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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

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

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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
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Earl Howe	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Lord Bates	Minister of State, Department for International Development and Treasury Spokesman
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government and Wales Office
Baroness Buscombe	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Callanan	Minister of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Duncan of Springbank	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office and Scotland Office
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Whip
Lord Henley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Lord O'Shaughnessy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health, Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Whip
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Whip
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office and Women and Equalities Spokesperson
Lord Young of Cookham	Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip and Wales and Scotland Office Spokesperson

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 15 November 2017

Childcare Service

[HLWS245]

Lord Bates: My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

This Government is committed to supporting parents with the cost of childcare. We've doubled free childcare to 30 hours a week and introduced Tax-Free Childcare. This support is fairer than the employer voucher scheme, as for the first time it is available to self-employed parents, and all qualifying working parents regardless of their employer. It is better targeted as the support is based on a per child basis, rather than a per parent basis.

The Government opened the childcare service in April of this year – one site where parents can apply for both 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare through an easy-to-use, single digital application. This avoids the need for parents to provide the same information twice and means that many parents receive an eligibility result in real time.

More than 275,000 parents now have an open childcare account. Of these, over 216,000 parents received an eligibility code for 30 hours free childcare in September.

However, HMRC recognise that over the summer some parents didn't receive the intended level of service whilst using the site. Whilst the majority of parents used the childcare service without significant problems, some parents experienced technical issues including delayed decisions about their eligibility for one or both of the schemes. The Government acted quickly to address this, and HMRC and their delivery partners NS&I have now made significant improvements to the service.

Over the coming months, we will gradually open the childcare service to parents of older children, whilst continuing to make further improvements to the system. This means we can manage the volume of applications going through the service, so parents continue to receive a better experience and prompt eligibility responses when they apply – almost all parents receive a response within five working days, and most get their decision instantly. All eligible parents will be able to apply by the end of March 2018.

On 24th November, we will open the service to parents whose youngest child is under 6 or who has their 6th birthday on that day. Parents can apply online through the childcare service which can be accessed via the Childcare Choices website: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Applications for Tax-Free Childcare accounts have been lower than expected. We want to encourage more parents to take up the offer they are entitled to and now the service has improved, we will undertake activity to raise awareness of Tax-Free Childcare amongst parents.

Tax-free Childcare is just one part of the support this Government offers for childcare costs. Where eligible, parents are able to access Working Tax Credits which covers 70% of childcare costs or Universal Credit which increases this support to 85% of costs, 15 free hours of childcare for disadvantaged 2 year olds, 15 free hours for all 3 and 4 year olds, and an additional 15 hours to working parents of 3 and 4 year olds. Employer Supported Childcare will also remain open to new entrants until April 2018.

Finance Bill

[HLWS243]

Lord Bates: I have made a statement under Section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998 that, in my view, the provisions of the Finance Bill are compatible with the Convention rights. A copy of the statement has been placed in the Library of the House.

Hormone Pregnancy Tests: Expert Working Group Report

[HLWS242]

Lord O'Shaughnessy (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health): Today, the Commission on Human Medicines has published the report of its Expert Working Group on Hormone Pregnancy Tests. Based on its extensive and thorough review, the Expert Working Group's overall finding, endorsed by the Commission on Human Medicines, is that the available scientific evidence, taking all aspects into consideration, does not support a causal association between the use of Hormone Pregnancy Tests, such as Primodos, during early pregnancy and adverse outcomes of pregnancy, either with regard to miscarriage, stillbirth or congenital anomalies.

In the UK, Hormone Pregnancy Tests first became available for diagnosing pregnancy in the 1950s. Between the 1950s and 1978, when Primodos was withdrawn from the market in the UK, a number of studies were published which investigated a possible link between women being given a Hormone Pregnancy Test to diagnose pregnancy and the occurrence of a range of congenital anomalies in the offspring.

Although there was never any reliable evidence that HPTs were unsafe, concern about this issue, coupled with the development of better pregnancy tests meant that a number of precautionary actions were taken to restrict the use of HPTs. The tests were voluntarily removed from the market by the manufacturers.

The body of information subsequently accrued by the 'Association for Children Damaged by Hormone Pregnancy Tests' and other campaigners, led to a Parliamentary debate in 2014 during which the then Minister for Life Sciences, George Freeman MP, stated that he would instruct that all relevant documents held by the Department of Health be released. In addition, he

determined that an independent review of the papers and all the available evidence was justified.

The purpose of the review was to ascertain whether the totality of the available data, on balance, support a causal association between use of a Hormone Pregnancy Test by the mother and adverse pregnancy outcomes. It also considered whether, alternatively, the anomalies could have been due to chance alone or due to other factors.

An Expert Working Group of the Commission on Human Medicines was established in October 2015 to conduct the review with the benefit of up-to-date scientific expertise.

The Expert Working Group was subject to a strict conflict of interest policy and comprised experts from a broad range of specialisms, together with lay representation. The terms of reference of the Expert Working Group, were as follows:

To consider all available evidence on the possible association between exposure in pregnancy to hormone pregnancy tests and adverse outcomes in pregnancy (in particular congenital anomalies, miscarriage and stillbirth) including consideration of any potential mechanism of action.

To consider whether the Expert Working Group's findings have any implications for currently licensed medicines in the UK or elsewhere.

To draw any lessons for how drug safety issues in pregnancy are identified, assessed and communicated in the present regulatory system and how the effectiveness of risk management is monitored.

To make recommendations.

The final report summarises the scientific evidence that was considered by the Expert Working Group, its conclusions on the evidence, and its recommendations. All the available relevant evidence on a possible association has been extensively and thoroughly reviewed with the benefit of up-to-date knowledge by experts from the relevant specialisms.

In addition to the overall conclusion, the Expert Working Group has made a number of recommendations to safeguard future generations through strengthening the systems in place for detecting, evaluating, managing and communicating safety concerns with use of medicines in early pregnancy. These recommendations can be found in the report. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will coordinate their implementation, in collaboration with relevant organisations; and the Commission on Human Medicines, together with its Expert Advisory Group on Medicines' for Women's Health, will ensure progress is regularly monitored.

The evidence which has been reviewed by the Expert Working Group will be published in the New Year once it has been checked in line with the legal duties of data protection and confidentiality.

I attach a copy of the report.

Attachments

CHM EWG HPT Report (Report-CHM-EWG-HPTs_FINAL-POST-CHM-Nov-2017.pdf)

Road haulage update

[HLWS246]

Baroness Sugg: My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling), has made the following Ministerial Statement.

