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Thursday
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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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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>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	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 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
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, 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
Baroness Fairhead	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
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 and Social Care
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Whip
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport, Whip
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Whip
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Young of Cookham	Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Thursday, 8 March 2018

Domestic Abuse

[HLWS506]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Prime Minister, Justice Secretary and I are today launching a consultation which seeks to address domestic abuse at every stage from prevention through to rehabilitation.

Domestic abuse is an inexcusable and devastating form of abuse that can have a lifelong impact on its victims and their families. There are approximately two million reported victims every year, and domestic abuse accounts for over 10% of all police recorded crime and nearly 20% of all police charges.

This Government has taken strong action to tackle domestic abuse. We are the first country to criminalise coercive and controlling behaviour, and we have introduced Domestic Violence Protection Orders and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. We have made legislative changes to legal aid to make it more accessible. Last year we also amended electoral law to make it easier for survivors of domestic abuse to register to vote, while keeping their name and address private.

In addition this year we have introduced a Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Bill that will maintain the status of survivors living in social housing with an existing lifetime tenancy when they move to a new social property. We have provided £20 million for accommodation based services such as refuges, which is already providing 2,200 additional beds in refuges and safe accommodation benefiting 19,000 victims. The best available data shows bed spaces have increased by 10% since 2010 and we are committed to supporting refuges and providing stable funding in the future.

We are reviewing the way in which refuges and supported housing are delivered and have heard the concerns about how our proposals will work in practice. We are working with all the charities and organisations working on the frontline, asking them to come forward with their ideas on how best to deliver this. That process is ongoing – and we've been clear no options are off the table as we work with them to ensure women requiring support in their time of need are not let down.

However we know there is more to do and that is why this Government is committed to transforming how we think about and tackle domestic abuse. We want victims to feel supported so that they can seek help and to rebuild their lives, safe in the knowledge that their perpetrator will be pursued and prosecuted.

The consultation seeks views under the four main themes set out below with the central aim of prevention running through each.

- Promote awareness – Proposals to help put domestic abuse at the top of everyone's agenda, and raise public and professionals' awareness
- Protect and support – Proposals to enhance the safety of victims and the support that they receive.
- Pursue and deter – Proposals to ensure an effective response to perpetrators from initial police response through to conviction and management of offenders (including rehabilitation).
- Improve Performance – Proposals to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas and agencies/sectors.

The Government welcomes responses from victims and survivors, charities, specialist organisations, experts and professionals across policing, criminal justice, health, welfare, education, social services, employment and local authorities who deal with these issues on a daily basis.

We are seeking a combination of legislative and non-legislative solutions for delivering the proposals set out in the consultation. Where primary legislation is required, the responses to the consultation will inform the content of the draft Domestic Abuse Bill announced in the Queen's speech.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks to 31 May.

A copy of the consultation paper will be placed in the Library of the House and will be available online at www.gov.uk.

General Affairs Council

[HLWS505]

Lord Callanan: My Hon. Friend, Robin Walker MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, has made the following statement.

I represented the UK at the General Affairs Council in Brussels on Tuesday 27 February. The items on the agenda were: Presentation of the Priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency; Annotated draft agenda for the European Council on 22-23 March 2018; and Rule of Law in Poland / Article 7(1) Treaty on European Union (TEU) Reasoned Proposal.

A provisional report of the meeting and the conclusions adopted can be found on the Council of the European Union's website at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2018/02/27/>

Presentation of the Priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency

The Presidency set out the four priorities for its tenure: the Future of Europe and Young People; Security and Stability; the Western Balkans; and the Digital Economy.

Annotated draft agenda for the European Council on 22-23 March 2018

The Presidency presented the annotated draft agenda for March European Council, which includes: Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness (and possibly Trade); and the Western Balkans. Leaders would also discuss Migration and Digital Taxation.

On the Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness agenda item, the Council welcomed a discussion on the Single Market, Digital Single Market and Social issues. I intervened to call for any tax discussion to focus on Digital Taxation, reflecting progress at international level. I also highlighted the UK's publication of a position paper on corporate tax and the digital economy last Autumn.

Under the Western Balkans agenda item, Ministers welcomed the adoption of procedural conclusions on the EU-Western Balkans Summit in May. I intervened to welcome the focus on the Western Balkans region. I highlighted the UK's close cooperation with the Presidency and the Commission ahead of the Berlin Process Western Balkans Summit in London in July, which will seek to deliver on regional priorities identified at the May Summit.

On Migration, the Commission highlighted the need to reach agreement on internal Asylum Reform.

Rule of law in Poland / Article 7(1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

The Commission presented its reasoned proposal under Article 7(1) TEU, concerning the rule of law in Poland. The Commission referred to the improved levels of dialogue with Poland but emphasised that it wanted to see action taken to address its concerns. Poland acknowledged the improved dialogue and stated that its forthcoming paper on this issue would place its judicial reforms into their wider systemic context.

I intervened to emphasise the importance the UK places on the rule of law and judicial independence, and that the UK expects its partners to respect international norms. I affirmed the UK's view that responsibility for constitutional issues lies primarily with national governments and welcomed the improved dialogue between the Commission and Poland. I highlighted that a solution is most likely to be found in this dialogue leading to a common understanding on how to resolve the issue in a way which aligns with international norms.

National Crime Agency Remuneration Review Body

[HLWS508]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The National Crime Agency (NCA) Remuneration Review Body has made recommendations on pay and allowances for NCA officers designated with operational

powers, and observations on the NCA's proposals to reform pay arrangements. I would like to thank the Chair and members of the Review Body for their careful consideration of the evidence from the NCA, the Home Office, HMT and the trades unions.

The Government is committed to the delivery of world class public services, and ensuring that public sector workers are fairly remunerated for the vitally important work that they do. That is why we ended the across-the-board 1% pay award policy for public sector workforces in September 2017. We recognised that some flexibility would be required in certain areas.

Each workforce is different and pay awards should therefore reflect the particular circumstances faced by those public workers and their recruitment and retention levels. It is also vital that our world class public services continue modernising to maximise the contribution of our public servants, so they can continue to do their incredible work, improving our lives and keeping us safe.

