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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements.....	1
Written Answers.....	8

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<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

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Written Statements

Monday, 7 December 2015

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

[HLWS353]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (George Osborne) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Yesterday the UK became the seventh member of the AIIB after ratifying the Articles of Agreement: the first non-regional member, first member of the G7 and first major western country to do so. In order to come into force the Articles of Agreement need to be ratified by at least ten countries together holding 50% of the shares, this requirement is expected to be met during December.

In joining the AIIB the UK is demonstrating its support for China's initiative to establish the Bank to address the historic shortage of infrastructure investment in Asia, this will support economic growth in the region and drive up living standards. The UK's membership will deepen economic ties with Asia and create opportunities for British businesses.

Education and Adoption Bill

[HLWS356]

Lord Nash: My honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education has today made the following statement:

We have today announced that we will table a substantive Government amendment to the Education and Adoption Bill.

The Bill fulfils the Government's manifesto commitment to raise standards across the country by speeding up the process by which failing maintained schools become sponsored academies, as well as introducing new measures to allow us to properly tackle coasting schools for the first time. The Bill seeks to improve the life chances of every child and ensure that all children have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential, wherever they live. These principles are at the heart of the Government's education agenda.

As currently drafted, the Bill focuses on ensuring Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) - acting on my behalf - have the powers they need to tackle failing and coasting maintained schools. The Bill does not apply to academies and free schools as they are governed by a different legal framework - they are held to account through a legally binding contract known as a funding agreement.

The vast majority of academies are performing well and the academy programme is central to our commitment to extending opportunity through delivering educational excellence in every part of the country. I am clear, however, that underperformance is unacceptable wherever it occurs - whether that is in a maintained school or an

academy. We have already shown that we are tough on underperforming academies and that RSCs take robust action where needed - we have issued 122 formal notices to underperforming academies and free schools and moved to change the sponsor in 118 cases of particular concern. Our formal powers in relation to underperforming academies can, however, vary depending on the terms of an academy's funding agreement. In a minority of cases, this can hinder our ability to intervene as swiftly as we would like. This is unacceptable and at the heart of this Bill lies our belief that a single day spent by a child in an underperforming school is a day too many. We have also taken the views of some of our leading sponsors, who tell us they are frustrated that not being able to act swiftly in a few cases of high-profile failure creates a misleading picture of the work that is being done by academies across England to raise standards and transform young lives.

I am responding with an amendment to the Bill designed to ensure that RSCs always have the power to act whenever or wherever they encounter underperformance in our schools. I propose to amend the Bill so that when an academy or free school's performance meets one of two triggers in legislation - an inadequate Ofsted judgement or performance that falls within the coasting definition - then their funding agreement will be read as having the latest provisions around failing and coasting schools. The amendment will not impinge on academy freedoms, on the contrary it reinforces the central principle of the academy programme - trusting heads to run their schools through freedom and autonomy, but at the same time holding them to account for the results their pupils achieve. This amendment will not lead to any interference from central Government in the academies and free schools that are performing well.

In practice, the amendment will ensure that we can move any failing academy swiftly to a new sponsor. The amendment will also subject academies to the same coasting definition as maintained schools and where a coasting academy does not have a credible plan, further action will be taken by RSCs. This could ultimately include terminating the funding agreement and bringing in a new sponsor if necessary.

The amendment will create a more consistent framework for tackling underperformance across all types of schools and stands as another example of our determination to create a world class education system. The amendment will be tabled this week and first debated when the Bill returns to the House of Lords for Report Stage (currently scheduled to take place on 16 December 2015).

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council

[HLWS357]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: My Honourable Friend the Minister of State for Culture and the Digital Economy (Mr Ed Vaizey) has made the following Written

Ministerial Statement. A meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council was held in Brussels on 24 November. Fiona Hyslop, Scottish Government Minister for Culture, Europe, and External Affairs, represented the UK for the cultural and audio-visual section of the Council and Shan Morgan, the UK's Deputy Permanent Representative, represented the UK for the sport section of the Council.

Culture and audiovisual

The overarching theme of this Ministerial Council was the relationship between culture and foreign policy, within the context of the destruction of cultural heritage in Syria by ISIS, and the recent attacks in Paris.

The Council adopted *Conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations*, with a specific focus on development cooperation: as well as *Conclusions amending the EU Work Plan for Culture 2015-18* to add a new priority of intercultural dialogue, so as to address the current migration crisis.

Ministers debated how best to act together against the *destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural heritage in conflict areas*, with the focus on the international community, and the need to mitigate the effects of the fragmentation of competences and legislation in this area.

The UK confirmed its determination to play a full part in the protection of cultural heritage, and highlighted its work on the establishment of a Cultural Protection Fund. It also drew attention to the significant experience that has been built up in digital documentation and visualisation of the historic environment through the Scottish Ten programme.

Overall the UK policy in this area is to preserve, to prevent, and to protect, and we underlined the importance of targeted EU interventions or actions that played to its area of competence and avoided duplication with other international bodies.

During the course of the ensuing discussion on *culture and digitisation* the UK noted the importance of digitisation as a powerful tool which can help deliver many cultural, social, and educational initiatives.

On the specific issue of the *Europeana* digital cultural portal, we noted the need to develop a sustainable funding model which did not exclude the participation of private-sector organisations, including those which were in a position to either contribute content, or to introduce *Europeana* to a wider audience.

Under other business, the European Commission updated on the current situation concerning the Regulatory Fitness and Performance (REFIT) exercise in the audio-visual sector, and other relevant initiatives of the Digital Single Market Strategy.

Its public consultation on the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive had revealed a very strong majority in support of maintaining the Country of Origin principle for regulating broadcast media, as well as for extending the scope of the instrument to include new types of services.

There was divergence on how to enhance protection of minors, commercial works and communications. The Commission confirmed that the first of the copyright regime proposals, on portability and unjustified geoblocking, would be published in the first half of 2016.

Finally, under this part of the agenda, the Council took note from the Netherlands delegation of its *main priorities in the field of culture* when it takes over the Presidency for the period January – June 2016. These will include the importance of digitisation for the preservation and dissemination of culture, and the need to establish a sustainable funding model for the *Europeana* digital culture portal.

Sport

The Council adopted conclusions on *EU representation in the World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA)*: and also on *the promotion of motor skills, physical and sport activities for children*.

These were followed by a policy debate on *the educational potential of sports*: in helping disadvantaged youth find their place in society. The debate was introduced by two external speakers, of which Olympic champion Ed Moses described the struggle to build an evidence base for convincing media and government that the sports sector was credible in playing a role, and appealed to governments to think longer-term and fund research. He was followed by the Premier League, which introduced a video of its Crystal Palace FC project, from which two participants had since built careers in Premier League clubs.

The UK described several of its projects in this area, such as Get on Track, and was the only Member State to emphasise the importance of including young people with disabilities.

Under other business: The Council was subsequently briefed by the Presidency on the state of play regarding the European Union's signing of the *Council of Europe Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions*.

The Council was also briefed by the EU representatives on the *outcome of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) meeting* which took place in Colorado Springs on 17 – 18 November 2015. The UK's Sports Minister, Tracey Crouch, has been named as the newly elected EU representative on the WADA Foundation Board for the UK-Estonia-Bulgaria Presidency Trio, and will take up her post in 2016. Two of the three EU Member States that were not yet fully code-compliant, Greece and Spain, (the third being the Czech Republic) intervened to stress they were preparing the required amendments to national legislation.

This was followed by information on *the informal meeting of Ministers for Sport*, held in Luxembourg from 06 -07 July 2015: and guidelines presented by the European Commission on next year's *European Week of Sport*.

Finally, under *other business* the Council took note of information from the Netherlands delegation of its main priorities in the field of sport when it takes over the

Presidency for the period January – June 2016. These will include the promotion of good governance and education in and through sport, with specific attention paid to international major sports events, sport diplomacy and voluntary activities.

Financial Services

[HLWS351]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Harriett Baldwin) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Further to the statement provided to the House on 2 June 2015 [HCWS10], the Chancellor has announced that the trading plan to sell part of the Government's shares in Lloyds Banking Group will be extended. We will stop the plan before the launch of the Government's retail sale of Lloyds shares.

The extension of the plan is a further step in returning Lloyds to the private sector and reducing our national debt. A statement will be laid before Parliament with further details at the end of the plan.

Foreign Affairs Council: Post Council Statement

[HLWS352]

Lord Maude of Horsham: The EU Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) took place in Brussels on 27 November 2015. I represented the UK on all the issues discussed at the meeting. A summary of those discussions follows.