The impact of disruption at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel in Kent can lead to significant congestion in that county and further afield. In the event of such disruption, Operation Stack is deployed which queues lorries on the M20 until they can access their ferry or train, closing parts of the motorway to other traffic. However, it has been accepted that this is not an ideal contingency solution particularly given the impact it has on the M20, the surrounding roads, and in particular on people and businesses in Kent.

Following significant and long-running disruption in the summer of 2015, due to French ferry employee industrial action and migrant activity in France, Operation Stack was deployed for over 30 days that summer. The government determined to find a solution to the issue and announced that a new lorry holding park would be built at Stanford West in Kent. The lorry park was to be designed to mitigate the worst impacts of Operation Stack by taking lorries off the road until they could be released to Dover or Eurotunnel.

However, in October 2016 this decision was judicially reviewed on the grounds that the Government had not properly taken into account the environmental impact on a local business and the area in which the lorry park would be built.

Today I am withdrawing the earlier decision to site a lorry park at Stanford West on the grounds that the Government can no longer defend the judicial review. My Department and Highways England have, since being judicially reviewed, tried to find a solution so that the lorry park could be delivered as quickly as possible to mitigate the impacts of Operation Stack, whilst also meeting our environmental obligations. However, it has not proven possible to do so.

But I can announce today that we are immediately starting the process to promote a lorry park through the normal planning process, including a full Environmental Impact Assessment, as a potential permanent solution to Operation Stack. As part of this we will reassess the scope, scale and location of our solutions, taking into account changes since the original concept of the lorry park was promoted, in particular the UK's exit from the European Union but also the need for 'business as usual' lorry parking in Kent. Highways England intend to consult on the options in early 2018 with a view to submitting a planning application in 2019.

Alongside this, I have tasked Highways England with developing an interim solution to be in place by March 2019. Highways England have developed a number of options that, while continuing to hold HGVs on the M20, would allow non-port traffic to continue to travel in both directions reducing the levels of traffic disruption seen in Operation Stack. This could, for example, be through holding HGVs in the centre of the motorway rather than on the coastbound carriageway. Different technologies ranging from steel barriers to moveable barrier systems could be deployed to deliver these solutions. A final decision on which option to take forward will be made in early 2018, with a view to completing delivery by March 2019.

Specific investment decisions on both the permanent and interim solutions will, of course, be subject to normal considerations of affordability and value for money.

Today's announcement demonstrates that despite the setback to our plans to build a lorry park at Stanford West, the Government is still serious about finding both short and permanent solution to help tackle the traffic disruption that can occur from disruption at our busiest border for lorry freight

The 1954 Hague Convention and Protocols

[HLWS244]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: My hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts, Heritage and Tourism, has today made the following statement in the House of Commons.

I am today announcing and publishing measures to support the effective implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999 and the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017.

The United Kingdom ratified the Convention and acceded to the Protocols on 12th September. They will enter into force for the United Kingdom on 12th December.

Commencement regulations have been made to bring the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017 into force on that date.

I am publishing a document setting out implementation measures in three key areas: cultural property protected by the Convention and Protocols; safeguarding protected cultural property; and use of the cultural emblem.

Part one of the document identifies seven categories of cultural property in the United Kingdom which we consider meet the definition of cultural property set out in

the Convention and are therefore protected by the Convention and Protocols. These categories are indicative and non-exhaustive: there may be other cultural property which meets the definition and which is therefore also protected. The list of categories is UK-wide and has been agreed with the devolved administrations.

Part two sets out our approach to safeguarding cultural property. It explains that we do not intend to impose any additional or specific safeguarding requirements on the owners, guardians and trustees of cultural property in England to be implemented during peacetime, given that they should already have plans in place to deal with emergencies and disasters and armed conflict affecting the territory of the United Kingdom is not expected in the foreseeable future.

Part three deals with use of the cultural emblem. It explains when permission to use the cultural emblem is required and how to request permission. It also explains that the government does not intend to grant permission for the cultural emblem to be displayed on immovable cultural property, such as museums and historic buildings, during peacetime, except where a strong, persuasive case can be made for doing so, in order to protect the integrity of the cultural emblem as a symbol of protection during armed conflict.

Initial permissions to use the emblem for education and training purposes and by the Ministry of Defence, for the new Armed Forces' Cultural Property Protection Unit, the British Red Cross, and the Blue Shield International and National Committees of the Blue Shield are included in an annex. These permissions will come into force on 12th December.

Parts two and three and the permissions in the annex relate only to England. The devolved administrations are responsible for safeguarding cultural property and for granting permissions to use and display the cultural emblem in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I am also publishing a separate guidance document on the new offence of dealing in unlawfully exported cultural property which is created by section 17 of the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017.

Both documents are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protection-of-cultural-property-in-the-event-of-armed-conflict>.

I have arranged for copies of both documents to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 15 November 2017

Agriculture: Sustainable Development

Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they provide to farmers and food growers on protecting water quality and the management of soil and nutrients. [HL3008]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environment Agency (EA) provides advice and guidance on pollution prevention to farmers and agricultural businesses to help them reduce the risk of causing environmental pollution and the costs of clean up. There are around 100,000 agricultural premises in England which can benefit from this guidance. This helps farmers become or remain compliant with regulations and the direct legislation which prohibits pollution. It is an offence under the Water Resources Act to cause pollution, so where serious or significant pollution does happen the EA will also take direct enforcement action.

The EA bases its advice around a consistent set of integrated key actions which farmers can take to manage environmental impacts. These key advisory actions will help to improve and protect water quality through the management of soils and nutrients, secure water resources, adapt to a changing climate and reduce flood risk. Other specific advice includes information to help farmers control nutrient levels from organic fertiliser and manufactured fertiliser use, previously known as the Code of Good Agricultural Practice (CoGAP). Where appropriate the EA will also signpost farmers to other partners for specialist support as well as grants which may be available through programmes such as Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the loss to the Exchequer resulting from the removal of the Alcohol Duty Escalator. [HL3034]

Lord Bates: The government ended the alcohol duty escalator for beer in 2013, and for cider, wine and spirits in 2014. The impact of ending the duty escalator on government revenues can be found in Table 2.1 of the Budget documents from 2013 and 2014, reproduced below. These are central estimates certified by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility.