Previous Review Body reports highlighted the need for reform to NCA pay arrangements and I welcome the Review Body's support for the NCA's proposed changes as an important step in that direction. There are two main elements to the pay reform: officers in two grades performing intelligence and investigator roles can opt into a new spot rate pay structure; and for the remaining workforce existing pay bands are being compressed. These changes are highly targeted, focussing on roles where there is evidence that pay has fallen significantly behind the market rate, and critical to the Agency's ability to improve productivity and transform to meet the rapidly evolving threat from serious and organised crime. This targeted pay reform will support the NCA's ability to recruit and retain highly skilled staff to continue to fulfil their vital role.

To support implementation of these changes, the 2017/18 award will be backdated to 1 August 2017 and the 2018/19 award implemented on 1 August 2018. The award is as follows:

- A varied award for staff in two targeted operational grades choosing to opt into the new pay structure and move onto new terms and conditions, including an increase in contracted hours;
- A minimum one per cent award for all officers not eligible for the new pay structure and not already receiving the pay range maximum for their grade;
- A one per cent award made up of consolidated and non-consolidated elements for officers not eligible for the new pay structure and already in receipt of the maximum for their grade or reaching it;
- A one per cent increase to the London Weighting payment in 2017/18. 2018/19 will be determined following a formal review of the allowance.

These awards will be fully funded within the NCA's existing budget. The small number of officers electing to remain on the terms and conditions of pre-cursor organisations will remain on their 2016/17 pay rates.

Copies of the NCA Remuneration Review Body's report are available in the Vote Office and at GOV.UK.

Northern Ireland: Finances

[HLWS511]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Karen Bradley) has today made the following statement:

During the course of the past 13 months, in the absence of an Executive and Assembly in Northern Ireland, the UK Government has worked tirelessly to facilitate the restoration of devolved government. It had been my firm hope that a new Executive would be in place to set a budget. That will now not be possible in time for plans to be put in place for the forthcoming financial year.

Yet there are acute pressures across public services to be addressed in 2018/19. And clarity is required now to enable planning to proceed for the year ahead. It is now imperative, therefore, that the UK Government provides clarity and certainty around Northern Ireland finances for 2018/19.

2018/19 Budget allocations

I set out below the resource and capital allocations which I consider to be the most balanced and appropriate settlement for Northern Ireland departments. It would be open to a restored Executive, of course, to consider and revise the position I have set out.

In deciding on these allocations I have engaged intensively with the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) to understand the needs of departments as they continue to work to deliver the draft Programme for Government. I have reflected too on the response to the budget briefing published by the NICS before Christmas, and discussed the budget situation with the main parties in Northern Ireland.

In the absence of local Ministers, and given the proximity of the next financial year, it would not be appropriate for the UK Government to seek to take fundamental decisions about service delivery and transformation at this time. Yet we must act to secure public services and enable NI departments to meet urgent pressures in health and education. That is what this budget settlement will do, by protecting and preserving public services within challenging fiscal constraints.

On the resource side, it delivers real-terms increases for health and education from their 2017/18 opening baseline. It also delivers cash terms increases for the Departments of Justice; Infrastructure; and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. Elsewhere departments would either be cash-flat or see small decreases, with notable reductions only for the two central departments (Finance and the Executive Office). For capital, it provides a strong basis for investment and enables key flagship projects to progress.

Confidence and Supply funding

This settlement also delivers £410m in financial support arising from the financial annex to the Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Conservative Party and the Democratic Unionist Party.

This includes £80m in support for immediate health and education pressures; £30m to support programmes to address issues of mental health and severe deprivation; £100m for ongoing work to transform the health service in line with the broad-based consensus fostered by the Bengoa report; and a £200m boost in capital spending for key infrastructure projects. Furthermore, in recognition of the lack of opportunity for more fundamental service reconfiguration over the last 12 months, this Budget position allows for £100m in flexibility to enable existing capital funding to be used to address public services resource pressures in 2018/19. This additional funding will be transferred in due course only with Parliament's full authorisation, in line with the long-established Estimates process.

Transformation

But, as the NICS budget briefing made clear, transformation is needed in a number of areas to make services sustainable in the long term. The urgent work to prepare for this must proceed. To that end, the Budget includes a £4m fund to prepare the ground for transformation, alongside the £100m set out for health transformation above. I also recognise that this budget only allocates resources for 2018/19 and the NI departments will need urgently to plan for future years. In that context, it is right that the NICS should continue to take forward preparatory work which could assist with balancing the budget in 2019/20. This will ensure that options are kept open for a restored Executive to consider as part of future budget processes.

Regional rate

As part of setting a budget, it is essential that the UK Government provides clarity on the regional rate. This budget position has been constructed on the basis of an increase in the domestic regional rate of 4.5%. I consider that this is a necessary and important step to continue to support public services, particularly in health and education. The non-domestic rates would rise only at 1.5%, in line with inflation. Conscious of the interest of many stakeholders in the scheme, I can also confirm that this budget settlement would provide the basis for the Small Business Rate Relief to continue.

Implementing decisions within the overall allocations

This statement outlines overall allocations, based on my assessment of the options currently available to the NI departments. To the extent possible, the consequent prioritisation of resources within NI departments will need to be undertaken by Permanent Secretaries, as has been the case during the past year. The position will be monitored throughout the year and, where possible, resources reallocated to the highest priority areas in the normal way.

Permanent Secretaries cannot, of course, take the full range of decisions that would be available to Ministers. In that context, the UK Government shall continue to support the Northern Ireland administration, and to do whatever is necessary to meet our responsibilities to the people of Northern Ireland.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Annex of tables [Annex WMS 8 March 2018.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2018-03-08/HLWS511/>

Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill

[HLWS509]

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 Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill are compatible with the convention rights. A copy of the statement has been placed in the Library of the House.

Universal Credit

[HLWS507]

Baroness Buscombe: My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (The Rt. Hon Esther McVey MP) has made the following Written Statement.