DDA/WTO - 10th World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference

On the preparations for the 10th World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference, Commissioner Malmström said the prospects for a deal on DDA were challenging. Nonetheless Member States united in expressing their ongoing support for the multilateral system.

I, supported by a number of other Member States, pushed in particular for progress on the Information Technology Agreement and Environmental Goods Agreement – two key plurilaterals agreements that could be concluded in the near future.

Free Trade Agreements:

TTIP

Commissioner Malmström reported positive progress from the last round in several areas, most notably the exchange on tariff offers at 97% liberalisation. However, progress was slower in areas such as GIs, public procurement and Technical Barriers to Trade.

I shared my view that the Obama Administration wanted to conclude TTIP and that to achieve this Member States would need to give the Commission maximum flexibility.

Twenty-two other Member States spoke, mostly to call for solid progress in the near future.

Mercosur

Commissioner Malmström spoke of the pending decision as whether to exchange tariff offers now with Mercosur given that we knew their offer was below the level of ambition the EU had been asking for. The choice would be between exchanging offers at this lower level now, or seek an improved offer but risk a drawn out impasse. The External Action Service supported an exchange now, noting that Mercosur was the EU's biggest investment partner outside of North America. I, supported by more than half of Member States, advocated moving ahead with the 87% offer subject to further progress being made thereafter. The Commissioner concluded that she would speak to the new Government of Argentina before reaching a decision.

Japan

Commissioner Malmström said negotiations on Japan were tough, but that she thought a deal could be concluded next year if Japan demonstrated the political will to move on the EU's asks. I, supported by Denmark, expressed my strong support for progress on this important FTA, and pointed to the G7 in May as a potential backstop for conclusion.

Other ASIA

Vietnamese PM Dung would be in Brussels the following week to conclude the ambitious EU-Vietnam FTA. After a lengthy break, Indian and EU Chief Negotiators would meet again in January.

AOB:

Ukraine's DCFTA

During the technical trilateral consultations between the EU, Russia and Ukraine on DCFTA implementation, Russia had not been interested in the EU's suggested practical solutions to Russian concerns. Commissioner Malmström stated she would not acquiesce to Russian attempts to broaden the scope of these discussions.

I supported the Commissioner's stance. I currently saw no benefit in enhanced cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union – one of Russia's requests. The Commissioner agreed.

Steel

Following the 9 November Extraordinary Competitiveness Council, Italy raised steel proposing further EU action based upon the 'threat of injury'; greater control of trade flows through registration and surveillance; faster use of interim measures: and the use of ex-officio powers to launch cases.

The Commissioner responded that she would continue to raise Chinese overcapacity in the OECD and China Steel dialogues. The Commission were open to action on 'threat of injury', and use of registration. This discussion merged with the lunchtime discussion on China. I was clear that we should speed up investigations and in any detailed attempts to modernise Trade Defence Instruments the EU should not row back on the Lesser Duty Rule.

Lunch Discussion - China

In the presence of High Representative/Vice President Mogherini, the discussion focused on the pending decision on granting Market Economy Status (MES) to China.

I stressed that if the EU wanted China to take its international obligations seriously then so must the EU. I also took the opportunity to state that the UK Government's approach on trade defence remained case-by-case.

Council Conclusions

The Council adopted the attached Council Conclusions, welcoming the Commission's "Trade for All" strategy published on 14 October 2015. See below.

Annexe

Council Conclusions, 27 November 2015 on the Communication from the Commission of 14 October 2015 on "Trade for All: Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy"

i) Recalling the European Council Conclusions of 7/8 February 2013 and its previous Conclusions on Trade of 21 November 2014, the Council broadly welcomes the Communication from the Commission of 14 October 2015 on "Trade for All: Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy". The Council takes note of the Communication's conclusions and recommendations, which pave the way for an ambitious trade and investment agenda, in line with the EU's external relations and other relevant policies.

i) The Council remains fully committed to a strong, rules-based multilateral trading system and strongly supports the Commission's ambitious approach in this regard. It supports the further strengthening of the multilateral system, including dispute settlement as one of its central pillars, on the basis of a robust and effective WTO that responds to current and future global trade challenges, and which better reflects the capacities of other WTO members to contribute to the system. A successful WTO Ministerial Conference (MC10) in Nairobi with concrete, balanced and meaningful outcomes and progress on the remaining issues of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) will be important to foster trust and confidence in the multilateral trading system and boost international trade. Following the ratification by the EU of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), the Council now expects other WTO partners which have not yet done so to fulfil all the required procedural steps without delay, so that companies, in particular in developing countries, can experience the tangible benefits of the TFA as soon as possible. The EU is also committed to exploring ways to make the multilateral trading system work better in the future and is open to considering the addition of new issues to the future trade agenda.

i) The Council looks forward to swift progress in plurilateral negotiations, including the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) and, by MC10, the expansion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) and a

significant outcome on the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA). These agreements, and any new plurilateral initiatives among WTO members, should contribute to stronger global trade and to more growth and jobs, and should act as building blocks for future multilateral agreements.

i) The Council supports the conclusion of ambitious, comprehensive and mutually beneficial bilateral trade and investment agreements and calls on the Commission to work to advance negotiations with the US, Japan and key partners in Latin America, and in the Asia-Pacific region. It welcomes the strong positive results stemming from the implementation of the EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement, which is the first and most ambitious new generation bilateral trade deal ever implemented by the EU. The Council also welcomes progress achieved in the context of the Economic Partnership Agreements with ACP countries and looks forward to swiftly moving ahead with signature, ratification and implementation of these agreements. Deepening the trade and economic integration of the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood with the EU should also be pursued, taking into account the different ambitions of partner countries, in order to further develop an area of shared stability, security and prosperity.

i) The Council welcomes the ambitious programme of future bilateral trade negotiations set out by the Commission in its Communication, and underlines the need to consider any decision to open negotiations on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the EU's offensive and defensive interests, broader political context, as well as prioritising those negotiations that will provide most benefit in terms of growth and jobs. Bilateral, regional and plurilateral agreements should complement each other, be transparent, consistent and contribute to a stronger multilateral trading system under WTO rules.

i) The Council agrees that trade should benefit all, whether consumers, workers or economic operators and be coherent with other EU policies. It stresses the importance of national and European economic, social, environmental and labour market policies to help workers and businesses adjust to the process of continuous change in the global economy, making sure that they enhance their international competitiveness, harness new market opportunities and that the benefits of globalisation are fairly distributed and negative impacts mitigated. The Council underlines that EU trade agreements will not lead to lower levels of consumer, health, environmental or social and labour protection standards, and that any changes to levels of protection can only be upward and need to respect fully governments' right to regulate.

i) The worldwide economic shifts outside the EU will require Europe to further tap into the new centres of global growth in order to consolidate economic recovery and create more and better jobs to address continued unemployment, especially among young

people, on our continent. Taking into account the EU's interests and specificities, trade agreements should provide equal opportunities across EU Member States, regions, including outermost regions and overseas territories of the EU, and all relevant sectors, including industry, agriculture and services. In this context, the Council underlines the need to facilitate and improve the integration of European companies in global value chains, in particular small and medium sized enterprises.

i) Given the importance of small and medium sized enterprises in the EU, their key role in job creation and their significant contribution to EU trade, the Council stresses the need to cut trading costs for SMEs through streamlining customs procedures, reducing non-tariff barriers and regulatory burdens, and strengthening trade enabling services. Therefore, the Council welcomes the Commission's intention to address these issues through provisions dedicated to SMEs in all trade and investment negotiations, in order to enhance the effective use of trade preferences by SMEs.

i) As the world's largest exporter of digitally deliverable services, the EU needs an ambitious and pro-active digital trade strategy in order to reap the benefits of digitalisation, in line with the Digital Single Market and relevant policies. This includes addressing new types of trade barriers which European businesses of all sizes face, such as non-transparent rules, undue government interference, and unjustified data localisation and data storage requirements. The Council stresses the need to create a global level playing field in the area of digital trade and strongly supports the Commission's intention to pursue this goal in full compliance with and without prejudice to the EU's data protection and data privacy rules, which are not negotiated in or affected by trade agreements.

ii) The Council recalls that trade in services is becoming all the more important for the EU economy and is closely interlinked with trade in goods. EU trade policy therefore needs to aim at improving market access for both goods and services together, as well as facilitating the mobility of highly skilled service providers and professionals, including recognition of their qualifications. The Council also reiterates that EU trade and investment agreements do not and will not require governments to privatise any public service, or prevent governments, at any level, from protecting, supporting or regulating the provision of public services in areas such as water, education, culture, health or social services, nor from expanding the range of services they supply to the public.