	£ million				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
2013: 1p off pint of beer and abolish escalator in 2014-15	-170	-215	-210	-205	-205
2014: 1p off pint of beer and freeze cider duty		-110	-110	-110	-110
2014: freeze spirits duty and abolish wine escalator		-175	-185	-195	-205

Apprentices: Disability

Asked by **Lord Browne of Belmont**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the number of people with (1) learning difficulties, and (2) other disabilities, taking part in apprenticeships. [HL2781]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is implementing reforms to English apprenticeships to raise their quality and ensure they are accessible to all, including people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We already have a comprehensive set of financial provisions to assist employers and training providers in meeting the needs of disabled apprentices. Where an apprentice has an Education Health and Care Plan, £2,000 in total is available for the training provider and the employer, who receive £1,000 each. Apprentices and their employers can also apply for Access to Work funding to support the apprentice's employment. Furthermore, training providers can claim up to £150 a month, and more in exceptional circumstances, to help with the costs of making adjustments to support apprentices with SEND. This is in addition to the £1,000 stated above.

We are implementing the Maynard Taskforce recommendations to improve access to apprenticeships for those with SEND. Recently, the rules for English and maths requirements were updated to provide more flexibility for apprentices with SEND and who hold an Education Health and Care plan or equivalent.

For the first time, British Sign Language (BSL) is now also an alternative to English Functional Skills for those who use BSL as their first language.

These changes will allow more people to benefit from the opportunities available through apprenticeships and work.

Additionally, the Government is supporting employers with apprentices who have SEND by developing new communications and guidance products. This includes our Employer Toolkit which can be found at: <http://www.employer-toolkit.org.uk/>.

Behaviour Disorders

Asked by **Lord Risby**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of their commitment made in July to provide £1.3 billion to expand mental health services, whether any of those funds will be used to support people with behavioural problems as well as those with psychiatric problems. [HL2820]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: *Stepping forward to 2020/21: The mental health workforce plan for England*, published in July, committed funds for the expansion of the mental health workforce across a range of clinical areas including Children and Young People's services, Core Acute and Core Community services. These areas support service users with behavioural problems, as well as meeting needs for wider psychiatric support. A copy of the report is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Stepping Forward to 2020/21 [FYFV Mental health workforce plan for England FINAL.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-11-01/HL2820>

Borders: EU Countries

Asked by **Lord Kinnock**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what technological innovations they have so far developed, or are developing, to deal with new post-Brexit demands for (1) the management of borders with EU Member States, and (2) customs and tariff arrangements with EU Member States. [HL2858]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Over the last two years, Border Force has invested £108m in new technology and capability and has committed a further £71m in 2017-18. New border systems will improve capabilities at all interception points improving Border Force's ability to manage demand and maintain and enhance security. Future customs controls required following EU exit will depend on the outcome of the negotiations. All options are being considered. In the unlikely event that an agreement with the EU is not reached, the Government will work to ensure that trade between the UK and the EU is as frictionless as possible.

HMRC's current Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system is due to be replaced by the Customs Declaration Service (CDS). HMRC remains on target to deliver CDS by January 2019 and is actively managing delivery plans in partnership with stakeholders, including industry representatives.

Bracken

Asked by **Lord Greaves**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the proportion of open countryside in England that was covered by bracken in (1) 1987, (2) 1997, (3) 2007, and (4) 2017; and what assessment they have made of the reasons for any changes in that coverage. [HL3000]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The extent of bracken broad habitat in England is estimated as part of the Countryside Survey, which is a survey of land cover across the UK. The survey has been undertaken at intervals since 1978 and provides evidence about the extent and condition or 'health' of the UK's countryside today. The most recent survey was conducted in 2007.

Estimations for the extent of bracken broad habitat in England are available from 1990 onwards and are provided in the table below. Data is not available for all the years referenced in the question. Within the survey, bracken broad habitat is defined as area with 95-100% coverage with bracken plants. Between 1990 and 2007 there was no change in the overall extent of bracken.

Table: Estimated area ('000s ha) and percentage of land area of the Bracken Broad Habitat in England from 1990 to 2007. *Source: Countryside Survey 2007.*

Year	1990		1998		2007	
	('000 ha)	% area ('000 ha) of England	('000 ha)	% area ('000 ha) of England	('000 ha)	% area of England
Bracken	93	0.7	109	0.8	91	0.7

Brexit

Asked by **Lord Kinnock**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many new civil service posts have been created to date to deal with new functions and obligations arising from Brexit; what is the annual cost of those appointments; in which departments those personnel are employed; and what specialist roles are being filled. [HL2855]

Asked by **Lord Kinnock**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU to the House of Lords EU Select Committee on 31 October, what estimate they have made of the annual cost of recruiting 8,000 new civil servants to deal with the changes and obligations that they anticipate will arise because of Brexit; which departments will require the new staff; and what specialist roles will be filled. [HL2857]

Lord Young of Cookham: The whole of Government is preparing for the UK to make an orderly and successful exit from the European Union, and we are equipping ourselves

with the right people and the right skills across Government to make this happen. Whilst workforce planning is primarily the responsibility of each department to determine based on their individual operational and policy requirements, the Civil Service constantly reviews its capabilities in order to deliver the Government's commitment to leave the EU and get the very best deal for the UK. Civil Service HR is working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union to support departments, functions and professions in continuing to develop plans to address their emerging capacity and capability requirements.

Broadcasting: Copyright

Asked by Lord Griffiths of Burry Port

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of EU Commission proposal 2016/0284, which lays down rules on the exercise of copyright and related rights applicable to certain online transmissions of broadcasting organisations and retransmissions of television and radio programmes, and its potential impacts on the UK. [HL2910]

Lord Henley: The proposed regulation under 2016/0284 seeks to extend a "country of origin" principle for copyright clearance to certain online broadcast transmissions (such as catch up services), meaning that rights only have to be cleared once in the country of origin of the service. It also proposes to extend the mandatory collective management of rights to retransmissions of TV and radio programmes delivered over the internet.

The Government provided an Explanatory Memorandum to the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee and the House of Lords European Union Committee in October 2016 following publication of the Commission's proposal. In this it set out how the proposed extension of country of origin principle could benefit consumers by enabling them to receive TV and radio programmes from other EU Member States via services which are currently unavailable – for example, where they miss a programme and cannot access the catch up service. Likewise, UK citizens in other countries may be able to access UK broadcasts. However, many broadcasters and rights holders have concerns that this provision will undermine their ability to license content by territory, which is central to their business models. The Government agrees that the proposal could undermine the principle of freedom to contract by territory, affecting both broadcasters and rights holders. On this basis, the Government opposes the proposed extension unless it protects the freedom to contract by territory robustly.

Asked by Lord Griffiths of Burry Port

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the responses of the governments of France and Spain to EU Commission proposal 2016/0284, which outlined why they oppose the initiative based on their belief that it would undermine the principle of the territoriality of copyright. [HL2911]

Lord Henley: The proposed EU regulation under 2016/0284 seeks to apply a "country of origin" principle for copyright clearance to certain online broadcast transmissions (such as catch up services). The governments of France and Spain have made known their opposition to this extension.