On 8 February 2018, the Work and Pensions Select Committee, published a report into the Universal Credit Project Assessment Reviews. From this publication, the House will be aware that my Department has been involved in a request under the Freedom of Information Act, for the release of the Project Assessment Reviews conducted between March 2012 and October 2015 on the Universal Credit Programme.

Project Assessment Reviews are an assurance tool used to assess major projects and programmes. The reviews are conducted by project professionals and subject matter experts drawn from across the public and private sector. The effectiveness of the reviews relies on confidentiality: information within the reports is non-attributable to encourage candour and a frank exchange of views. The reports act as advice to the Senior Responsible Owner on the delivery aspects of their programme – they are not advice to Ministers. They are intended to give the Senior Responsible Owner a project delivery perspective on their programme, independent of the programme management function. They represent perspectives for the Senior Responsible Owner to consider and not absolute truths. The Senior Responsible Owner, not the review team, is accountable to Parliament.

It should be noted that the reviews I will place in the Library are historic, conducted between March 2012 and

October 2015. Come 2018, the Universal Credit Programme is in a very different place since those reports were written. Universal Credit is in every Jobcentre and we are rolling it out safely and securely to all categories of claimant. We are focussing on the continued safe delivery of Universal Credit, so people continue to be helped to improve their lives.

In recognition of the confidential nature of these reports, the Work and Pensions Select Committee viewed the full set of Project Assessment Reviews up to 2017 and published a report on 8 February 2018. The Work and Pensions Select Committee agrees that the historic issues have now been addressed and ‘substantial achievements’ have been delivered since 2013. In the Committee’s report, they commended the Department for running the Universal Credit programme ‘more professionally and efficiently with a collective sense of purpose’.

The Universal Credit Programme does not lack scrutiny as the ongoing Work and Pension’s Select Committee inquiries demonstrate. Given the Select Committee has seen the reports subject to the Freedom of Information challenge, and commented upon them publically I can see no point in continuing to argue that case. Accordingly my officials will be writing to the Information Commissioner and to the First Tier Tribunal to advise them of my decision to release copies of the requested Project Assessment Review reports to the requestor.

With regard to future reports, I emphasise that the steps I have decided to take today, to disclose the material subject to proceedings, are exceptional. I remain of the view, that it is critical to the effectiveness of the Infrastructure & Projects Authority assurance framework for participants to be confident that their comments will be non-attributable and that review reports will be treated as confidential.

I accept that this House and the wider public has significant interest in government major projects. I support the principle of transparency and the Universal Credit Programme regularly publishes independent research and analysis into the effectiveness of Universal Credit. I believe that there are better ways of addressing this concern, rather than undermining the mechanism that provides Senior Responsible Owners with an independent external perspective on the programmes they are responsible to Parliament for.

Universal Credit is a flexible benefit, which has simplified the welfare system and ensures that people are always better off in work. We know that the legacy system trapped people in benefit dependency. We needed a new approach to reflect the 21st Century work environment. The evidence shows Universal Credit is working, with people getting into work faster and staying in work longer than under the old system.

I am sure this House joins me in recognising the great progress we have made since 2010, with 3 million more people in work and unemployment at a near record low. Universal Credit builds on this success, delivering welfare reform that works for everyone.

Wheelchair Spaces on Buses

[HLWS510]

Baroness Sugg: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Nusrat Ghani) has made the following Ministerial Statement.

The Government believes that where people live, shop, go out, or park their car should not be determined by their disability and recognises the importance of accessible transport networks in supporting disabled people to live independent lives and fulfil their potential.

In January 2017 the Supreme Court handed down its judgment in the case of *Paulley vs FirstGroup PLC*, concerning the “reasonable adjustments” which must be provided by bus operators to enable wheelchair users to access the on-board wheelchair space.

The Supreme Court judgment states that FirstGroup’s policy with regard to use of the wheelchair space was insufficient to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and that bus drivers should be required to do more than simply request that a person vacates the wheelchair space, including suspending the journey if needed. The judgment did not provide clarity on precisely what action a service provider should require its drivers to take or how the needs of both passengers in wheelchairs and other bus users, disabled or otherwise, should be taken into account.

In order to understand the implications of the judgment for disabled people, the bus industry and other passengers, and to identify actions for Government and others to take to ensure that required adjustments can be provided on buses we established a stakeholder “Task and Finish Group on the Use of Wheelchair Spaces on Buses” (the Group).

The Group’s report to Ministers stated that:

“Our view is that drivers need to play an active role in ensuring that the wheelchair space is made available for passengers in wheelchairs, which includes requiring other passengers to move where necessary, but that drivers also need more powers than they have currently to enable them to do this effectively.”

The Group agreed that that whilst wheelchair users should be granted access to the on-board wheelchair space they may not be the only passengers who rely on using it, but that where other passengers do not have such a need they should be expected to vacate the space in order that it can be occupied by a wheelchair user.

The group made four specific recommendations:

i) That the Public Service Vehicles (Conduct of Drivers, Inspectors, Conductors and Passengers) Regulations 1990 (the Conduct Regulations) are amended to enable drivers to remove passengers from the bus who

unreasonably refuse to move when requested from the wheelchair space;

ii) The associated guidance is amended to better reflect the behaviours expected from drivers and passengers with respect to use of the wheelchair space;

iii) Further work is conducted to consider how best to raise public awareness of the behaviours expected from passengers with respect to the wheelchair space, for example a public awareness campaign, or improved signage on buses; and

iv) That conditions of carriage and disability awareness training best practice guidance are updated to reflect the fact that passengers will be required to move from the wheelchair space should it be required by a passenger in a wheelchair.

I am grateful to the Group for their careful consideration of this complex issue.

Government agrees with the Group that the wheelchair space should be available to those who need it and that the balance of measures proposed, supporting bus drivers to facilitate access to the wheelchair space, and creating an environment where the needs of disabled passengers are recognised and respected should help to overcome the barriers still faced by some disabled people when using bus services.