iii) The Council underlines that investment, both inward and outward, is essential for Europe's economy and companies to succeed. Regarding investment policy, which is an area of shared competence and responsibility, the Council stresses the need to promote and protect investments, and to maintain a level playing field for all investors. It welcomes the Commission's innovative and ambitious approach to modernise

investment protection, and takes note of the transmission of a negotiating text proposal to the United States in this regard. The Council further takes note of the Commission's intention to consider this approach, where appropriate, in other EU trade agreements and to work towards the establishment of a multilateral investment court as a final goal. The Council welcomes the renewed pledge to respect governments' right to regulate.

iv) The Council underlines the need to seize the benefits of open trade in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit, and taking into account third countries' level of development. Open trade also depends on and benefits from fair and undistorted competition. It is therefore of utmost importance to fight all forms of protectionism by reducing barriers to trade, including as regards non-tariff trade barriers, ensuring better market access, promoting appropriate investment conditions including as regards investment protection, enforcing and promoting intellectual property rights (including geographical indications, patents, designs, trademarks and copyright), opening up public procurement markets, and securing access to energy, raw materials and components. It encourages the Commission to continue its efforts for market opening, reinforced international regulatory co-operation, raising global standards, as well as tackling trade barriers and unfair trade practices, including through using the full range of EU trade policy instruments. It also supports the Commission in its efforts to ensure compliance and enforcement of WTO rules and the better implementation of the EU's own bilateral trade and investment agreements.

v) The Council acknowledges that trade policy and a better implementation of the EU's agreements are a joint responsibility of the Commission, Member States, the European Parliament and stakeholders, building on an effective cooperation and timely consultations, and welcomes the proposed enhanced partnership for implementation with a view to maximising the benefits stemming from trade and investment agreements. The Council recalls the importance of ensuring the non-discrimination of Member States as well as the integrity of the single market when it comes to trade preferences granted by third countries. It welcomes the Commission's intention to improve "ex-ante" impact assessments, to report annually on the implementation of FTAs and to intensify its work on "ex-post" impact evaluations.

vi) A responsible EU trade policy must be accompanied by a high level of transparency and an effective communication with citizens about the benefits and challenges of trade and open markets. The intensification of the debate around the EU's trade policy is an opportunity to better involve all stakeholders in the preparation, negotiation and implementation of our different initiatives in the field. This should respect the existing institutional balance and applicable rules regarding classified information,

and not prejudice the EU's negotiating positions or international relations.

vii) Only through an ambitious and responsible trade policy agenda, which takes account of other relevant policies, will the EU be able to shape globalisation and participate in the drawing up of robust international rules in future. The Council is therefore committed to ensuring that trade agreements safeguard the values on which the EU is founded, as well as EU standards and regulatory practices. This includes strengthening measures to support sustainable development and good governance through trade agreements, multi-stakeholder initiatives and beyond, with an emphasis on free, fair and ethical trade, environmental protection, labour rights, decent working conditions, as well as human rights, health and consumer protection, animal welfare, ensuring the protection of cultural diversity and promoting development through trade, including Aid for Trade and the 2030 Agenda. The Council attaches great importance to ensuring the inclusion and effective implementation of related provisions in all trade agreements and the Generalised System of Preferences.

viii) The EU needs to be at the forefront of the fight against corruption and the Council looks forward to the Commission's proposals on how to tackle related issues in trade agreements. Corporate social responsibility and due diligence, in particular regarding global value chains, needs to be increased. The EU will support partner countries, and in particular least developed countries, in taking advantage of responsible global value chains to foster inclusive and sustainable growth, thereby creating jobs and strengthening competitiveness.

NHS: Charging Overseas Visitors and Migrants

[HLWS355]

Lord Prior of Brampton: My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health (Jeremy Hunt) has made the following written ministerial statement.

The visitor and migrant National Health Service cost recovery programme was established in July 2014 to design and implement improvements in the systems for charging patients who are not resident of the United Kingdom. The programme has focused so far on improving identification and cost recovery from chargeable patients in hospitals.

I am pleased to announce the Department of Health will now be seeking the public's views on extending charging of overseas visitors and migrants who use the National Health Service. We have proposed a number of changes to enable overseas visitors and migrants to be charged for NHS healthcare they receive, in addition to the existing system for cost recovery for hospital treatment. The proposed extension of charging will not affect free healthcare at the point of use for permanent residents of the UK.

The consultation seeks opinions on proposals affecting:

- Primary Medical Care - NHS Prescriptions - Primary NHS Dental Care - Primary NHS Ophthalmic Services (Eye Care) - Accident and Emergency (A&E) - Ambulance Services - Assisted Reproduction - Non-NHS providers of NHS Care and Out-of-Hospital Care - NHS Continuing Healthcare - EEA National's residency definition - Overseas visitors working on UK-registered ships

The consultation also seeks views on any further areas that could be considered for charging.

The proposals explored within the consultation aim to support the principle of fairness by ensuring those not resident of the United Kingdom who can pay for National Health Service care do so. The proposals we are consulting on do not intend to restrict access, but aim to ensure everyone makes a fair contribution for the care they receive.

We propose that the most vulnerable people, including refugees, remain exempt from charging. Furthermore, the National Health Service will not deny urgent and immediately necessary healthcare to those in need, regardless of residency. We also propose that exemptions from charging will also remain in place for illnesses that pose a risk to public health.

The potential income generated through the extension of charging will contribute towards the Department of Health's aim of recovering up to £500 million per year from overseas migrants and visitors by the middle of this Parliament (2017/18). The recovery of up to £500 million per year will contribute to the £22 billion savings required to ensure the long-term sustainability of the National Health Service.

A copy of the consultation document is attached.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Extending Charging Consultation Document [Extending Charging Consultation.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2015-12-07/HLWS355/>

Stalking Protection Order

[HLWS354]

Lord Bates: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Theresa May) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On Saturday 5 December, I launched a public consultation on introducing a new Stalking Protection Order. Stalking is an insidious crime which traumatises its victims and, at its most extreme, can lead to the loss of innocent lives. We are addressing stalking as part of our wider work to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the work we are driving in this area will be captured in our refreshed VAWG strategy to be published in due course.

We introduced new legislation in 2012 to fill a gap in the law to tackle stalking and have driven a programme of

training for police and prosecutors to ensure that stalking is recognised and dealt with effectively. Prosecutions are rising which is encouraging. However, I want to be absolutely sure that we are doing all we can to protect victims from this frightening act, which can cause considerable distress and alarm.

The nature of stalking can be delusional and obsessive and while the actions of a stalker can seem innocuous on the surface, there is a risk that the developing fixation may be missed. Early identification of stalking behaviour is crucial and I am determined that this Government will do everything possible to protect victims and deter perpetrators, even before the stage is reached to commence prosecution.

We know that stalking can take place in the context of an ongoing pattern of domestic violence and abuse and we have introduced a range of measures to protect victims in these circumstances, including the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, and the Domestic Violence Protection Order. Our stalking legislation, along with the new offence of coercive or controlling behaviour, is already helping to protect victims from this abuse.

However, in around half of cases, stalking occurs where only a very casual acquaintanceship exists between the perpetrator and their victim. While existing injunctions or orders may place restrictions on a stalker, this alone will often not deter them from their behaviour. Stalking needs to be recognised for what it is to ensure interventions are effective and meaningful.

A new Stalking Protection Order could ensure that pre-charge options are available to the police to protect these victims of 'stranger stalking' to the same level that victims of domestic violence and abuse can be protected. The consultation will explore whether 'positive requirements' can be placed on perpetrators at this early stage to help stop their behaviour in its tracks.

I launched the consultation on 5 December during the 16 Days of Actions following the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November. The consultation can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-a-stalking-protection-order>.

A copy will also be placed in the House library.

Written Answers

Monday, 7 December 2015

Acute Oak Decline

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the spread of Acute Oak Decline in the UK. [HL3978]

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many oak trees have been killed by Acute Oak Decline in the past five years. [HL3979]

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research they have conducted into the bacterial infection spread by the *Agrilus biguttatus* beetle. [HL3980]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Over the past five years Forest Research, in collaboration with Rothamsted Research, has conducted a systematic survey to model the distribution of acute oak decline (AOD) in England and Wales. The results show that the condition currently affects several thousand oak trees, mostly across East Anglia, the Midlands and southern England.

The complex nature of the condition means it is often associated with other pathogens, as well as insect defoliators and the research has not yet concluded whether AOD kills trees or not. A large proportion of the infected trees monitored have entered remission suggesting some level of host resistance. We do not have information at the landscape level on the number of oak with AOD symptoms that die every year.

Since 2013, Defra has invested £1.1 million in research to understand the causes, distribution and scale of AOD in the UK. This includes work to investigate the bacterial species associated with the condition and to understand whether the *Agrilus biguttatus* beetle plays a role in the dispersal of these bacterial species. Early findings from this research are still inconclusive. There is currently no firm evidence of transmission by the beetle.