The Government agrees that the Commission's proposal could undermine the principle of freedom to contract by territory, affecting both broadcasters and rights holders. On this basis, the Government opposes the proposed extension unless it protects the freedom to contract by territory robustly.

Caribbean: Hurricanes and Tornadoes

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money they have committed to date to assist the UK Overseas Territories damaged by hurricane Irma. [HL2779]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has to date committed £57 million to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the Overseas Territories that were impacted by Hurricane Irma.

Commonwealth: Blasphemy

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of Commonwealth countries that retain some form of blasphemy law. [HL2841]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Government remains firmly committed to the protection and promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief around the world. Criminalising blasphemy runs contrary to that human right and we oppose it for that reason. We do not currently hold information on the number of Commonwealth countries that criminalise blasphemy, but a report published by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom in July 2017 found that blasphemy laws were retained in 71 countries worldwide.

We do not hold this information and accurate data is difficult to obtain. We will speak with our non-governmental organisations to see if they hold this information.

Commonwealth: Capital Punishment

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of Commonwealth countries that retain the death penalty. [HL2842]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) works closely with leading human rights organisations to promote abolition of the death penalty globally. 33 Commonwealth countries retain the death penalty. The UK opposes the death penalty in all

circumstances and we make our opposition known at the highest levels in countries where it continues to be applied. On World Day Against the Death Penalty on 10 October, I issued a statement setting out the UK Government's position that the use of the death penalty undermines human dignity, that there is no conclusive evidence of its deterrent value, and that any miscarriage of justice leading to its imposition is irreparable.

Commonwealth: Religious Freedom

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of Commonwealth countries that retain apostasy laws. [[HL2840](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Her Majesty's Government remains firmly committed to the promotion and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief around the world. Criminalising apostasy runs contrary to this human right and we oppose it for that reason. We do not currently hold information on the number of Commonwealth countries that criminalise apostasy, but data collected by Pew Research Centre in 2014 found that 25 countries worldwide had some form of apostasy law or policy.

We do not hold these details and it is difficult to obtain accurate data. We will speak with our non-governmental organisations to see if they hold information

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their strategy for protecting freedom of religion or belief across the Commonwealth. [[HL2843](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Protecting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) remains a high priority for Her Majesty's Government. We work on this issue around the world, including in countries that are members of the Commonwealth.

On International Religious Freedom Day (27 October), I wrote to all UK Ambassadors and High Commissioners encouraging them to make FoRB a priority in their human rights engagements and work in country. I also re-issued our revised "toolkit" which supports our diplomats working to protect and promote FoRB in locally appropriate ways. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) also continues to provide training and seminars to increase religious literacy amongst staff.

Ministers and officials also speak out publicly in support of Freedom of Religion or Belief. For example, during my visit to Bangladesh in August 2017, I visited the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Dhaka and made a public call for religious tolerance.

The UK Government also continues to support a number of projects which promote Freedom of Religion or Belief through the FCO's Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy. Examples include a project to support a network of human rights defenders in South Asia.

In multilateral fora, the Government continues to work to sustain consensus on the adoption and implementation

of two important resolutions: the European Union's Freedom of Religion or Belief resolution and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)'s resolution on Combating Religious Intolerance.

In October 2017, I convened the first in a series of roundtable meetings on FoRB. These meetings will bring together faith leaders and civil society to discuss current challenges to FoRB internationally, and how we can collaborate to strengthen our response to these.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Coventry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of funds currently allocated under the Magna Carta Fund aim to protect or strengthen freedom of religion or belief across the Commonwealth. [[HL2844](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This financial year 2% (£207,946) of the overall Magna Carta Fund has been allocated to protecting or strengthening freedom of religion or belief across the Commonwealth. All of these projects are regional and therefore include Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries.

Cybercrime: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much, if any, of the £1.9 billion investment in cyber security announced on 1 November 2016, has been designated for allocation towards policing in Northern Ireland. [[HL2784](#)]

Lord Young of Cookham: The £1.9bn investment in cyber security is subject to the Barnett formula. The Devolved Administrations prioritise their funding in line with internal cyber priorities. In addition, policing in Northern Ireland will benefit from many UK-wide capabilities, including the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Cyber Crime Unit within the National Crime Agency.

Darfur: Military Bases

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any bases previously occupied and managed by the hybrid United Nations–African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur in Sudan have been transferred to the control of the Rapid Support Forces militia in the region; and if not, whether there are any plans to do so in the future. [[HL2870](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As part of the Status of Forces Agreement, United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) bases are being handed over to the Government of Sudan. The UK is in regular contact with UNAMID and is monitoring the reconfiguration of the Mission closely. During the Strategic Dialogue on 16 October, we impressed upon the Government of Sudan that, as they move into the security space in Darfur, it is vital that they provide safety for civilians in a manner that

is compliant with both international humanitarian and human rights law.

Dental Services

Asked by Lord Colwyn

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to publish the assessment of the new dental contract prototypes. [HL2789]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The evaluation report on the first full year of prototyping is due to be published by the end of this year. Evaluation of the dental contract prototype scheme is led by Eric Rooney, Deputy Chief Dental Officer for England, with an evidence and learning reference group, which includes external members.

Asked by Lord Colwyn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were (1) the total contracted Units of Dental Activity, and (2) the average value of a contracted Unit of Dental Activity per capita, in England in each year since the current dental contract was introduced in 2006. [HL2790]

Asked by Lord Colwyn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were (1) the total contracted Units of Dental Activity, and (2) the average value of a contracted Unit of Dental Activity per capita, in each region in England in each year since the current dental contract was introduced in 2006. [HL2791]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The total contracted units of dental activity for England and by region can be found in the table, which is attached owing to the size of the data. We do not hold the average value of contracted unit of dental activity per capita in England or by region.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Units of Dental Activity for England [HL2790 table.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-11-01/HL2790>

Digital Technology: Adult Education

Asked by Baroness Rebuck

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they support UNESCO's work in discovering what kind of literacy skills people need to navigate a digitally-mediated society; and what actions they plan to take in the UK to explore and fund effective adult literacy policies and programmes which leverage the opportunities that the digital world provides. [HL2818]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: We welcome the work that UNESCO is doing on digital literacy to highlight some of the challenges and opportunities that the digital world presents.

The Government supports adults in England to develop the basic English and digital expertise they need for employment and everyday life. We provide funding for

adults to access a range of literacy training up to English GCSE and equivalent qualifications, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses.

Provisional Further Education and Skills data shows that in 2016/17 the Government funded the participation of 536,700 adults in English courses and 114,400 adults in ESOL courses. We are also introducing a similar right to funding for specified Information and Communication Technology courses.