In accepting the Group’s recommendations in principle we will begin a process of further engagement to understand the specific experiences of a range of stakeholders affected by the wheelchair space issue, including wheelchair users, parents travelling with young children, and bus drivers – with a view to bringing forward a package of measures in 2018, informed by the Group’s recommendations and our further consideration, to support access to the wheelchair space.

Disabled people make ten times as many journeys by bus as by rail, and it is essential that the services they rely upon to access education, employment, social and leisure activities are accessible to them. We hope that in supporting access to the wheelchair space for those who need it we will help many more disabled people to travel with confidence.

Copies of the Task and Finish Group’s report to Ministers and accompanying letter have been placed in the House libraries.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Task and Finish Group - Wheelchairs on Buses [180308 - Wheelchair Space.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2018-03-08/HLWS510/>

Written Answers

Thursday, 8 March 2018

Advisory Committee on Malaria Prevention

Asked by **Baroness Corston**

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what dates the Advisory Committee on Malaria Prevention met in the last five years. [[HL5779](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Meetings of the Advisory Committee on Malaria Prevention held over the last five years are shown in the following table.

Year	Date	Type of meeting
2013	30-Jan-13	Full Committee Meeting
	15-May-13	Country Recommendations Meeting
	08-Nov-13	Prevention Guidelines Meeting (Methodology)
	11-Dec-13	Prevention Guidelines Meeting
2014	04-Mar-14	Treatment Guidelines Meeting
	02-Jun-14	Country Recommendations Meeting
2015	12-Jan-15	Prevention Guidelines Meeting
	05-Mar-15	Treatment Guidelines Meeting
	24-Jun-15	Full Committee Meeting
	24-Nov-15	Prevention Guidelines Meeting
2016	07-Jun-16	Country Recommendations Meeting
	16-Sep-16	Country Recommendations Working Group
	22-Nov-16	Prevention Guidelines Meeting
2017	10-Aug-17	Country Recommendations Meeting
	14-Sep-17	Personal protection issues Meeting
2018	02-Feb-18	Prevention Guidelines Meeting

Agriculture: Vacancies

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address concerns about a shortage of labour on British farms. [[HL5851](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Access to a sufficient and appropriately-skilled workforce is essential to continued industry growth, productivity and safety. Defra considers the latest data, and works closely with industry to

understand labour demand and supply including on the seasonal workforce.

Until we have left the EU, employers in the agricultural and food processing sectors can continue to recruit EU workers to meet their labour needs.

The Government is already taking action through our apprenticeship programme, post-16 Skills Plan to reform technical education and new Careers Strategy. We want industry to make the most of this framework to attract more domestic workers and ensure that agri-food is a career destination of choice.

The Government has also commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to assess the role that EU citizens play in the UK economy and society, and how to align future immigration framework with modern industrial strategy.

Armed Forces: Health

Asked by **Lord Richards of Herstonceux**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Earl Howe on 12 February (HL5176), what are the figures for the Medical Deployability Standard categories for (1) the army, (2) the Royal Navy, and (3) the Royal Air Force. [[HL5886](#)]

Earl Howe: There are three Medical Deployability Standard (MDS) categories for the Armed Forces.

Medically Fully Deployable (MFD) personnel are those medically fit for duty with no employment limitations.

Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) personnel are medically fit for duty with minor employment limitations. MLD personnel may have a medical condition or functional limitation that prevents the meeting of all MFD requirements.

Medically Not Deployable (MND) personnel are medically fit for duty with major employment limitations. MND personnel are not currently deployable on Operations but may be deployable on UK based exercises and should be able to work effectively for at least 32.5 hours per week. MND status, as with other MDS categories, is often only temporary due to injury or illness, and may change following medical review.

The table below provides the number and percentage of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel by permanent and temporary MDS category, by Service, as at 1 January 2018.

All Services		Naval Service		Army		RAF		
No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
All Personnel	137,263		29,264		77,467		30,532	
Medically Fully Deployable	110,154	80.30%	24,458	83.60%	60,396	78.00%	25,300	82.90%

<i>All Services</i>		<i>Naval Service</i>		<i>Army</i>		<i>RAF</i>		
Medically Limited Deployable	13,967	10.20%	2,071	7.10%	9,972	12.90%	1,924	6.30%
Temporary	4,329	3.20%	522	1.80%	3,036	3.90%	771	2.50%
Permanent	9,522	6.90%	1,506	5.10%	6,902	8.90%	1,114	3.60%
Medically Not Deployable	13,104	9.50%	2,717	9.30%	7,082	9.10%	3,305	10.80%
Temporary	10,284	7.50%	2,189	7.50%	5,324	6.90%	2,771	9.10%
Permanent	2,720	2.00%	505	1.70%	1,733	2.20%	482	1.60%

Naval Service includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines. Please note that some of the total figures may be greater than the sum of their parts. This is because data on the temporary or permanent Medical Deployability Standard status of some personnel was not available.

Army Reserve: Recruitment

Asked by Lord De Mauley

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the Defence Recruiting System to be able to process enlistments to the Army Reserve. [HL5868]

Earl Howe: The Defence Recruiting System (DRS) went live on 13 November and replaced a 20 year old system. It will enable a quicker and easier recruitment process for applicants and the Armed Forces.

As with any new information system defects have been identified post 'Go Live' and we recognise that for a couple of months these created some problems with the application process, including particular issues regarding the enlistment of new Army Reserves.

These issues have been urgently addressed and are either fixed or have temporary mitigations in place to minimise applicant facing issues. With these mitigations DRS is now processing enlistments to the Army Reserve.

Brazil: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the Department for International Development's spending in the last financial year was in Brazil. [HL5813]

Lord Bates: Since 2010 DFID has not provided any direct bilateral official development assistance (ODA) to Brazil. CDC made four equity investments in private companies in Brazil prior to 2012. The Newton Fund, the Global Challenge Research Fund and the International Climate Fund have funded projects in Brazil.

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust: Vacancies

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many vacancies existed for (1) nurses, (2) junior doctors, (3) doctors, and (4) consultants, in the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, in each year since 2010. [HL5862]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The data is not available in the format requested.