Earlier this year, Defra in collaboration with the Research Councils, Scottish Government and the Forestry Commission launched a further £2 million call for research proposals on 'oak health' and *Phytophthora*. The successful bids from this call are due to be announced shortly.

Biofuels

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the viability of biodiesel made from waste products in comparison to biodiesel made from virgin products. [HL3994]

Asked by *Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are giving to producers of biodiesel made from waste products. [HL3995]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) provides double rewards for biofuels derived from wastes.

The Department concluded a post-implementation review of the RTFO in April 2014. Evidence from the review indicates that double rewards for biofuels from wastes, which were introduced under the RTFO in 2011, have encouraged a strong market for biodiesel from used cooking oil in the UK.

Since the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) was established waste based biofuels have risen from 12% of total biofuel supply in the first year of the obligation 2008/09, to 50% according to the data for 2014/15 (*Biofuels Statistics obligation year 7 2014/15 - Report 5*).

British Nationals Abroad: Islamic State

Asked by *Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they treat UK citizens in Iraq and Syria who participate in ISIL actions and activities as enemy combatants or criminals, and whether in making such assessments they consider what the actions of those individuals were, in particular whether they are violent or of violent intent, and whether or not their violence is targeted at the UK or UK citizens. [HL3986]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: More than 750 Britons of national security concern have travelled to the region since the start of the conflict and we estimate that around half of those have returned. Those who have committed criminal offences (including financing terrorism, training for terrorism and murder) should expect to be prosecuted for their crimes on their return to the UK.

The British Government is carrying out air strikes to support Iraqi and Kurdish forces' efforts against Daesh in Iraq. UK citizens who are part of Daesh in Iraq are in no different position to other Daesh members there. The current position in Syria is that the UK will only take military action if there is a critical British national interest at stake or there was the need to act to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. In relation to the airstrike against Reyaad Khan on 21 August, I refer the noble Lord to the oral statement of 7 September 2015 made by the Prime Minister, my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr Cameron), which was repeated the same day in the House of Lords by The Lord Privy Seal (Baroness Stowell of Beeston), (Official Report, column 1249).

British Nationals Abroad: Syria

Asked by *Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why 450 British extremists who have been, or are believed to have been,

fighting in Syria have been permitted to re-enter the UK, and why only three of those individuals have been charged with terrorist offences. [HL3775]

Lord Bates: Approximately 800 British nationals have travelled to Syria to take part in the conflict since it began, and of those who are known to have travelled about half have returned.

It is a general convention of international law that a state should allow entry of its own citizens.

However, everyone who returns from taking part in the conflict in Syria or Iraq – which includes those who voluntarily decide to live in areas controlled by ISIL – must expect to be subject to review by the police to determine if they have committed criminal offences abroad, and to ensure that they do not pose a threat to our national security.

British citizens and residents who commit offences abroad can be prosecuted under a wide range of terrorism and criminal law offences including training for terrorism and murder.

Decisions on charging are taken independently on a case-by-case basis by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Bus Service Operators Grant

Asked by Baroness Kramer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the amount of the Bus Service Operators Grant in (1) 2014–15, and (2) 2015–16. [HL3964]

Asked by Baroness Kramer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the expected amount of the Bus Service Operators Grant in each financial year from 2016–17 to 2019–20 inclusive. [HL3965]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The amount of Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) paid out for services in England during 2014/15 was some £253 million. As BSOG is demand-led, it is too early to estimate accurately the amount likely to be paid out during 2015/16, although we would expect it to be broadly similar to that for 2014/15.

The amount to be paid out in future years will depend upon the number of eligible claims submitted by the operators of bus services in each year. However, I can confirm that we were able to protect the grant as part of the 2015 Spending Review. Moreover, we will be publishing more details early next year of how we will be reforming the way BSOG is paid to make it even more effective in supporting bus services.

Care Homes: Children

Asked by Lord Laird

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many files from children's homes in London that were previously supervised by the Home Office remain unopened

because they are marked "not for opening"; to which homes they relate; and how long those files have been closed. [HL3916]

Lord Bates: Following a machinery of government change in the early 1970s, Home Office files relating to children's home inspections were transferred to the Department for Health and Social Security. There are 49 files with 'children's home' and 'London' in the catalogue description dating from 1931 onwards that are held at The National Archives. Details of the files, including whether they are closed, can be found through a search of The National Archives catalogue. Most are closed for 75 years from the date they went out of active use as they contain sensitive personal information where release would distress or endanger an individual who was a minor at the time the file was in use.

Classroom Assistants and Teachers

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the latest figures available for the proportion of (1) male, and (2) female (a) teachers, and (b) teaching assistants in (i) primary, and (ii) secondary, schools in the UK. [HL3455]

Lord Nash: The requested information is set out in the following table. This is based on data collected in November 2014 for the School Workforce Census. The following table shows the proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) male and female teachers and teaching assistants in primary and secondary state-funded schools in England.

	<i>(a) Teachers¹</i>		<i>(b) Teaching Assistants²</i>	
	<i>(1) Male</i>	<i>(2) Female</i>	<i>(1) Male</i>	<i>(2) Female</i>
(i) Primary	15%	85%	5%	95%
(ii) Secondary	38%	62%	17%	83%
All	26%	74%	9%	91%

Source: School Workforce Census

1. Teacher numbers include all regular qualified and unqualified, covering classroom and all leadership grades.
2. Teaching Assistants include higher level teaching assistants, special needs support staff, minority ethnic pupils support staff and other staff with pupil support roles.

Equivalent figures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a matter for the relevant Devolved Administration.

Common Agricultural Policy

Asked by Lord Tebbit

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 16 November (HL3254), what is the UK share of the

Common Agricultural Policy budget for 2015 in percentage and cash terms respectively. [HL3981]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: In 2015, the UK was allocated 7% of the Common Agricultural Policy budget which is equivalent to €4 billion.

Cycleways

Asked by Lord Crathorne

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to build bicycle tracks when new roads are constructed in the UK. [HL3926]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Management of roads is a devolved issue so I can only respond in respect of roads in England.

Highways England have committed to provide a safer, integrated and more accessible strategic road network for cyclists and other vulnerable road users, and will play a key role in ensuring that the ambition set for growth in cycling is fully supported by a dedicated programme of work to improve cycle facilities on or near our strategic road network. To support this, The Government has outlined a commitment to invest £100m between 2015/16 and 2020/21 to improve provision for cyclists on the strategic road network.

On a local level, provision of cycling infrastructure is for local traffic authorities as they are responsible for managing their road networks. The Department encourages them to ensure cycling is considered as part of the process of planning new development. The Department for Transport's *Cycle Infrastructure Design* guidance supports local authorities on providing cycle-safe infrastructure for cyclists. The Government will continue to support sustainable transport with a new £580 million 'Access' fund, with £80 million revenue and £500 million capital. This will build on the legacy of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and support growth in both cycling and walking.

Cycling: Licensing

Asked by Lord Wills

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the possible advantages and disadvantages of licensing bicyclists. [HL3851]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We consider that the costs of a formal testing and licensing system for cyclists would significantly outweigh the benefits cycling has to the country's economy, health and environment. Evidence suggests that increased cycling could create significant savings for the NHS, less pollution and congestion, and a happier and healthier population. It is likely that a licensing system will discourage many existing and potential cyclists, leading to a dramatic fall in the numbers of people cycling.

Around 80% of adult cyclists also hold driving licenses, meaning that the majority of cyclists on the road have already been tested on operating safely in different road and traffic conditions. Furthermore, the safety case for a

testing/licensing system is not as strong as that for drivers since, by contrast with motorised vehicles, bicycles involved in collisions on the highway are highly unlikely to cause serious injury to other road users.

Cyclists as well as all road users must obey the Highway Code, and the Government has provided funding for training schemes such as Bikeability which provides practical training and teaches the Highway Code to the next generation of cyclists. The Bikeability programme currently trains approximately 50% of primary schoolchildren in England and more than 1.5 million children have received training since the programme's inception.

The recent Spending Review committed £300m to cycling investment between 2015-16 and 2020-21, this includes delivering in full the £114 million Cycle Ambition City scheme, with construction of segregated cycle lanes including 115 kilometres in Birmingham and 56 kilometres in Manchester.

Asked by Lord Rowe-Beddoe

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 23 November (HL Deb, col 468), whether they will consider introducing a small annual licence fee and mandatory registration of all bicycles. [HL3865]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has no plans to introduce such measures.

