, Ofqual and awarding organisations continue to consider and discuss potential approaches to securing these qualifications. The government is keen to ensure reformed qualifications in community languages will be available for first teaching in 2017. If no course of action can be agreed by Ofqual and awarding organisations the department will consult more widely on potential approaches and seek to ensure this timeline is adhered to.

Mesothelioma: Compensation

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, with regard to the compensation payments awarded under the Mesothelioma Act 2014, what is their estimate of (1) the difference between the actuarial calculations on which they based their assumptions for payments of compensation and the payments now being made by insurance companies; and (2) how much such companies will save in each of the next 10 years compared with the original legislative assumptions. [HL380]

Baroness Altmann: No actuarial calculations were carried out in relation to the payments that would be made by the Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme. The tariff table, which sets out the rate of payment according to age at diagnosis, is based on an average of similar payments made under civil compensation.

The Impact Assessment published in March 2014 estimated that £93.7m would be paid out by the Scheme in the first year of its operation, and £412.4m would be paid out over the first 10 years.

Initial application volumes were lower than anticipated so the amount levied on the insurance industry for the period 2014/15 was £32m. It is too early to estimate what the application volumes will be over the next 10 years given volumes received to date. As this is a demand led scheme, the calculations for the levy are done afresh each

year. An upturn in applications to the Scheme would result in a higher levy rate in future years.

Middle East: Internally Displaced People

Asked by Lord Ahmed

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they support the proposed establishment of an international enclave, protected by the United Nations, in Syria and Iraq to house internally displaced people. [HL387]

Baroness Verma: The UK welcomes any option compliant with international law that might save lives in Syria and Iraq. The situation in Syria and Iraq is incredibly complex, and international enclaves are not currently feasible. For such a safe area to work in any context, all parties to the conflict would need to agree on its establishment. In the absence of such an agreement, this would require foreign military intervention, authorised by a UN Security Council resolution.

Nepal: Earthquakes

Asked by Lord Harries of Pentregarth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that post-earthquake aid to Nepal is being distributed fairly. [HL350]

Baroness Verma: The UK is providing more than £33 million to the earthquake response in Nepal, making us the largest donor to the relief operation, and we are committed to ensuring that this assistance is available to those most in need. UK funding and technical expertise is supporting a central coordination mechanism, under the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which is gathering real time information and feedback from affected communities. This mechanism helps to ensure that aid efforts are not being duplicated and that the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable are understood and acted upon.

The UK has placed particular emphasis on reaching vulnerable groups; immediately after the earthquake, DFID identified the heightened risk of violence to displaced women and children. Examples of our assistance include: two UK-funded support centres, in Sindhupalchowk District, which ensure a safe and protected environment for around 500 women and girls; and the distribution of over 15,000 dignity kits to provide women with basic essentials, like clothing and hygiene products.

Nurses

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of claims by patient safety campaigners and others that NHS England may introduce lower standards in terms of the number of nurses required in the light of the termination by the National Institute of

Health and Clinical Excellence of its work on staffing levels. [HL378]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Government is committed to supporting National Health Service trusts to use their resources as effectively as possible for patients, including the critical priority that staffing levels are safe.

Existing National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance will continue to be used by NHS trusts to help them look at their approach to staffing and decide what is best for patients. NHS England will take this work forward alongside their programme of service reviews.

The Chief Nursing Office for England wrote to Directors of Nursing and other NHS staff on 11 June confirming the steps she will be taking to advance the programme of work.

Nurses: Qualifications

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many nurses working in the NHS received their qualifications (1) in the United Kingdom, and (2) elsewhere. [HL290]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The information requested about the numbers of nurses working in the National Health Service with qualifications gained in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, is not held centrally.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the independent regulator of nurses and midwives in the UK and is responsible for nurse registration. Information provided by the NMC on the total number of registered nurses and midwives at the end of each financial year since 2010, broken down by whether they trained in the UK or elsewhere is shown in the following table. However, it should be noted that those on the NMC register may not be practising or working in the NHS.

<i>Year ending 31 March</i>	<i>Total effective registrants</i>	<i>Qualified in the UK</i>	<i>Qualified Elsewhere</i>
2010	665,983	584,589 (88%)	81,394 (12%)
2011	670,011	587,451 (88%)	82,560 (12%)
2012	672,622	588,815 (88%)	83,807 (12%)
2013	675,278	590,364 (87%)	84,914 (13%)
2014	680,882	592,945 (87%)	87,937 (13%)
2015	686,797	593,536 (86%)	93,261 (14%)

Source: The Nursing and Midwifery Council

Note: The 'elsewhere' column includes those nurses and midwives trained in the European Economic Area excluding the UK and those trained outside of the EEA.