NHS Digital publishes workforce statistics. The following table contains full time equivalent vacancies for medical and dental, and registered nurses and midwives as at September 2017, the latest data available, in Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust.

<i>Number of job adverts as at September 2017 Full time equivalent</i>	<i>Medical and Dental</i>	<i>Nursing and Midwifery Registered</i>
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	35	113

Source: NHS Digital Vacancy Statistics

NHS Improvement collects monthly vacancy rate information since April 2017 with no historic information prior to this point. The collection includes a total medical vacancy figure but is not disaggregated to junior or consultant level and is not available at trust level.

The Trust's Board published January 2018 Combined Board in Public papers which provide the following statement on vacancies in the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust:

"The Trust Establishment stands at 8210.7 WTE. There are 7334.7 WTE staff in post which equates to a vacancy rate of 10.7%. Of the 876 WTE vacancies; 343 WTE are Nursing and Midwifery, 178 WTE are Admin & Clerical, 149 WTE are Scientific, therapeutic and technical staff (ST&T), 126 WTE are Ancillary Support and 80 are Medical. The highest vacancy rate is within Ancillary Support (18.6%)".

Building Regulations

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 24 March 2016 (HL7094), when the next biennial review will be published; and why there has been a 12-month delay in publication for the review which was scheduled to have been published in early 2017. [HL5960]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government is working to publish shortly the next biennial report under the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004.

Cheltenham Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to reintroduce a 24-hour Accident and Emergency service at Cheltenham General Hospital. [HL5831]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: This is a matter for the local National Health Service who are best placed to understand the healthcare needs of their local population. The Government is clear, however, that any changes should meet the Government's four tests for service change: they should have support from general practitioner commissioners, be based on clinical evidence, demonstrate public and patient engagement, and consider patient choice.

Any proposals for urgent care developed by the local NHS as part of the Gloucestershire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership will be subject to full public consultation led by the local clinical commissioning group later this year.

The Department is advised that the local NHS remains committed to continued dialogue with local stakeholders on the urgent and emergency care offer as a whole to ensure that patients receive the safest, highest quality care and the best possible health outcomes into the future.

Clitheroe-Hellifield Railway Line

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of proposals from Ribble Valley Council to reopen the railway line from Clitheroe to Hellifield for passenger trains. [HL5900]

Baroness Sugg: The Government is working with local authorities and other partners to identify the best new rail projects that can unlock new housing and economic growth, ease overcrowding, meet future demand and offer good value for money.

In line with our devolution policies, proposals for additional passenger services between Clitheroe and Hellifield (beyond the infrequent service currently provided on Sundays) need first to secure the support of a

local body or promoter to undertake studies of the passenger demand, train service options, economic benefits, capital and any operating subsidy requirements before the addition of such services to a franchise agreement could be considered by the DfT and the Rail North consortium of local authorities, who co-manage the relevant local rail franchise (Northern).

We will consider proposals on a case by case basis, based on the economic benefits and business case put forward by local partners. Promoters of new lines are directed to the document published by the Campaign for Better Transport "*Expanding the Railways*". Endorsed by the Department, this provides advice and guidance to organisations seeking to open railway lines and stations.

Common Agricultural Policy

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the quantity of products they have bought under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy; and how they plan to manage those products following Brexit. [HL5853]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) public intervention system allows operators to request that a Member State buys certain agricultural products such as skimmed milk powder (SMP) into public storage. Such stocks are subsequently resold when market prices recover. With the greater market orientation of the CAP, public intervention now operates as a safety net measure that is only relevant when prices are very low, as occurred during the "milk crisis" of 2015/16 when large quantities of SMP were bought into public intervention in the EU.

As at 22 February 2018, the UK held 7,731.85 tonnes of skimmed milk powder in public intervention stores, equivalent to around 2% of total EU purchases. The European Commission is currently reselling the older public stocks of skimmed milk powder back onto the domestic market. The pace of these sales will depend on a number of factors, including the market price, the competitiveness of the bids and the quantities bid for.

Looking forward, it is still to be determined what will happen to any intervention stocks held by the UK that remain unsold once we leave the EU. This will be subject to discussions as part of the withdrawal agreement and on any implementation period.

There are no other products held in public storage in the UK under CAP measures.

Dental Health

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effects of drinking fruit tea on dental health. [HL5842]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The third edition of *Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for*

prevention, published by Public Health England, includes fruit teas (but not camomile) in the list of extrinsic sources of acid that may lead to erosive tooth wear. Therefore, individuals are advised to keep acidic drinks to mealtimes and limit the number of fruit drinks to no more than one a day.

Delivering better oral health is an evidence based toolkit for dental teams to support them when giving preventive advice and treatment for their patients. This resource has been acknowledged by the European platform for better oral health in Europe as good practice and adopted by Wales.

A copy of the third edition of *Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention* is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Delivering better oral health
[Delivering_better_oral_health_an_evidenced_based_toolkit_for_prevention_third edition.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-02-23/HL5842>

Eastwood Park Prison: Mother and Baby Units

Asked by Baroness Corston

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date the Mother and Baby Unit at Eastwood Park Prison was closed. [HL5777]

Asked by Baroness Corston

To ask Her Majesty's Government when it is anticipated that the Mother and Baby Unit at Eastwood Park Prison will re-open. [HL5778]

Lord Keen of Elie: The mother and baby unit (MBU) at Eastwood Park has been out of commission since October 2016, owing to flooding caused by a burst pipe. We are planning to complete refurbishment by May, with re-occupation in late June/early July.

While the MBU remains out of use, any women at the prison whose application for a MBU place is accepted can be accommodated in one of the other five units within the women's prison estate.

We are committed to doing all we can to address the issues around female offending so we can better protect the public and deliver more effective rehabilitation.

Electrical Safety

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to convene a roundtable of representatives of Ebay, Amazon and Electrical Safety First to seek a resolution to the problem of unregulated sales of sub-standard and counterfeit electrical goods online. [HL5961]

Lord Henley: The Government regularly engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including online sales platforms, to discuss the issues caused by the sale of sub-standard and counterfeit goods. While there are no immediate plans for a roundtable with the parties listed, officials in the Intellectual Property Office are considering options for addressing the problem.