Darfur: Rape

Asked by Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of whether continuing efforts to press the government of Sudan to tackle sexual and gender-based violence in Darfur have been successful, in the light of (1) the incidence of rape in the areas currently monitored by the UN and (2) the requirement in the legal framework in Sudan for a victim to provide four male witnesses to confirm that a rape was without consent. [HL3895]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We remain deeply concerned by the reported prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence in Darfur. While we welcome amendments to Sudanese law earlier this year that separated the crimes of rape and adultery we are concerned about how the law is implemented.

In addition to engaging the Government of Sudan, we will continue to support a wide-range of efforts to progress this issue. We strongly support the presence of the African Union/UN Hybrid Mission operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and have worked to ensure that the mission has a strong mandate to protect civilians across Darfur. We are also vocal – both bilaterally and through the UN's Security and Human Rights Councils – in urging all armed actors to address sexual and gender-based violence in Darfur. The UK played a significant role in the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution

2242 reflecting the importance of Women, Peace and Security-related issues for the UN family. Bilaterally, we have provided support to over 150 survivors of rape in Darfur and contributed to the successful prosecution of members of the police and armed forces.

Diabetes

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the evidence on which the current emphasis by NHS Choices on low-fat products or unsaturated fats in dietary advice for people with diabetes, or who are pre-diabetic, is based. [HL3809]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the focus in the current dietary advice by NHS Choices to people with diabetes or who are pre-diabetic on the possible benefits of a diet combining protein with low glycemic load carbohydrates. [HL3810]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Public Health England (PHE) advocates a healthy balanced diet for all based on the eatwell plate; the national healthy eating guide. The eatwell plate shows for a healthy balanced diet people should try to eat plenty of starchy foods, fruit and vegetables, some milk, dairy, meat, fish and other non-dairy sources of protein and only small amounts of food and drinks high in fat and/or sugar.

The Government takes a whole population approach to healthy eating, and therefore does not provide specific dietary advice to individuals with medical needs. It is recommended for anyone with a medical condition who is in search of dietary advice to consult their local general practitioner or a dietician.

In July 2015, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) published its report on Carbohydrates and Health, a review of the latest evidence on dietary carbohydrates and health. SACN recommended reducing sugar consumption, increasing fibre consumption and minimising consumption of sugars-sweetened drinks. A copy of Carbohydrates and Health is attached.

Following publication, advice on what constitutes a healthy balanced diet, for the general population, which includes those with diabetes, was updated to reflect SACN's recommendations. As part of this, PHE is undertaking a review of the eatwell plate; the refreshed resource will be launched in early 2016.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Carbohydrates and Health
[SACN_Carbohydrates_and_Health_July_2015.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2015-11-23/HL3809>

Electoral Register: Young People

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bridges of Headley on 17 November (HL3184), how many electoral registration officers have visited schools and colleges in the last twelve months; and what proportion of the total number of electoral registration officers that figure represents. [HL3794]

Lord Bridges of Headley: This information is not collected centrally.

Equal Pay

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Answer by Baroness Altmann on 19 November (HL Deb, col 265) promising to look at the gender pay gap for older women, whether they will also look into the gender pay gap between men and women under 35 years of age. [HL3817]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are pleased with the progress made towards eliminating the gender pay gap women working full time under the age of 40, but we are not complacent. To encourage young women to consider a wide range of career options, we have revised statutory guidance for schools on careers to raise aspirations; established a new Careers and Enterprise Company to encourage greater collaboration between employers and schools to inspire young people; supported the 'Your Life' campaign to encourage more young people to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM); and published the 'Your Daughter's Future' guidance for parents.

Ethnic Groups: Employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps are being taken to increase racial diversity in the workplace in the light of the Business in the Community report Race at Work 2015, which found that ethnic minority Britons are struggling against bias at work. [HL3795]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Equality Act 2010 protects all individuals against racial and other forms of discrimination in the workplace. The Prime Minister has underlined the Government's commitments to increasing racial diversity in the workplace in his 2020 Vision in which he made a commitment to increase BAME employment by 20% by 2020. Her Majesty's Government welcomes the publication of the Race at Work report and will study its recommendations carefully.

European Convention on Human Rights: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Lester of Herne Hill

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Answer by Lord Faulks on 18 November (HL Deb, col 133), what is their assessment of whether they have the power under section 26 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to give direction to the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland to secure their compliance with the European Human Rights Conventions; and whether the Secretary of State has considered exercising any such power to secure full compliance in Northern Ireland with its obligations under the Convention in relation to equal marriage, blasphemy and defamation. [HL3813]

Lord Faulks: Under section 26 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (NIA) the Secretary of State may by order direct that action be taken by a Northern Ireland Minister or department if required for the purpose of giving effect to international obligations. However, international obligations in this context are defined as “any international obligations of the United Kingdom other than obligations to observe and implement EU law or the Convention rights” (Section 98 of the NIA). As such, the power under section 26 cannot be used for the purpose of bringing about action in Northern Ireland to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Fluoride: Drinking Water

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the running costs of existing and future fluoridation schemes will continue to be funded when the ring-fenced public health grant is removed; and if so, how. [I] [HL3805]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made for the capital funding costs of new fluoridation schemes. [I] [HL3806]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Since April 2013 Public Health England (PHE), on behalf of the Secretary of State, has recovered the operational costs of water fluoridation from local authorities served by these arrangements. The Secretary of State is required to meet the reasonable fluoridation capital and operating costs incurred by water undertakers in England and has the power to require local authorities to make payments to the Secretary of State to meet any such costs he has incurred. There are no proposed changes to the legislation affecting these arrangements.

Funding arrangements for the capital costs of new fluoridation schemes in England will need to be agreed between local authorities and PHE, on behalf of the Secretary of State, as part of the preparatory work before the scheme can commence.

Gatwick Airport

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reconsider expanding Gatwick airport in the light of comments by the Chief Executive of that airport. [HL3797]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government continues to consider the large amount of very detailed analysis contained in the Airports Commission's final report before taking any decisions on next steps.

Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety

Asked by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen

To ask Her Majesty's Government why no Minister or senior British representative attended the second global High-Level Conference on Road Safety in Brasilia, Brazil on 18–19 November. [HL3930]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The second global High-Level Conference on Road Safety in Brasilia, Brazil was attended by Deputy Head of Mission, Mr Wasim Mir.

High Speed 2 Railway Line

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest projection of the cost of HS2 at completion including motive power units and carriages. [HL3816]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Spending Review 2015 settlement announced by the Chancellor on 25 November sets out an updated funding envelope for delivering the HS2 project in 2015 prices of £55.7bn. This includes provision for rolling stock, including motive power. The underlying budget for this project has not changed. At SR13 we announced that the total budget was £50.1bn in 2011 prices and it has been updated to 2015 prices.

HMS Vanguard

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the designed operational life of HMS Vanguard. [HL4046]

Earl Howe: In common with most Royal Navy ships and submarines, the initial operational life planning estimate for the Vanguard class submarines was 25 years. The planning estimates of in-service life for all defence platforms are routinely reviewed and amended when appropriate.

Holloway Prison

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners are presently held at HMP Holloway. [HL3913]

Lord Faulks: As published on the MOJs website, on Friday 30 October 2015 there were 544 prisoners held in HM Prison and Young Offender Institution Holloway.

A figure for Friday 27 November 2015 will be published on the 11 December 2015 on the Ministry of Justice website.

Individual prison population and capacity information for every prison in England and Wales, as well as the total population and useable operational capacity of the prison estate is published monthly on the Ministry of Justice website.

Innovate UK

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government when Innovate UK will publish its strategy for 2016–20. [HL4009]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: Innovate UK intends to publish its Strategy for 2016-20 in the spring. This will be followed by the publication of Innovate UK's Delivery Plan for 2016-17. This timetable takes account of the timing of the recent Spending Review.

Iraq: Genocide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the discovery of a booby-trapped mass grave in northern Iraq is evidence of genocide against minorities such as Yazidis and Assyrian Christians. [HL4065]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We are aware of reports that mass graves have been discovered in northern Iraq, at least one of which was allegedly booby trapped by Daesh. We condemn in the strongest terms the targeting and persecution of Yezidis, Christians and other communities by this brutal terrorist organisation.

We continue to urge the Government of Iraq to do all it can to ensure the security and rights of all communities in Iraq. We are working in Iraq to build consensus around the importance of freedom of religion or belief; and supporting practical projects on community dialogue with civil society and faith groups.