Asked by Baroness Rebuck

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of how many adults in the UK lack basic digital skills, and of that number, how many are functionally illiterate; and what plans they have to ensure that such people do not end up marginalised. [HL2819]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Skills for Life Survey in 2011, assessed the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills of adults aged 16-64 in England using four competencies: word processing; emailing; spreadsheets; and a multiple-choice assessment of other ICT skills such as internet use (see table attached). The survey results demonstrated a broad correlation between the respondents' performance in the ICT and in the literacy tests.

The Government is supporting adults in England to develop their basic digital skills for the workplace and in everyday life. We are introducing a new entitlement to fully-funded training in digital skills, which will mirror the current approach for improving literacy and numeracy.

The Department also funds the Future Digital Inclusion programme that aims to help one million adults gain basic digital skills by 2019. A majority of these adults are educated below Level 2, unemployed, in a low-income household, in receipt of means-tested benefits, or living in social or sheltered housing.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL2819 attachment [HL2819 Attachment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-11-01/HL2819>

Domestic Waste: Landfill

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the amount of household waste that ended up in landfill in each year since 1997 for which records are held. [HL3014]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Information on the amount of all local authority waste for England sent to landfill is readily available through published statistics for 2000/01 to 2015/16 and is summarised in the table below. The majority of all local authority waste is household waste (typically around 85 per cent); information just for household waste is not readily available.

Year	Tonnes of all local authority waste sent to landfill (thousand tonnes)	% of all local authority LA waste managed
2000/01	22,039	79%
2001/02	22,421	78%
2002/03	22,068	75%
2003/04	20,936	72%
2004/05	19,822	67%
2005/06	17,873	62%
2006/07	16,890	58%
2007/08	15,513	54%
2008/09	13,784	50%
2009/10	12,490	47%
2010/11	11,391	43%
2011/12	9,568	37%
2012/13	8,514	34%
2013/14	7,933	31%
2014/15	6,361	25%
2015/16	5,133	20%

Elephants: Conservation

Asked by Lord Hague of Richmond

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further support they intend to offer members of the Elephant Protection Initiative to succeed in protecting their wildlife. [HL2847]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government has supported the work of the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI) since its launch at the 2014 Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) conference in London, including providing approximately £1.2 million funding through Stop Ivory. The Minister for Asia and the Pacific and the Minister for Africa both recently met Helen Clarke, co-chair of the new EPI Consultative Group, to discuss Her Majesty's Government's support for the next phase of the EPIs work and in developing plans for the 2018 London IWT Conference. The UK Government also supports countries, including EPI members, to tackle poaching and the illegal ivory trade through the Global Environment Facility which is providing \$131 million (£97 million) over seven years from 2015 to the Global Wildlife Programme. Our overseas network has supported EPI events in a number of member states and we are happy to continue this support.

European Migrant Smuggling Centre

Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the work of the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC); how much the EMSC has cost to operate in each year since its inception; and whether they intend to continue to work with, or otherwise support the work of, the EMSC following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. [HL2896]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The intelligence exchange that the UK undertakes with the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) is a very important part of our efforts to tackle organised immigration crime in source, transit and destination countries.

Europol funds the EMSC and the UK contributes indirectly through our contribution to the EU budget.

The Government recently set out its proposals for an ambitious strategic agreement to support our future cooperation with the EU on security and law enforcement in “*Security, Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice – a future partnership paper*” published on 18 September and available on the GOV.UK website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/security-law-enforcement-and-criminal-justice-a-future-partnership-paper>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Security, Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice – a
[Security__law_enforcement_and_criminal_justice_-
_a_future_partnership_paper.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-11-06/HL2896>

Exports: Packaging

Asked by Lord Macpherson of Earl's Court

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enable British exporters to conform with wooden packing requirements under ISPM15 following the UK's departure from the EU. [HL2808]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The precise nature of our future relationship with the EU is still to be determined and is the subject of negotiation. The Government is working to get the best deal for Britain and through our new relationship with the EU are aiming to achieve the freest possible trade in goods and services between the UK and the EU.

Discussion on the sanitary and phyto-sanitary conditions that will be applicable to trade in animal and plant product will form part of these negotiations. Negotiations between the UK and the EU have so far been limited to the withdrawal arrangements.

Fisheries

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what bilateral discussions they have conducted with neighbouring countries interested in fishing in UK waters after Brexit; and how Parliament will be advised of progress in such discussions. [HL2933]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government maintains regular dialogue with neighbouring countries on marine and fisheries issues but have undertaken no formal negotiations on future access to UK waters. However, we have written to parties to the London Fisheries Convention to give notice of our intention to withdraw from that agreement. The Minister of State has also discussed the Voisinage Agreement with the Minister for Fisheries in the Irish Republic. We have committed to keep Parliament informed provided that doing so would not risk damaging our negotiating position.

Fisheries: Protection

Asked by Lord Lisvane

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 3 November (HL2523), when the assessment of sea-based patrol capability is expected to be completed. [HL3019]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The assessment of the scale and volume of sea-based patrol capability required after we leave the EU is currently in its initial stages. We will be able to provide an update next year.

Hepatitis: Drugs

Asked by Lord Mancroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many hepatitis C patients were treated using the new anti-viral drugs by NHS England in the year 2016–17; and what proportion remain free of the virus post-treatment. [HL2810]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Based on data from National Health Service trusts, the NHS treated 9,440 of the planned 10,000 patients with new anti-viral drugs in 2016-17. Data on the proportion that remain virus free is still being analysed; this information should be available by the end of 2017 when the new hepatitis C registry being established by NHS England will be fully operational.

Asked by Lord Mancroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the cost of treatment with anti-viral drugs for each hepatitis C patient treated by NHS England in 2016–17. [HL2811]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Hepatitis C medicines are subject to commercially confidential pricing agreements so it is not possible to disclose the cost for each patient treated. NHS England spent in excess of £200 million on direct-acting antivirals for hepatitis C in 2016-17.

Asked by Lord Mancroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many hepatitis C patients NHS England intend to treat using the new anti-viral drugs in 2017–18. [HL2812]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Treatment of 12,500 hepatitis C patients is planned in 2017/18.

Asked by Lord Mancroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients diagnosed with hepatitis C remain to be treated with new anti-viral drugs; and when NHS England expect them all to have received such treatment. [HL2813]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: An estimated 160,000 people in England are thought to be living with chronic hepatitis C infection. The current number of people diagnosed and yet to access treatment is difficult to state with certainty. National surveys of people who inject drugs suggest that only about half are aware of their hepatitis C infection; this figure has remained relatively stable over the past decade.