Emergencies: Planning

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government when their Preparing for Emergencies guidance was last updated. [HL5809]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Preparing for Emergencies guidance, as published on gov.uk, was last updated on 6 April 2016. It can be found here;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-emergencies/preparing-for-emergencies>

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they raise public awareness of the advice contained in their Preparing for Emergencies guidance. [HL5810]

Lord Young of Cookham: National campaigns are run as appropriate to inform the public about preparing themselves, their businesses and their communities for risks, such as the annual Get Ready for Winter campaign, which uses both online and print mediums to inform the public about winter-related risks.

Local responders have a duty to communicate risk to the public under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), and do so via Community Risk Registers and local campaigns. Government supports the development of Community Risk Registers (and public awareness more generally) via the publication of the bi-annual National Risk Register, which provides a UK-wide resource for local responders to draw on for up-to-date resilience and scientific information.

Equal Pay

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in addressing the gender pay gap. [HL5897]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: For the first time, all employers with 250 or more employees are required to publish their gender pay gap before 4 April 2018. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has powers to enforce compliance with this requirement. The EHRC has published a policy paper on its intended approach to enforcement here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/closing-gap-enforcing-gender-pay-gap-regulations>.

More generally, the EHRC's 2017-18 Business Plan commits it to working with employers to demonstrate how changes to recruitment, retention, pay decisions and career pipelines can narrow pay gaps.

Farms: Fly Tipping

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to tackle the dumping of waste on farmland. [[HL5835](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government is committed to tackling fly-tipping in rural and urban areas. Local authorities and the Environment Agency (EA) have a wide range of enforcement powers to tackle fly-tipping and we have recently strengthened these. In 2016 we gave local authorities the power to issue fixed penalty notices for small scale fly-tipping and enhanced the local authorities and EA's ability to search and seize the vehicles of suspected fly-tippers. We have also worked with the Sentencing Council to strengthen the Sentencing Guideline for environmental offences. The maximum penalties for fly-tipping are imprisonment of up to five years or a potentially unlimited fine.

We are currently consulting on proposals to introduce a new fixed penalty notice of up to £400 for householders who fail in their duty of care and whose waste is fly-tipped. As two-thirds of fly-tipped waste originates from households, the introduction of this penalty along with educational awareness for individuals will help reduce fly-tipping on public and private land.

Government Departments: Shipping

*Asked by **Lord West of Spithead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to establish a post with executive authority over the maritime craft of those departments with an interest in coastal littoral activity; and if so, whether that post would lead on procurement of a common fleet of maritime craft in the future. [[HL5857](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The Joint Maritime Operations Coordination Centre (JMOCC), established very recently, in October 2017, optimises and coordinates the deployment of UK maritime assets across government agencies, including the seagoing craft owned by Border Force, the Royal Navy, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities. This is achieved by maintaining a detailed picture of those assets in terms of type, location and availability along with a comprehensive overview of the threats likely to occur in UK waters and access to near real-time monitoring systems. The methodology has already led to successful interventions in respect of incidents ranging from criminality to safety.

Additionally, the Joint Governance Board for the JMOCC and the National Maritime Information Centre supports stakeholders' decision-making processes in

relation to the deployment of resources; as such there are currently no plans to procure a 'common fleet of maritime craft'.

Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017

*Asked by **Baroness Finlay of Llandaff***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards implementing the provisions of the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017, specifically in relation to remuneration in respect of special medicinal products. [[HL5784](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Finlay of Llandaff***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultations they have held with interested parties regarding implementation of the provisions of the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017 relating to special medicinal products. [[HL5785](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Finlay of Llandaff***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when proposals on the legal requirements for the provision of information relating to the sale and purchase of health service products used in the NHS under the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017 will be brought forward. [[HL5786](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The Government ran two public consultations implementing the powers in the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017. We consulted on changes to the statutory scheme regulations for branded medicines and on new regulations for the provision of information about health service products. We are finalising both sets of regulations which will be laid and enter into force in spring 2018.

The information Regulations include requirements in relation to special medicinal products which will ensure that the Government obtains information from all manufacturers and importers. This information will make the reimbursement arrangements for the most commonly used special medicinal products more robust.

Separately, the Government is considering how to implement its powers in the 2017 Act on the way it reimburses special medicinal products. Any proposals will be subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Innovate UK

*Asked by **Lord Fox***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what processes are used by Innovate UK to confirm that all parties listed in a project application have consented to their inclusion in that project. [[HL5949](#)]

Lord Henley: Applicants must individually agree to their personal data and some specific, commercially sensitive project outputs being shared in exchange for being awarded grant. The lead participant cannot sign up

to this on an organisation's behalf, and without that buy-in the project cannot proceed. Similarly, the applicant briefing events and documentation clearly state that an application must show genuine evidence of collaboration.

Asked by Lord Fox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recourse a business has if it finds that it has been falsely cited by a third party in a bid application to Innovate UK. [HL5950]

Lord Henley: Innovate UK will act speedily to review the allegation and if found to be true, they would pull the application and mark it ineligible.

Measles

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cases of measles there were in England in (1) 2016, and (2) 2017; whether there was a drop in vaccination rates in the UK in 2017; what action they are taking to maintain World Health Organisation measles elimination status; and how they are working with European partners to tackle the recent surge in measles cases in Europe. [HL5794]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The total number of measles cases in England was 531 in 2016 and figures for 2017 will be published in April 2018.

Annual vaccine coverage statistics for England for 2016/17 indicate uptake of the first dose measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine at two years of age was 91.6%, a 0.3% decrease from 2015/16; the first dose MMR at five years of age reached the 95% World Health Organization (WHO) target, a 0.2% increase from 2015/16; and the second dose MMR at five years was 87.6%, a 0.6% decrease from 2015/16.