The British Government believes that recognition of genocides should be a matter for international courts. It should be a legal, rather than political determination, decided by international judges after consideration of all the evidence available in the context of a credible international judicial process.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the closure by Israeli forces of two stone factories in a village south of Bethlehem for security reasons, after incidents of stone throwing in the vicinity. [HL3871]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have not made representations to the Israeli authorities over the specific issue of the closure of two stone factories. However we continue to urge both the Israelis and Palestinians to maintain calm and refrain from taking actions which could make peace more difficult to achieve.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the retention by Israel of the bodies of suspected Palestinian combatants, rather than returning those bodies to their families. [HL3874]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The Deputy Head of Mission at our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised this issue with Israel's National Security Council Director on 18 November. We continue to urge both the Israelis and Palestinians to maintain calm and refrain from taking actions which could make peace more difficult to achieve.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel following reports that the Israeli army is preventing a Palestinian woman from travelling to her own wedding ceremony in Jordan. [HL3875]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have not made any representations to the Israeli authorities over this specific issue. We do, however, remain deeply concerned about restrictions on freedom of movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised this issue with Israeli National Security Advisor Cohen on 2 November. Our Consul-General to Jerusalem also raised this issue with the Mayor of Jerusalem on 28 October.

Israel: West Bank

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what influence they and the EU will exert to secure the lifting of restrictions imposed on Palestinians in and near Hebron. [HL3962]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on freedom of movement in and near Hebron as well as elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Through our Embassy in Tel Aviv, we continue to lobby the Israeli authorities on the issue of

movement and access, most recently on 24 November when our Deputy Head of Mission discussed with the Head of the relevant unit at Israel's Ministry of Defence. We continue to work closely with EU partners to call on Israel to ease restrictions on access.

Local Healthwatch

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether local healthwatches are meeting Healthwatch England's mission to be a consumer champion, in the light of reports that some contractors and local authorities refuse to engage with the public in their area. [HL3841]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recourse or right of appeal is available to a member of the public removed from, or prevented from working with, a local healthwatch by the contractors. [HL3842]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to undertake an investigation into the performance of local healthwatches. [HL3843]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they propose to take to ensure that a proper distinction is made between the role of the contractor appointed by the local authority to enable local healthwatches to be established and run, and that of the local healthwatch organisation itself. [HL3844]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Department currently has no plans to undertake an investigation into the performance of local Healthwatch organisations. In March 2015 the Department published a report commissioned from the King's Fund — *Local Healthwatch: Progress and promise* — which set out the progress that local Healthwatch have made since being established in 2013. Transparency about the performance of local Healthwatch organisations is provided through the annual reports which they are required to publish. Reports on how the local Healthwatch network as a whole is operating and the nature of the support needed to deliver their activities effectively are discussed at quarterly public meetings of the Healthwatch England Committee.

Arrangements for ensuring local Healthwatch statutory activities are delivered in each area are a matter for local authorities. The Local Government Association has published guidance to support local Healthwatch and local commissioners in putting in place good governance arrangements, which includes clarity about the roles of all parties involved.

Neither the Department nor Healthwatch England are aware of local Healthwatch contractors refusing to engage with the public in their area. Where Healthwatch England

is made aware of concerns in relation to local Healthwatch around governance or local relationships with specific individuals or organisations, it seeks to provide support to resolve these where appropriate. Members of the public are able to raise concerns through the complaints process of the local Healthwatch or the commissioning local authority.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Local Healthwatch [Kings Fund - Local Healthwatch report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2015-11-24/HL3841>

New Businesses: Disability

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support is available for disabled entrepreneurs. [HL3796]

Baroness Altmann: Anyone, including disabled people, can apply for financial and practical help through the Government's Start Up Loans scheme.

Access to Work, which helps people with a disability or health condition to stay in work or start work, now features a new specialist self-employment team to support entrepreneurs and the self-employed.

Unemployed potential entrepreneurs, including those with disabilities or health conditions, can talk to their Jobcentre Plus Work Coach, or where appropriate, Disability Employment Adviser (DEA), regarding national programmes like Work Choice, Work Programme and the new Specialist Employability Support. These programmes offer tailored services which can include practical support and advice for becoming self-employed.

Work coaches can also refer claimants, including disabled clients, to the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA). Over 73,000 new businesses have started up through the scheme and 20% of NEA business starts have been made by disabled people. Disabled jobseekers who are accepted onto the NEA scheme may also be entitled to receive an Access to Work grant.

Northern Ireland Government

Asked by Lord Laird

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Dunlop on 25 November (HL3646), on what dates over the last 24 months the government of the Republic of Ireland attended in any capacity meetings held under section 1 of the 1998 Belfast Agreement; where the meetings were held; and what was discussed. [HL4129]

Lord Dunlop: The Government has held regular meetings with the Irish Government over the last two years. The Irish Government has not been in any negotiations or been involved in discussions about Strand one issues under the Belfast Agreement. As the

Government set out in its Northern Ireland manifesto at the election, we are committed to upholding the well-established three-stranded approach.

Older People

Asked by Lord Turnberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many UK citizens there were over the age of 75 in each of the years between 1999 and 2015. [HL3822]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UKSA referral letter [HL3822 UKSA Letter.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2015-11-23/HL3822>

Personal Independence Payment

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of their aim to halve the number of unemployed disabled people, whether they will conduct a review into the way the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment for enhanced rate mobility is working; and on what grounds they would consider changing the PIP assessment for enhanced rate mobility. [HL3783]

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the scoring system for the Personal Independence Payment assessment for enhanced rate mobility is compatible with enabling more disabled people to work, particularly in rural areas. [HL3785]

Baroness Altmann: The Government is committed to giving all disabled people the opportunity to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions. Work is an important part of this, which is why the Government has committed to halving the disability employment gap, requiring us to transform policy, practice and public attitudes.

Enhanced rate mobility payments within Personal Independence Payment are intended for those who face the greatest barriers to their mobility. We believe that the assessment criteria, which was designed in close consultation with disabled people and disability groups, achieve this by targeting support to those who need it most.

We currently have no plans to review how the PIP assessment for enhanced rate mobility is working.

Access to Work (ATW) provides practical and financial support with the additional costs faced by individuals whose health or disability affects the way they do their job. The type of support provided is tailored to an

individual's needs and can include travel to work, support workers and specialist aids and equipment.

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to ensure that disabled people who used their motability car to work are able to carry on working if, after a Personal Independence Payment assessment, they lose entitlement to a Motability car and cannot afford to buy their own car. [HL3784]

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are monitoring the numbers of disabled people who have had to give up work after a Personal Independence Payment assessment led to the loss of a Motability car. [HL3786]

Baroness Altmann: We recognise that the transition from DLA to PIP can be challenging for individuals, which is why the Department worked closely with Motability as we developed our plans for the introduction of PIP. The Motability charity provide a one-off package of transitional support and advice to support customers who no longer meet the eligibility criteria for the Motability scheme. For most of these customers who entered into their first lease agreement with Motability before January 2013, Motability will provide transitional support of £2,000. This will enable many former Scheme customers to continue to meet their mobility needs by purchasing a used car. For customers who entered into their first lease agreement with the scheme after January 2013 and up to December 2013, Motability will supply transitional support of £1,000 to assist with mobility costs. Motability is also providing help with the cost of adaptations made to non-scheme vehicles and information on non-scheme motoring and insurance. The Scheme also offers customers an opportunity to purchase their vehicle after the end of the lease.

Support is also available through the Access to Work Scheme, which is potentially available on application to anyone with a health condition or disability that affects the way they perform their job and who needs practical support above and beyond the reasonable adjustments that an employer has a duty to make under the Equality Act 2010. The type of support Access to Work provides is tailored to an individual's needs and can include travel to work.

DLA and PIP are available regardless of whether claimants are in or out of work. We do not hold information about the employment circumstances of recipients of either benefit, including those who are members of Motability.

Poverty

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their definition of poverty. [HL3820]

Lord Freud: Poverty is complex and affects different people in different ways throughout their lives. As such, the Government does not have one recognised definition, or measure, of poverty which applies to everyone's stage of someone's life. Our focus is on ensuring we have measures which drive the right approaches to tackling the root causes of poverty.

Propaganda: Islamic State

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any work is underway to undermine Islamic State's propaganda on social media, and how much money has been allocated to that work. [HL3627]

Lord Bates: Extremist and terrorist organisations such as Da'esh use social media and other internet tools to spread fear, disseminate propaganda and persuade individuals to join their groups and support their aims.

The Government's Prevent strategy is focused on preventing people from being drawn into terrorism by challenging the terrorists' ideology and supporting those vulnerable to its appeal.

As part of Prevent, our dedicated police unit supports industry to remove, on average, 1,000 pieces of terrorist-related internet content per week. The Research, Information and Communication Unit (RICU) also helps build the capacity of civil society groups to confront and challenge the ideology of terrorism and extremism. By bringing civil society groups together with communications professionals and industry experts, it has provided them with advice and support, production capabilities, public relations expertise and social media training.