NHS England is planning a sustainable roll out of treatment which will complete the treatment of 71,000 individuals between 2015/16 and 2020/21.

Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination

Asked by The Countess of Mar

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord O'Shaughnessy on 1 November (HL2357), why all the symptoms reported for one individual are not correlated and recorded as occurring in that individual in the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency records, instead of being recorded as discrete symptom reports. [HL2861]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: When recording the details of an individual Yellow Card report, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency does assign all reported signs, symptoms and diagnoses to that individual case. Individual reports are evaluated in the context of all cumulative reports when reviewing safety.

Industrial Health and Safety

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest assessment of health and safety legislation that is currently in force. [HL2798]

Baroness Buscombe: Professor Löfstedt's *Reclaiming Health and Safety for All: An independent review of health and safety legislation* (2011) found that the framework for health and safety law was broadly right, but recommended simplifying its structure and the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guidance to help business comply more easily. The Government's response to the Review was published in March 2015: 'A final report on

implementation of health and safety reforms'. A copy of the report is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Response to Review [HL2798 final-progress-report-h-and-s-reform.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-11-01/HL2798>

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of procurement policies on improving health and safety at work. [HL2799]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Crown Commercial Service's Model Services Contract contains specific terms and conditions covering health and safety at work:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526358/Model_Services_Contract_v1.02.pdf

We do not measure the impact of these terms on improving health and safety at work as it would be difficult to attribute cause and effect with any degree of certainty.

Intercountry Adoption

Asked by Lord Triesman

To ask Her Majesty's Government what specific provision is available from their resources, and local government resources, for children of school age adopted from abroad but at school in England; and in which respects that provision differs from the provision for adopted children who were born in the UK. [HL2833]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Previously looked after children adopted in England retain the educational entitlements they had when they were looked after. The entitlements are: a free early education place from the age of two, the early years' pupil premium, the pupil premium plus and priority admission to school. Children adopted from abroad are not currently eligible for these entitlements. However, the government is currently considering the entitlements of children adopted from care outside England.

From April 2018, previously looked after children adopted from care in England and those adopted from an equivalent form of care outside of England will have access to support and advice from their local council's Virtual School Head and from their school's designated teacher for looked after children.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Ahmed

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding reports of recent air strikes conducted by Israeli authorities, leading to the deaths of seven

Palestinians; and what assessment they have made of the likelihood of such actions leading to an escalation of tensions in the region. [HL2774]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the reports of the targeting of a tunnel by Israel. We understand that the tunnel was constructed by Palestinian militants and that its destruction was carried out on Israeli territory. The UK supports Israel's right to self-defence. We remain deeply concerned by attempts to rearm and rebuild militant infrastructure, including the tunnel network in Gaza. This activity undermines efforts to improve the situation in Gaza and harms the prospects for peace and stability in the region.

Asked by Lord Ahmed

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prospect for improvements in Israeli–Palestinian relations as a result of the reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. [HL2775]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome progression to the reconciliation agreement, which will see the Palestinian Authority (PA) resume administrative control of Gaza, and we are monitoring the situation closely. We are clear that any future Palestinian government must comply with the Quartet Principles: renounce violence, recognise Israel, and accept previously signed agreements. We support the PA, as the legitimate Palestinian leadership, in realising self-determination through an independent, sovereign, and unified Palestinian state encompassing the West Bank and Gaza.

Marine Conservation Zones: Goodwin Sands

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to designate the Goodwin Sands off the Kent Coast as a Marine Conservation Zone. [HL2951]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Details of which sites we consider suitable to become Marine Conservation Zones will be announced in a consultation that will take place in the first half of 2018. Designation of sites will follow within 12 months of the launch of the consultation.

Mental Health Services

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of mental health crisis care units on reducing pressure on accident and emergency departments. [HL2780]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The Department has not conducted a specific assessment of the impact of mental health crisis care units on reducing pressure on accident and emergency departments.

The Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat made it clear that a wide range of agencies and services, including hospital emergency departments, should be involved in the

development of local plans to ensure that people experiencing a mental health crisis have access to urgent and emergency care.

We are making £247 million available to make sure that every emergency department has a liaison mental health team in place, and that by 2020 at least half of England's acute hospitals will have these services available at a standard defined by the Royal College of Psychiatrists as 'Core 24', meaning that clinical support is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

NHS England published guidance last year on Achieving Better Access to 24/7 Urgent and Emergency Mental Health Care, which sets out that liaison mental health teams will play a vital role in ensuring that people experiencing a mental health crisis will have access to appropriate care to meet their needs.

Military Aid

Asked by Lord Burnett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what payments were made from the Department for International Development (DfID) to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in (1) 2014–15, (2) 2015–16, and (3) 2016–17, to reimburse the MoD for any costs incurred when fulfilling any DfID-related tasks or roles, or any other humanitarian operations. [[HL2788](#)]

Lord Bates: The Department for International Development (DfID) reimbursed the Ministry of Defence (MoD) the following amounts for DFID-related tasks and roles and humanitarian operations in the years specified.

2014/2015 £32,349,060.35 (including £28,822,177 in relation to the Ebola crisis)

2015/2016 £8,843,540.06

2016/2017 £3,676,517.66

Motor Vehicles: Taxation

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total annual revenue from taxation of motor vehicles; and what proportion of this is currently hypothecated for the Highways Agency. [[HL2816](#)]

Lord Bates: The latest year available for a combined total annual revenue from taxation of motor vehicles is 2014/15. The total revenue in this year was £37bn.

Revenues from motoring taxes are used by the Exchequer to fund public services, and are currently not hypothecated for the Highways Agency. However, as announced at Summer Budget 2015, revenues from Vehicle Excise Duty in England will be hypothecated to a National Roads Fund from 2021.

Nabeel Rajab

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Bahrain concerning the transfer of Nabeel Rajab from the Ministry of Interior Hospital to Jau Prison; whether that government has indicated to them why the transfer took place; and what assessment they have made of his treatment. [[HL2822](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to closely monitor the case of Nabeel Rajab and have frequently raised it with the Bahraini Government at the highest levels. Where we have concerns we will continue to raise them at an appropriate level with the Government of Bahrain. We encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to report these to the relevant human rights oversight bodies

The UK continues to encourage the Government of Bahrain to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date they last raised concerns with the government of Bahrain over the case of Nabeel Rajab. [[HL2823](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to closely monitor the case of Nabeel Rajab and have frequently raised it with the Bahraini Government at the highest levels. Where we have concerns we will continue to raise them at an appropriate level with the Government of Bahrain. The UK Government continues to emphasise the need to respect the rights of all citizens, including freedom of expression.