Palestinians: Refugees

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential for violence and fighting in countries surrounding Syria if UNRWA

have to stop cash payments to Palestinian refugees from Syria, because of a lack of funds. [HL413]

Baroness Verma: The UK is concerned that cuts to UNRWA assistance may exacerbate existing tensions amongst Palestinian refugees who have fled to Syria's neighbouring countries. That is why the UK has been in close contact with UNRWA, other donors, and host governments on how best to manage and mitigate the impact of funding shortfalls. The UK is the third largest donor to UNRWA's General Fund, and the fourth largest donor to UNRWA's operations overall. This includes over £28 million provided to date to support Palestinian refugees in Syria and the region affected by the Syria crisis.

Poultry: Campylobacter

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of campylobacter in imported chickens and chicken meat and how it compares to the level found in their recent study of chickens produced in the United Kingdom. [HL259]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Food Standards Agency advises that there are no available comparisons of campylobacter levels between chickens imported into the United Kingdom from outside the European Union and chickens produced in the UK. Chicken imported from outside the EU is not assessed for levels of campylobacter as most chicken imported into the UK is frozen. The European Food Standards Authority has indicated that a greater than 90% risk reduction from campylobacter can be obtained by freezing carcasses for two to three weeks.

Prescribed Industrial Diseases

Asked by The Countess of Mar

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many claims they have received for Prescribed Disease C3b in the last 10 years; and of these, how many were allowed. [HL419]

Baroness Altmann: The information as requested is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Sheep Dipping

Asked by The Countess of Mar

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by George Eustice, Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on 10 June (HC Deb, col 136WH), who published the 1991 Health and Safety Executive report of an inquiry into sheep dipping; and to whom it was distributed. [HL420]

Baroness Altmann: The 1991 Health and Safety Executive (HSE) report presented the findings of a 1990

survey of sheep dipping and was published by HSE as an internal document in May 1991.

The report was discussed at a meeting of the then Health and Safety Commission's Agricultural Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC) working group, Chemicals In Agriculture (ChemAg), on 10 July 1991. The ChemAg working group membership included HSE, the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress and other industry organisations.

State Education

Asked by Lord Davies of Stamford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many state secondary schools there are in England; and how many of these have not had a student enter into Oxford or Cambridge University as an undergraduate over the past five years. [HL293]

Lord Nash: The number of state-funded secondary schools is available in the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' Statistical First Release published by Department for Education. Table 2a of the 'National tables' spreadsheet contains information for each year since 2003.

Detailed destinations information such as destinations to Oxford and Cambridge Universities is only compiled for students completing Key Stage 5 (A levels or other level 3 qualifications), and is published in the Department for Education "Destinations of Key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils" experimental statistical first release. Figures are therefore only available for secondary schools where they have sixth forms. Data has only been published for four years up to the 2011/12 cohort and information for the previous five years cannot be provided. In the latest destinations data (published 27 January 2015), destinations for institutions are available in table IN1 of the 'Key stage 5: institution level tables' spreadsheet.

The table below summarises the published information. Data have only been published for four years up to the 2011/12 cohort so information for the previous five years cannot be provided.

	<i>Number of state-funded secondary schools at January 2012</i>	<i>Number of state funded schools in 2012/13 Key Stage 5 destination cohort</i>	<i>Number with no student having sustained participation at Oxford or Cambridge University as an undergraduate, over the 4 cohorts of destinations data available [1]</i>
State-funded schools	3,329	1,870	533

[1] To be included in the destinations measure, young people have to show sustained participation in an education or employment destination

in all of the first two terms of the year after they took an A level or other level 3 qualifications (October to March).

Stormont House Agreement

Asked by Lord Laird

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Dunlop on 2 June (HL34) concerning the government of Ireland's involvement in the talks leading up to the Stormont House Agreement, what is the full list of talks attended by the government of Ireland's representatives; and why that list was not given in that Answer. [HL393]

Lord Dunlop: As I said on 2nd June 2015 Irish Government representatives were present on a number of occasions in the talks leading up to the Stormont House Agreement. As the Noble Lord is aware, the involvement of the Irish Government was in accordance with the established three-stranded approach to Northern Ireland affairs and the 1998 Belfast Agreement. As the Conservative Party's Northern Ireland Manifesto for the General Election states:

"This provides that Northern Ireland's internal arrangements are for the parties here and the United Kingdom Government alone to decide. A Conservative Government will always stand by that principle".

Teachers

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the letter to The Times of 2 June from 28 former prime ministers and presidents which claims that there is a worldwide decline in the respect paid to and status of teachers. [HL376]

Lord Nash: The research cited, in the letter to The Times, was the Varkey GEMS Global Teacher Status Index, which was published in 2013. The index surveys public opinion on the status of teachers and contained several positive findings in relation to the UK.