British Muslim communities are playing a leading role in the fight against Da'esh's poisonous narrative. This work, which allows them to share their alternative message more widely, is specifically aimed at undermining Da'esh's propaganda.

The threat of Da'esh is global and RICU is working closely with international partners and others to develop similar approaches.

The Prevent programme has been allocated £65 million for the 2015/2016 financial year.

Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government by how much they estimate the budget of the Northern Ireland Executive will be reduced annually as a consequence of the decision to introduce a reduced rate of Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland in 2018–19. [HL3781]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The government is committed to devolving corporation tax powers as provided for by the Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland) Act 2015, if the Northern Ireland parties meet their commitments in the

Stormont House Agreement. This includes the Northern Ireland Executive demonstrating that its finances are on a sustainable footing for the long term.

The government is working closely with the Executive to agree a fair adjustment to the block grant covering both the direct and behavioural effects of devolution. Ultimately, however, the impact on the Executive's budget will depend on the rate set by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Public Finance

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the deficit in the light of statistics from the ONS recording the highest level of borrowing in six years. [HL3799]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The government has made significant progress to date in reducing borrowing – the deficit has more than halved as a share of GDP since 2009-10 and the national debt as a share of GDP is forecast to be falling this year. But the job is not yet done – the deficit remains high among advanced economies.

At Summer Budget the government announced £17 billion of consolidation measures; £5 billion from tax avoidance, evasion and imbalances in the tax system and £12 billion from welfare reform. The Autumn Statement and Spending Review laid out a further £18 billion; £12 billion savings to overall RDEL spending; £3 billion from the Apprenticeship levy and £3 billion from delivering reforms such as Making Tax Digital and further measures to tackle tax avoidance.

In their November forecast, the independent OBR predict the deficit to fall in each year of this Parliament, reaching a £10.1 billion surplus by 2019-20.

Public Records

Asked by Lord Lester of Herne Hill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their plans to release files from their Special Collections archive during this Parliament. [HL3617]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Files outside the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) standard corporate file plan are now known as non-standard files.

Estimated at around 600,000, the non-standard files are generally older than the standard departmental files.

We have divided most of the non-standard material into four main categories in order to prioritise the preparation of these files for transfer to The National Archives (TNA): High Priority (around 60,000 files), Medium and Low priority (around 290,000 files across both categories) and a separate category for the Hong Kong government records (around 270,000 files). The Hong Kong records require further assessment before we can prioritise them for release (most are on microform).

Our prioritisation of the non-standard files has taken into account feedback from a wide variety of sources and interested parties including Professor Tony Badger, Professor of History at Northumbria University, the Independent Reviewer of the non-standard files.

We aim to prepare for transfer to TNA all high priority non-standard files (10% of the total) by 2019.

The first of the high priority records have now been released at TNA. They include 445 Colonial Reports, which are bound volumes of reports submitted annually to the Colonial Office by colonial governors. In October 2015, 254 files relating to the defection of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean were released to the public.

Our current estimate is that we will be able to prepare the medium and low priority records for transfer to TNA by 2027.

The FCO is committed to complying with the Public Records Act and to full transparency with respect to our record holdings.

Public Sector: Borrowing

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the net level of borrowing by the public sector in October 2015. [HL3787]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The government has made significant progress to date in reducing borrowing – the deficit has more than halved as a share of GDP since 2009-10 and as the latest Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast shows, the national debt as a share of GDP is forecast to be falling this year for the first time in over a decade. October public sector finance figures show government borrowing is falling, down £6.6 billion so far this year compared to last year. However, the job is not yet done. The government is committed to eliminating the deficit and returning the public finances to a more sustainable path. To achieve this, the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 sets out the action required to return the country to surplus over the course of this Parliament. On the basis of these plans, the latest OBR forecast estimates that borrowing in 2015-16 will be on a like-for-like basis £73.5bn, £0.6bn lower relative to Summer Budget. The forecast also shows the government is on track to meet its fiscal targets, with a budget surplus of £10.1bn by 2019-20 and debt falling as a percentage of GDP in 2015-16 and for each year in this Parliament.

Refugees

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government which local authorities have agreed to accept Syrian and other refugees. [HL3899]

Lord Bates: Local authorities from across the UK participate in the four resettlement programmes which the UK operates. These run on a voluntary basis, and we do not disclose which are involved as resettlement can be a sensitive issue. Providing this information without their

consent could deter other local authorities from participating in future.

It is at the discretion of Local Authorities to disclose whether or not they are involved with the Syrian Resettlement programme.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they are having with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government, and the Northern Ireland Executive, in order to enable the welcoming of the maximum number of refugees. [HL3900]

Lord Bates: The UK Government is discussing and engaging closely with the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that each is able to welcome refugees who will be resettled under the Syrian resettlement programme. We are also represented on the task forces in each of the devolved administrations.

Roads: Safety

Asked by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen

To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions are planned in the UK to fulfil the objectives of reducing deaths and injuries on the roads included in the global Sustainable Development Goals. [HL3931]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Conservative Manifesto 2015 had a commitment to reduce the number of cyclists and other road users killed or injured on our roads every year. This commitment aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal of halving the number of road traffic deaths and injuries globally by 2020. We are working closely with road safety groups to consider what more can be done in the UK and we believe that every death is a tragedy and is one too many.

Saudi Arabia: Prisoners

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Saudi Arabia about the case of Waleed Abu Khair. [HL4091]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We continue to be concerned by the case of Waleed abu Al-Khair and have raised it at a senior level with the Saudi authorities. We will continue to follow this and other cases closely.

Schools

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local authority schools have opened in the last five years. [HL3868]

Lord Nash: On 1 February 2011 the Education Act 2011 amended the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to

change the arrangements for establishing new schools. Most new schools are now established via the academy/free school presumption.

182 local authority maintained schools have opened since 01 January 2011.

Schools: Asbestos

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they are giving to the risks posed by asbestos in schools and the safest ways to deal with those risks. [HL4064]

Lord Nash: The Government takes the risks posed by asbestos in schools extremely seriously.

In March 2015, under the coalition government, the Department published a review of its policy on asbestos management in schools and the risks posed.

The department is led in its consideration of asbestos risks and the safest way to deal with these by the expert advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). They advise that it is best to manage asbestos-containing materials in situ, reviewing their risk assessments by monitoring condition and likelihood of disturbance, and repairing or encapsulating as necessary. Removal may be needed where asbestos is damaged or when refurbishment work demands prior removal.

The department continues to take steps to understand the risks posed by asbestos in schools even better. As a result of the review the department has committed to collect data from schools about how they manage their asbestos and also to exploring ways to improve the evidence on the risk posed by asbestos in schools. In addition, the Asbestos in Schools Steering Group advises the department on some of the particular issues schools face in managing their asbestos.

Scottish Parliament: Legislative Consent Motions

Asked by The Duke of Montrose

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times the Scottish Parliament has passed a legislative consent motion for legislation regarding matters that were not at that time devolved under Schedule 5 to the Scotland Act 1998, and in each case what reason was given for the motion. [HL3967]

Lord Dunlop: This Government and its predecessors have always sought consent from the Scottish Parliament with regard to legislating on devolved matters under the Sewel Convention. The Convention does not require consent to be sought for matters which are reserved under Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998, though the legislative consent process can be used to enable the Scottish Parliament to indicate its consent for certain matters to be transferred in or out of Schedule 5. For example, section 10 of the Scotland Act 2012 made

provision for certain elements in relation to air weapons to be within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament and a Legislative Consent Motion was passed to cover this provision.

Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015

Asked by Lord Cotter

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to implement the Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act 2015's mandatory referral scheme. [HL3824]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The referral scheme is not yet up and running but the Government is committed to delivering this policy which will help small and medium sized enterprises access the finance they need to grow and expand.

Since the Government announced the Finance Platform policy it has consulted, passed primary legislation and is now close to making secondary legislation.

The British Business Bank is currently undertaking a due diligence process on Finance Platforms that have expressed an interest in becoming designated and will advise HM Treasury on designation in the Spring; with the policy expected to 'go live' later in 2016.

Social Services: Expenditure

Asked by Lord Turnberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the UK's GDP was spent on social care in each year between 1999 and 2015. [HL3821]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Expenditure on adult social care in England as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) is detailed in the table below. Expenditure data for the rest of the United Kingdom is not available.