Offences against Children: Prosecutions

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the scale of sex grooming by organised gangs over the last 12 years; how many girls have suffered such grooming; and in which towns or areas of the UK. [[HL2953](#)]

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many successful prosecutions of members of sex grooming gangs there have been in the last 12 years; and in which towns or areas of the UK. [[HL2954](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data relating to prosecutions and convictions for group-based child sexual exploitation are not held. Prosecutions for these crimes relate to a range of different offences. There is no specific offence for organised child sexual exploitation.

While we know that child sexual exploitation (CSE) happens in all parts of the country, we are continuing to build a national picture of offending. We have introduced

new requirements for the police to record information relating to CSE, and have funded a network of police regional CSE coordinators and analysts, located in Regional Organised Crime Units. Alongside this, we have committed £7.5m of funding to the new Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse to identify and generate high-quality evidence on the nature and scale of these crimes.

In the year to December 2016 9,305 defendants were prosecuted for child sexual abuse-related offences (including imagery offences), a rise of 15% on the year to December 2015 (up from 8,470) and 6,763 were convicted, an increase of 15 % on the number of convictions in 2015 (up from 5,879).

Out-of-school Education: Prosecutions

Asked by Lord Warner

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidelines they have issued to Crown Prosecutors on the prosecution of persons for operating unregistered schools. [HL2407]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Crown Prosecution Service has issued legal guidance for Crown Prosecutors on prosecuting criminal offences relating to unregistered schools under sections 96 and 97 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. CPS guidance is publicly available via the CPS website and can be accessed at: www.cps.gov.uk/legal/d_to_g/education/

Penguins: Antarctic

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the World Wildlife Fund's proposal for a new protected area for waters off East Antarctica, following this year's breeding failure in the colony of Adelle penguins in East Antarctic. [HL3025]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a co-proponent of a proposal to establish a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the East Antarctic, which has been submitted by the Australia and the European Union and its Member States to the annual meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) since 2010. The UK is convinced of the need for a system of MPA to be established around Antarctica to underpin protection of the unique habitats and the resilience of the ecosystem to adapt to climate change. Following the designation of the first, UK-led, Marine Protected Area in CCAMLR waters in 2009, the UK has consistently supported the designation of an MPA in the Ross Sea region of Antarctica, which was finally agreed in CCAMLR in 2016, and is continuing to work with other CCAMLR Members to secure agreement to the East Antarctica MPA proposal as soon as possible.

Professions: Social Mobility

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to increase access to positions in elite professional sectors by young people who attend maintained schools. [HL2829]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: This Government wants to increase social mobility to ensure all young people have the opportunity to access positions in elite professional sectors. To achieve this, we are encouraging social mobility throughout the entire education system.

The Government is improving standards for all schools, including maintained schools. In 2016, we introduced reforms to primary assessment to help pupils achieve the basics in English reading, English writing and maths. In 2017, based on provisional data, 61% of pupils achieved the new more rigorous standard in English reading, English writing and maths. This is an increase of 8% on the 2016 results.

At secondary schools, we are reforming GCSEs to ensure pupils sit qualifications that will enable them to successfully go onto further study or employment. Our new GCSEs will be introduced over the next few years and will provide a more challenging assessment for students. As a part of this new assessment, pupils in 2017 sat GCSEs that were graded 1-9 in English language, English literature and maths for the first time.

The Government wants to identify and support schools that are not meeting our expectations, either by way of the floor standard or coasting definition. Regional School Commissioners work closely with schools to ensure they receive the support they need to help their pupils achieve.

We have seen the highest number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering the most selective universities and higher education institutions. The Government though is keen to improve the prospects for young people even further. The Director for Fair Access has agreed access agreements for 2018/19, with plans for universities to spend more than £860 million on measures to improve access and success for students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds. This is an increase from £404 million in 2009. In addition, the Higher Education and Research Act includes a transparency duty requiring all universities to publish applications, offers, acceptance and retention rates broken down by gender, ethnicity and social economic background. This will provide greater accountability for judging the success of universities in offering access to students from all backgrounds.

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are also widening access to professions, giving young people an alternative to attending university.

Ultimately, it is essential that young people in all schools are offered quality careers advice and guidance. The Government is taking steps to improve access for young people by investing over £70m this year. The Government will be publishing a careers strategy shortly that will build

on the best international evidence to improve the quality and coverage of careers guidance.

Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Leeds

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the value of UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia in (1) 2015, (2) 2016, and (3) 2017. [HL2802]

Baroness Fairhead: Government data on the value of exports does not differentiate sufficiently between military and non-military exports.

However, the Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) of licences granted for military exports on GOV.UK. This data includes the value of exports licensed where this is known. Licensing data for 2015, 2016 and 2017 indicates the following values for military exports to Saudi Arabia:

2015: £2,856,814,952

2016: £680,288,434

2017: £1,120,427,691 (January-June)

The value of exports licensed each quarter is not necessarily a measure of actual exports shipped in a given period because licences are valid for between two and five years, and because exporters only declare values for a subsection of export licences (Standard Individual Export Licences). Additionally, some licences expire before they are fully used and in these circumstances exporters must apply for a new (duplicate) licence, which can result in a significant element of double counting in some reporting periods. Over the period 2015, 2016 and 2017 (January-June) at least £2.4 billion of the total value of military exports licensed (£4.6 billion) is attributable to double counting because of duplicate licences.

Saudi Arabia: Politics and Government

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Leeds

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's recent announcement that he intends to return Saudi Arabia to a path of "moderate Islam". [HL2803]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome recent developments under Vision 2030 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, such as the Royal Decree permitting women to drive from June 2018 and the announcement of a new economic city. We recognise HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's comments as part of these changes and we continue to encourage reform in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia: Radicalism

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Leeds

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relationship between (1) reports that Saudi Arabia funds organisations that promote a

Salafist Wahhabist ideology, and (2) the growth of violent extremism. [HL2804]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 12 July, the Home Secretary announced the main findings of the Home Office's internal review into the nature, scale and origin of the funding of Islamist extremist activity in the UK, including any overseas sources. I refer the noble Lord to Written Statement HCWS39. We work closely with Saudi Arabia to combat terrorism in all its manifestations, including countering violent extremism and terrorist financing. The Saudi Government's national strategy includes a number of important initiatives to counter extremism.

Shops: Wheelchairs

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the study conducted by DisabledGo and the Department for Work and Pensions in 2014, what is their current estimate of the number or proportion of shops with wheelchair access; and whether they intend to conduct a further study. [HL2838]

Baroness Buscombe: There are no plans to conduct a further study with DisabledGo at this time and DCLG have no current data on the number of accessible shops.