For example, teachers' status was ranked higher in the UK than in many other countries, including France, Finland and Germany. Respect for headteachers in the UK was ranked highest of all the countries in the study. When respondents were asked to assess 'how good is the education system?' the UK ranked seventh out of all countries surveyed – a higher score than the USA, South Korea and Germany.

To help raise the status of teaching further still, our manifesto set out our commitment to supporting the establishment of a new, independent College of Teaching. Teaching is unique amongst the professions in this country in not having a membership body to champion high standards of practice.

The recognition of teaching as a respected and high-status profession is reflected in the calibre of those joining. Almost three quarters of new teachers now have an upper-second or first class degree, 10% higher than in

2010. We have a record proportion of new teachers (17%) with first class degrees and, for several years running, teaching has remained the most popular career destination for graduates from Oxford University.

Whilst perceptions of teachers and teaching in this country are positive, the government remains committed to doing all we can to support the profession to develop and improve.

Thames Water

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Thames Water regarding (1) its payment to its offshore shareholders of £170 million in dividends, (2) its non-payment of United Kingdom tax, and (3) the pay increase given to its chief executive officer, in the light of the fact that the company is in receipt of a government guarantee to finance the Thames Tideway Tunnel. [HL295]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government has had no discussions with Thames Water in this regard.

The payment of dividends is a matter for Thames Water.

The Government cannot comment on the tax affairs of individual companies. Thames Water is resident for tax in the UK and is required by law to pay all taxes for which it is liable.

Thames Water Chief Executive Officer's pay is also a matter for the Thames Water Board and its shareholders.

The Government is not providing a guarantee to Thames Water. The Thames Tideway Tunnel project is being delivered in the private sector and will be financed and delivered by a competitively tendered Infrastructure Provider that is an entirely separate entity to Thames Water. Details of the contingent Government Support Package for this entity were announced in a Written Ministerial Statement on 5 June 2014.

UN Agencies

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of the Gulf States concerning the funding of UNRWA and UNHCR. [HL416]

Baroness Verma: The UK continues to play a prominent role in encouraging the international community, including the Gulf states, to support UN agencies in meeting urgent humanitarian and human development needs. The UK regularly raises the issue of UNRWA funding in discussions with Gulf States at both ministerial and official level.

UNRWA

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with donor partners about the level of funding needed for UNRWA. [HL412]

Baroness Verma: The UK engages in regular discussion with other donors about the UN Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) financial situation through the UNRWA Advisory Commission and Sub-Committee. The UK uses its influence as a predictable, multi-year donor to UNRWA to encourage other donor contributions and incentivise reforms which would get the Agency on a more sustainable financial footing.

Written Questions: Government Responses

Asked by Lord Jopling

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Lord Bridges of Headley on 3 June (HLWS10), whether they will publish figures on the response rates to questions for written answer during the 2010–15 Parliament along similar lines. [HL256]

Baroness Stowell of Beeston: In line with the commitment made by my predecessor to begin to publish annually the performance of departments on their promptness in dealing with QWAs (HL Deb 8 May 2014, col 1575), I have today published data on departmental performance in answering Questions for Written Answer for the 2014/15 session (HLWS39). I am pleased to say that, overall, 91% of Questions for Written Answer were answered within the expected 10 working days in the last session.

I will continue to publish departmental performance data on an annual basis to enable performance to be compared over time. My office will also continue to work with all departments to ensure prompt and comprehensive responses to all Questions for Written Answer.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....	1	UN Agencies.....	10
EU Transport Council.....	1	UNRWA	10
Local Planning.....	1	Written Questions: Government Responses	10
Onshore Wind Subsidies	2		
Questions for Written Answer - 2014/15 Session 2			
Palace of Westminster (Restoration and Renewal)			
.....	3		
Written Answers.....	4		
Channel Tunnel: Safety	4		
Charter of the Forest.....	4		
Children: Day Care.....	4		
Children: Poverty.....	4		
Council Tax	4		
Council Tax Reduction Schemes.....	5		
Derelict Land	5		
Doctors: Qualifications.....	5		
Electoral Register	5		
Employment: Disability.....	5		
Eritrea: Refugees	6		
EU Aid.....	6		
Fuel Direct Scheme	6		
High Speed 2 Railway Line: Sheffield.....	6		
Languages: Qualifications.....	7		
Mesothelioma: Compensation	7		
Middle East: Internally Displaced People	7		
Nepal: Earthquakes.....	7		
Nurses	7		
Nurses: Qualifications	8		
Palestinians: Refugees	8		
Poultry: Campylobacter.....	8		
Prescribed Industrial Diseases	8		
Sheep Dipping	8		
State Education.....	9		
Stormont House Agreement	9		
Teachers.....	9		
Thames Water.....	10		