In adopting the European Vaccine Action Plan 2015–2020, the United Kingdom, along with all 53 Member States of the WHO European Region, has committed to eliminating measles and rubella as one of the Region's priority immunisation goals. In 2017, Public Health England convened a multi-stakeholder measles and rubella elimination group, to develop a UK-wide strategy with key recommendations for action, to ensure elimination will be sustained.

Merchant Shipping: Cybercrime

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have assessed the cyber risks to merchant shipping (1) in UK ports, (2) in UK waters, and (3) globally. [HL5811]

Baroness Sugg: The Government continues to assess both existing and emerging cyber threats to the maritime industry, both in relation to UK-flagged vessels and UK ports, as well as the evolving threats globally. The Department for Transport has issued Codes of Practice for both UK-flagged vessels and ports which are tools aimed

at making industry aware of the threats and the impacts they could have on their business, as well as providing practical and simple management solutions which, when properly applied, can provide an effective defence against cyber attacks.

The Government also takes a leading role within the international maritime and security community, through such organizations as the International Maritime Organization, to develop awareness and promote best practice not only to improve defence but to encourage better detection when such attacks occur.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have issued advice to merchant shipping companies about the level of cyber awareness expected of ships entering UK ports. [HL5812]

Baroness Sugg: The Department for Transport has issued Codes of Practice on cyber security for both UK-flagged ships and UK ports. These documents, which are available to everyone, provide a management framework intended to support industry in recognizing and addressing their own vulnerabilities, and to encourage them to have in place procedures that safeguard their businesses from current and emerging threats.

We work closely with the wider international maritime community to promote best practice and expertise, especially through the International Maritime Organization, who themselves have recently published guidelines on maritime cyber risk management, which will also be incorporated into their International Safety Management Code in 2021.

National Maritime Information Centre

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Cabinet Office intends to fund the £4.5 million annual cost of running the National Maritime Information Centre and Joint Maritime Operations Centre; and if not, how they will ensure that departments involved pay the requisite amount. [HL5856]

Baroness Sugg: The National Maritime Information Centre (NMIC) and Joint Maritime Operations Coordination Centre (JMOCC) are currently funded by annual contributions from the major government stakeholders, Border Force, the Department for Transport, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Marine Management Organisation, the National Crime Agency, the Home Office (Office for Security and Counter Terrorism) and the Police. In addition to the financial contributions, a number of these stakeholders also directly sponsor posts at the NMIC and JMOCC. The Royal Navy supports the NMIC-JMOCC estate, along with other infrastructure.

The long-term funding for both organisations will be considered as part of next year's planned Spending Review.

Northern Ireland Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ascertain the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland on (1) the current political impasse over the restoration of a Northern Ireland Executive, and (2) the implications of leaving the European Union; and whether those issues will be discussed through the establishment of a Civic Forum, as provided for under the Good Friday Agreement. [HL5827]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and her Ministerial team regularly meet the people of Northern Ireland, and with business and civic leaders, to hear their views about a range of issues. But we are clear that this is no substitute for a fully functional power-sharing Executive in place to represent the people of Northern Ireland and to advocate for the issues that matter to them.

The Government is fully committed to ensuring that, as the UK leaves the EU, the unique interests of Northern Ireland are protected and advanced. That is why we continue to work towards the resumption of stable devolved government. The UK Government will continue to advocate for Northern Ireland's interests and needs at the heart of government.

The Belfast Agreement, the 1998 Northern Ireland Act, and all subsequent political agreements are clear that decisions about the Civic Forum are a devolved matter for the Executive and the Assembly.

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish a consultation on legacy issues pertaining to Northern Ireland; if so, when; and whether they intend to seek the views of the public in Northern Ireland on the appropriateness of establishing the legacy bodies envisaged in the Stormont House Agreement. [HL5948]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: As our Northern Ireland manifesto at the last Election made clear, the Government remains committed to the implementation of the legacy institutions in the 2014 Stormont House Agreement. We believe that taken together they have the potential to provide better outcomes for victims and survivors in a way that allows society ultimately to move forward. The bodies will be under legal obligations to operate in ways that are fair, balanced and proportionate.

Our manifesto also set out our intention 'to consult publicly on the details of how the new structures would work in practice'. This will be an open consultation in which all views will be welcomed and considered carefully. The Government wants to consult soon, with the aim of building support and confidence in the new legacy institutions from across the community.

Overseas Trade: USA

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are being lobbied in respect of any future UK-US trade deal. [HL5768]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government, with regard to lobbying in relation to any future UK-US trade deal, whether they will disclose (1) the names of all those lobbying Her Majesty's Government, (2) the form and timing of such lobbying, and (3) the subjects covered by those lobbyists. [HL5769]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have been subject to lobbying to open the NHS market to United States firms as part of any future UK-US trade deals. [HL5770]

Baroness Fairhead: As outlined in the Trade White Paper, 'Preparing for our Future UK Trade Policy', the UK is committed to a transparent approach to international trade. We have invited views on the UK's approach to future trade agreements, including our future trade relationship with the US, and engagement with stakeholders is ongoing as they continue to feed into our policy development.

The Government has been clear that protecting the NHS is of the utmost importance. Nothing in our future trade agreements, including with the US, will prevent the UK from regulating in the pursuit of legitimate public policy objectives such as the NHS. As we leave the EU, the UK will continue to ensure that rigorous protections for the NHS are included in all trade agreements it is party to.

Public Transport

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they ensure that all groups who use public transport have equal access to public transport and that none are discriminated against, including the elderly and those with young children. [HL5792]

Baroness Sugg: The Government is committed to making the transport system accessible to all users, including the elderly and those with young children. The draft Accessibility Action Plan, published for consultation last year, set out a number of steps we will be taking across transport modes.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 makes provision for operators of public transport services to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate passengers who share protected characteristics, which includes age.

Reparation by Offenders

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Keen of Elie on 22 February, whether they will actively promote the practice of restorative justice for all levels of crime. [HL5791]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government supports the provision of good quality, victim focussed restorative justice to help victims cope and recover from the effects of crime.