Earlier this year the Minister for Disabled People appointed a number of Sector Champions to help tackle the issues disabled people face as consumers. The champions represent a range of different sectors and businesses, including retail (Helen Drury) and tourism (Chris Veitch). The Champions are using their influential status as leaders to drive improvements to the accessibility and quality of services and facilities for disabled people.

On 27 November the Minister will be hosting a round table with the Retail Sector Champion and leaders of large retail companies to discuss accessibility in the retail industry.

Social Security Benefits

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Buscombe on 30 October (HL Deb, cols 1156–7), what assessment they have made of the impact of the freeze on working-age benefits on incentivising claimants into work. [HL2942]

Baroness Buscombe: The Government's assessment of the impact of the benefit freeze is set out in the analysis of the measures in the Welfare Reform and Work Act published at the time of the Summer Budget 2015.

As I said in my response to the Noble Baroness' question on 30 October, the benefit freeze is part of a package of welfare reforms designed to incentivise claimants into work. These include introducing the National Living Wage, increasing the tax-free personal allowance, providing 30 hours of free childcare to working families in

England and rolling out of Universal Credit. Analysis published by the department in September 2017 showed that UC claimants are four percentage points more likely to have been in work at any point within six months of starting their claim than the matched sample of JSA claimants (63 per cent to 59 per cent).

The employment rate now stands at a near record high and the number of children living in workless households has fallen to a record low.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UC Employment Impact Analysis [HL2942 universal-credit-employment-impact-analysis-update.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-11-06/HL2942>

Social Services: Disability

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the social care needs of working-age disabled adults distinct from the care needs of people over the age of 65. [HL2831]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: We have not made an assessment of the distinct social care needs of working-age disabled adults as a group.

Under the Care Act 2014, where an adult or carer appears to have care and support, or support needs, the local authority must carry out an assessment. It must then decide if the person has eligible needs by considering what needs they have, how these impact on their ability to achieve certain outcomes, and the impact on their wellbeing. Where a person is assessed as having eligible care and support, or support needs, these must be met by their local authority.

The Government understands that there are specific challenges in relation to funding and quality of care for people of working age, and their carers. We will continue to carefully consider how best to support people of working age with care and support needs, alongside older people.

Tobacco: EU Action

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on UK businesses of the implementation of the EU Commission proposals for a track and trace scheme for the tobacco market; and whether they support those proposals. [HL2862]

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on UK business of the proposal from the EU Commission for a European track and trace for the tobacco market; and what steps they are taking to protect UK interests. [HL2948]

Lord Bates: The illicit tobacco trade is a global problem, and the introduction of a track and trace system will be an important step forward in tackling this issue.

The government is continuing to study the draft implementing legislation for Article 15 of the EU Tobacco Products Directive and is discussing the drafts with the Commission and other Member States.

In considering the proposed EU regulations, the government is concerned to ensure they are proportionate, efficient, effective, can be implemented in the timescale set and keep burdens on legitimate business to a minimum while delivering the required objectives.

The government is aware of some concerns raised by businesses affected and will continue to assess the impact of the legislation and the timetable for implementation as the drafts develop.

Tobacco: EU Law

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial impact on HM Treasury revenues of the prohibition on small tobacco packages imposed by the EU Tobacco Products Directive. [HL2863]

Lord Bates: In their December 2014 Economic and fiscal outlook the OBR revised the underlying downward trend in clearances of tobacco. This was to account for various factors including the expected effects of the Tobacco Products Directive.

The 2016 Economic and fiscal outlook noted the effect on receipts from the introduction of standardised tobacco packaging was assumed to be captured by this downward trend in clearances.

No financial impacts have been made separately of the impact of the prohibition on small tobacco packages.

Training: Finance

Asked by Lord Aberdare

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they have determined the level of funding available to existing training providers from non-levy apprenticeship funds; whether there is a cap on such funding for individual training providers; if so, how that cap is determined; whether (1) the level of funding available, and (2) the cap, have been changed from previously announced plans; and if so, how. [HL2773]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Providers of services to employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy are funded through existing contract extensions, covering the period from May to December 2017.

The overall level of funding for new apprenticeship starts made available during this period was based on forecasts of demand. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) determined individual providers' allocation on their historical delivery to all employers and an estimate of

the proportion of that delivery which related to non-levy paying employers.

The ESFA set a minimum threshold allocation value of £3,000. There is no cap for individual training providers. However, public contracting regulations set a limit on the value of an individual providers' contract extension relative to the value of their original contract.

In July and October, there were opportunities for providers to bid for additional funding above their non-levy allocations to take account of growth in demand.

Tree Planting

*Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to encourage tree planting in areas that are prone to recurrent flooding. [HL3006]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government continues to fund and support research into the utility of trees in flood prevention, for example through the joint Defra/Environment Agency 'Working with Natural Processes' research programme, and the Forestry Commission's Science and Innovation Strategy work.

In July, Defra also announced the allocation of £15 million specifically for natural flood management projects. Several of the 58 projects undertaken within this programme include tree planting amongst their interventions.

Flood risk management is one of the targeting criteria for woodland creation funded through the Countryside Stewardship scheme. Countryside Stewardship also supports the installation of leaky woody dams in new and existing woodland to aid flood mitigation.

Additionally, Forest Research, the Forestry Commission's research agency, is conducting a number of medium and long term projects on this topic, often in partnership with water regulators, universities and end users. These cover process, modelling, economic and mapping studies designed to quantify and demonstrate how woodland can contribute to flood risk management. One

flagship project led by Forest Research is the 'Slowing the Flow' at Pickering study. This is evaluating how the integrated application of a range of land use and management measures can alleviate flooding, including woodland creation and the use of large woody structures.

UK Membership of EU: Referendums

*Asked by **Lord Rooker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any government departments and agencies have ongoing inquiries in respect of the 23 June 2016 referendum; and if so, which. [HL2821]

Lord Young of Cookham: This information is not collected centrally.

The Information Commissioner, who reports directly to Parliament, is carrying out a formal investigation into the use of data analytics for political purposes. This will explore practices deployed during the EU referendum campaign.

The Government also understands that the Electoral Commission, which reports directly to Parliament, is carrying out a number of investigations related to campaigning at the EU referendum.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Leeds***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to mark, in 2018, the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [HL2805]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In 2018, as in previous years, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will organise coordinated activities across its network of overseas posts and in London to commemorate Human Rights Day (10th December), which marks the anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The Government strongly believes in the values enshrined in the UDHR and its continued relevance in global affairs.

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