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>UK GDP (£ billions)</i>	<i>England adult social care (£ billions)</i>	<i>Proportion of UK GDP on England's adult social care</i>
1999-2000	980	8.50	0.87%
2000-01	1,040	9.05	0.87%
2001-02	1,080	9.48	0.88%
2002-03	1,140	10.30	0.90%
2003-04	1,210	11.51	0.95%
2004-05	1,270	12.62	0.99%
2005-06	1,350	13.46	1.00%
2006-07	1,430	13.98	0.98%
2007-08	1,500	14.33	0.96%
2008-09	1,500	15.08	1.01%

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>UK GDP (£ billions)</i>	<i>England adult social care (£ billions)</i>	<i>Proportion of UK GDP on England's adult social care</i>
2009-10	1,500	15.72	1.05%
2010-11	1,570	16.06	1.02%
2011-12	1,630	15.55	0.95%
2012-13	1,680	15.35	0.91%
2013-14	1,760	15.51	0.88%
2014-15	1,830	15.51	0.85%

2014-15 is the last year we have outturn data for spend on adult social care.

The cash terms figures and comparisons to GDP for gross spend on children and young people's services in England, calculated from the Department for Education section 251 data returns are set out in the table below. Expenditure data for the rest of the UK is not available.

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>UK GDP (£ billions)</i>	<i>England children's social care (£ billions)</i>	<i>Proportion of UK GDP on England's children's social care</i>
2010-11	1,570	9.26	0.59%
2011-12	1,630	8.65	0.53%
2012-13	1,680	8.88	0.53%
2013-14	1,760	8.99	0.51%

2010-11 was the first time that national level income and expenditure data were presented in the form of a statistical release. To derive comparable figures for previous years would incur disproportionate cost.

Student Opportunity Fund

Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to retain the Student Opportunity fund. [HL3834]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is responsible for decisions on how the student opportunity fund is allocated to higher education institutions and for publishing guidance.

We will be issuing a grant letter to the HEFCE in the New Year outlining the Government's priorities for expenditure through the teaching grant, including on widening access.

Teachers: Training

Asked by Baroness Donaghy

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many primary phase students were recruited in 2015-16 to initial teacher training courses delivered through (1)

core university provision, (2) school-centred initial teacher training provision, (3) School Direct salaried, and (4) School Direct fee-paying provision, compared to the total number of training places allocated to each of those routes. [HL3803]

Asked by Baroness Donaghy

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many secondary phase students, by individual secondary subject, were recruited in 2015-16 to initial teacher training programmes delivered through (1) core university provision, (2) school-centred initial teacher training provision, (3) School Direct salaried, and (4) School Direct fee-paying provision, compared to the total number of training places allocated to each of those routes and subject s. [HL3804]

Lord Nash: For the academic year 2015 to 2016 we recruited 13,034 initial trainee teachers to primary programmes (compared to 12,872 in 2014 to 2015) and 15,114 to secondary programmes (compared to 12,971 in 2014 to 2015). These figures are for postgraduate only and include Teach First and forecasted trainees. This represents 116% and 82% against the Teacher Supply Model (TSM) target respectively. The target is higher this year compared to academic year 2014 to 2015.

We allocated a total of 13,962 postgraduate places in primary and 22,800 postgraduate secondary programmes, against TSM targets of 11,245 and 18,541 respectively.

We allocate more ITT places than we require trainee teachers, and the extent to which we over-allocate differs by route. When assessing recruitment overall we measure the number of trainee teachers recruited against the number required, rather than against the proportion of allocated places that are filled.

The table below shows the total postgraduate trainees by secondary subject and primary phase. The total includes 1,584 Teach First and 379 forecast trainees. The table also includes trainees and allocations by route.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Provisional Data on ITT new Entrants

[Provisional_data_on_ITT_new_entrants_(HL3083and3084).xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2015-11-23/HL3803>

Trident Submarines

Asked by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the lifetime of the Vanguard-class submarines can be extended beyond the previous published date of 2018 to the 2030s referred to in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review. [HL3929]

Earl Howe: As set out in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, we have assessed that we can safely manage and maintain the Vanguard boats until Successor submarines are introduced into service in the early 2030s.

Turkey: Kurds

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Turkey, following the killing on 15 November in Nusaybin of Selamet Yesilmen; and whether they intend to call for full compensation for killed and injured civilians and property damaged throughout south-eastern Turkey. [HL3827]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We are aware of the case of Selamet Yesilmen, who was killed in clashes between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Turkish authorities in Nusaybin, and closely monitor the human rights situation across Turkey, including the southeast. As we have made clear, the PKK must cease its violence and the peace process needs to be resumed, in the interests of Turkey and the wider region.

UN Committee on Disarmament and International Security

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government how far they expect proposals in the report of the earlier Open Ended Working Group of 2015 in Geneva, and developed in working papers to the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, to provide a basis for identifying which of those proposals could be negotiated in time to be submitted to the 2016 UN General Assembly in order to prepare for substantial negotiations to begin in 2017. [HL3812]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Any Open Ended Working Group mandated to address the issue of nuclear disarmament should consider proposals and papers related to this issue from previous UN and Non Proliferation Treaty meetings and should take a consensus-based approach that takes into account the wider global security environment. We remain open to an appropriately-mandated Open Ended Working Group provided that it is conducive to a constructive dialogue and we are considering whether to attend the meeting in Geneva in 2016.

UN Convention for Protection of Cultural Property in Event of Armed Conflict

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will introduce legislation to ratify the 1954 Hague

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols. [HL4076]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Government remains committed to bringing forward legislation to ratify the Hague Convention and accede to its two Protocols at the first opportunity.

West London Mental Health NHS Trust

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are taking any action against the West London Mental Health NHS Trust for allegedly barring Dr Stuart Lorimer from commenting on his being placed on The Independent on Sunday's Rainbow List; and if so, what. [HL3807]

Lord Prior of Brampton: We are assured by the NHS Trust Development Authority that the West London Mental Health NHS Trust has not sought to prevent Dr Stuart Lorimer or any other member of staff from speaking about the Independent on Sunday's Rainbow List and the recognition of Dr Lorimer's work with the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. We understand the Trust has congratulated Dr Lorimer on being recognised for his work with the LGBT community.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the performance of the West London Mental Health NHS Trust in combatting bullying in that organisation. [HL3808]

Lord Prior of Brampton: We are advised by the NHS Trust Development Agency (NHS TDA) that the West London Mental Health NHS Trust is aware of long standing concerns relating to staff engagement and bullying within the organisation. These concerns were highlighted in recent inspections of the Trust by the Care Quality Commission.

We are assured by the NHS TDA that the trust has put in place a comprehensive staff engagement programme aimed at improving working culture and staff morale. The Trust has also introduced a number of additional staff support mechanisms to enable staff to raise any concerns they may have around bullying and harassment.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....	1	Local Healthwatch.....	14
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.....	1	New Businesses: Disability.....	14
Education and Adoption Bill.....	1	Northern Ireland Government.....	14
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council.....	1	Older People.....	15
Financial Services.....	3	Personal Independence Payment.....	15
Foreign Affairs Council: Post Council Statement	3	Poverty.....	15
NHS: Charging Overseas Visitors and Migrants..	6	Propaganda: Islamic State.....	16
Stalking Protection Order.....	6	Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland.....	16
Written Answers.....	8	Public Finance.....	16
Acute Oak Decline.....	8	Public Records.....	16
Biofuels.....	8	Public Sector: Borrowing.....	17
British Nationals Abroad: Islamic State.....	8	Refugees.....	17
British Nationals Abroad: Syria.....	8	Roads: Safety.....	17
Bus Service Operators Grant.....	9	Saudi Arabia: Prisoners.....	17
Care Homes: Children.....	9	Schools.....	17
Classroom Assistants and Teachers.....	9	Schools: Asbestos.....	18
Common Agricultural Policy.....	9	Scottish Parliament: Legislative Consent Motions	18
Cycleways.....	10	18
Cycling: Licensing.....	10	Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act	18
Darfur: Rape.....	10	2015.....	18
Diabetes.....	11	Social Services: Expenditure.....	18
Electoral Register: Young People.....	11	Student Opportunity Fund.....	19
Equal Pay.....	11	Teachers: Training.....	19
Ethnic Groups: Employment.....	11	Trident Submarines.....	19
European Convention on Human Rights: Northern	12	Turkey: Kurds.....	20
Ireland.....	12	UN Committee on Disarmament and International	20
Fluoride: Drinking Water.....	12	Security.....	20
Gatwick Airport.....	12	UN Convention for Protection of Cultural	20
Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety.	12	Property in Event of Armed Conflict.....	20
High Speed 2 Railway Line.....	12	West London Mental Health NHS Trust.....	20
HMS Vanguard.....	12		
Holloway Prison.....	13		
Innovate UK.....	13		
Iraq: Genocide.....	13		
Israel: Palestinians.....	13		
Israel: West Bank.....	13		