We have made progress against the Ministry of Justice's current Action Plan on Restorative Justice, published last year. This plan sets out the measures we are taking to raise awareness of restorative justice and seeks to allow victims of crime access to quality restorative justice services no matter the crime committed against them or where they live in England and Wales. With rigorous risk assessment and ongoing safeguarding in place, restorative justice carried out by experienced and skilled practitioners, can benefit victims' recovery.

Legislation provides for courts to defer sentence to allow restorative activities to take place, and in other circumstances to form part of a community sentence as a restorative justice requirement. In all instances, this may only be imposed where all parties involved in the activity consent and where the activity provides opportunity for the victim to have their say. We are clear however, that restorative justice should be used alongside formal criminal justice processes, and not as a substitute to a criminal justice system response.

Right to Buy Scheme

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards removing barriers to the replacement of homes sold under Right to Buy. [HL5846]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government is keen to understand if more can be done to encourage faster delivery of Right to Buy replacements and has been engaging with local authorities to obtain their views, which will be fed into our assessment.

Rolling Stock: North of England

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Northern rail franchise is still intended to result in the withdrawal of all Pacer trains by the end of 2019. [HL5875]

Baroness Sugg: Northern Rail will oversee the complete removal of Pacer trains by the end of 2019.

South Africa: Corruption

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they (1) have contacted, or (2) plan to contact, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) in relation to Lord Hain's referral of Hogan Lovells LLP to the SRA over allegations that Hogan Lovells LLP was complicit in covering up corruption in South Africa. [HL5790]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) is an independent regulator. They have confirmed receipt of Lord Hain's letter regarding Hogan Lovells LLP.

South Africa: Foreign Relations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what practical steps they intend to take to strengthen bilateral relations with South Africa, including UK ministerial meetings with new President, Cyril Ramaphosa. [HL5796]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister spoke to President Ramaphosa on 18 February. They committed to work closely together to help build a more secure and prosperous future for both our countries. The Prime Minister also invited President Ramaphosa to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April and looks forward to meeting him there. The High Commission in Pretoria is in regular contact with the South African government on a wide range of issues.

Sudan: Political Prisoners

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Sudan has forced recently released political detainees to take part in negotiations with that government as a condition of their release. [HL5780]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are not aware of individuals being required to take part in negotiations as a condition of their release. However, we continue to make clear to the Government of Sudan our expectation that all detainees will be treated in accordance with international standards. This includes ensuring their unconditional release if there are no charges brought against them.

Syria: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the situation in (1) Afrin, and (2) Eastern Ghouta, in Syria. [HL5793]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are closely following developments in Afrin and wider north-western

Syria. A combination of Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces and Turkish troops have advanced into the border areas of Afrin province as part of an operation launched on 20 January. There have been airstrikes, clashes between Turkish backed forces and the Kurdish YPG militia, and there are reports of civilian casualties. We are aware of reports of the deployment of pro-regime militia to the Afrin area since 20 February. We are concerned about the potential for further violence. We have been in close contact with Turkey and are calling for de-escalation and the protection of civilians in Afrin. While recognising Turkey's legitimate interest in the security of its borders, it remains in our shared interest to focus on achieving a political settlement that ends the war and suffering, and provides stability for all Syrians.

The Assad regime's brutal siege of Eastern Ghouta, coupled with escalating bombardment over the past week and reports of chemicals weapons use, is causing unprecedented levels of suffering. Non-governmental organisations, including Medecins Sans Frontieres, report over 500 civilians killed in Eastern Ghouta since 18 February, and many more injured. We welcome the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2401 on 24 February which calls for a 30-day ceasefire in Syria to allow for delivery of humanitarian aid and medical evacuations, which are urgently needed across Syria, but particularly in Eastern Ghouta. Those with influence over the regime must now ensure the ceasefire is implemented in full.

Syria: Islamic State

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Joint Statement of Guiding Principles for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS which says that "only a few pockets of land remain under [ISIS] control in Syria"; and whether the UK has any plans to withdraw from the coalition. [HL5781]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government supports the vision set out in the Joint Statement of Guiding Principles. At the ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition this month, the Minister of State for the Middle East expressed this Government's support.

As the Guiding Principles note '...our work is not done. ISIS/Da'esh remains a serious threat to the stability of the region and our common security.' That is why the UK will continue to play a leading role in the Global Coalition. Daesh remains a threat. In order to protect UK citizens at home and abroad, we must continue our efforts to secure the lasting defeat of Daesh in Syria and Iraq.

We are working to secure Daesh's lasting defeat by working with legitimate local authorities to ensure a stable, prosperous and united future for affected communities in both Syria and Iraq. Daesh must not be allowed to re-emerge.

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they provided to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in Syria between 2015 and the latest date for which figures are available; and what was (1) the cost, and (2) the nature, of that assistance. [HL5782]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK plays a leading role in the Global Coalition against Daesh.

Our military involvement in the Global Coalition is Operation SHADER. We do not disaggregate the costs of that operation between Iraq and Syria (the costs of military operations are published in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Accounts, available online).

In Syria, our military role in the Global Coalition is limited to air strikes to support partner forces on the ground. Since 2015, the UK launched 315 air strikes in Syria as part of the Coalition campaign.

We are also playing a leading role in the humanitarian response, including funding to stabilise areas liberated from Daesh. In October 2017, we announced a further £10 million to respond to displacement in North East Syria, including funding to remove mines.

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what legal basis they participate in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in Syria. [HL5783]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's legal basis for military action in Iraq is the consent of the Government of Iraq. The UK's legal basis for military action in Syria is the collective self-defence of Iraq. Daesh continue to pose a threat to Iraq both within and from over the Syrian border and therefore our legal basis for military action remains extant.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which takes place on 10 December. [HL5795]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Every year the Foreign and Commonwealth Office commemorates Human Rights Day (10 December) which is the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its diplomatic network will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights using a variety of public diplomacy efforts to promote, defend and champion human rights. This includes, as set out in my statement at the Human Rights Council, the Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy spending approximately £10.6 million in 2017/18 to support 110 projects in over 60 countries. The UK remains committed to the universal principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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