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

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness 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

Monday, 12 March 2018

Branded Health Service Medicines

[HLWS518]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: This statement is to update the House that Regulations were laid before Parliament on 9 March 2018 to revise the statutory scheme to control the cost of branded health service medicines. The changes will come into force on 1 April 2018, and are estimated to result in £33m of savings in the first year. I have also published a response to the consultation and impact assessment which are attached.

Last year the Government consulted on reforms to the statutory scheme to better align the way the statutory scheme and voluntary 2014 Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme work, and move towards a more level playing field between companies in the two schemes.

Reforming the statutory scheme will also enable the Department to put more effective pricing and enforcement controls in place, whilst increasing the levels of savings of health service medicines covered by the scheme.

Having considered the responses to the consultation, the Government is making Regulations for a statutory scheme requiring manufacturers and suppliers that come within the scope of the scheme's provisions to pay the Department of Health and Social Care 7.8% of their net sales income received from the supply of health service medicines. A record of the maximum prices that may be charged for the supply of those health service medicines will be published by the Department. The operation of the statutory scheme will be supported by the requirement for manufacturers and suppliers to record and keep information and to provide that information in accordance with the Regulations. Payments received through the scheme will be passed to the NHS in England, with apportionment to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

After consideration, the Government has amended its approach to the classification of companies in the scope of the scheme, to the exemptions from the payments, and has made a number of minor and technical amendments to ensure the new scheme operates as effectively as possible with the minimum administrative burden to companies.

The Regulations will apply to the whole of the UK. Medicines pricing is a reserved area with respect to Wales and Scotland and devolved with respect to Northern Ireland. A legislative consent motion (LCM) was sought from the Northern Ireland Assembly during the passage of the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act"). However, the Assembly was dissolved before the motion itself could be passed. With that in mind, the 2017 Act provided for separate commencement in Northern Ireland, on the basis that it was hoped that a restored executive could complete the LCM process before the provisions were commenced. In the light of the ongoing absence of an Executive, however, a point has

been reached whereby a decision on whether to commence the provisions cannot be further deferred. The UK Government has therefore decided to proceed with UK-wide implementation. This decision has not been reached lightly. Yet it is clear that not commencing the provision UK-wide would introduce substantial burdens on companies, and further delay would lead to fewer savings being made by health services across the UK. Given those factors, and noting the support the measures commanded from the previous Executive (with a Legislative Consent Motion laid in the Assembly albeit not passed), I assess that now is the right time to move forward with commencement.

I recognise that I made a commitment to the House during passage of the primary legislation that the provisions would not be commenced in Northern Ireland without an LCM in place. However, there has been no Assembly in place to provide an LCM over a period of more than 13 months and, in its absence, there is a clear public interest in seeing these measures proceed, not least because the measures will generate savings of £1.5m for Northern Ireland in the first year. It is on that basis that I consider we should move forward. When an Executive has been restored I will write to the Northern Ireland Health Minister to confirm that they are content for the commenced 2017 Act to remain in place. I will also continue to consider carefully any further representations from stakeholders in Northern Ireland, while recognising the broad support that these measures have commanded previously.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Consultation response [180312 branded-health-service-medicines-statutory-scheme-consultation-response.pdf]

Impact Assessment [180312 Impact Assessment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2018-03-12/HLWS518/>

Competitiveness Council

[HLWS513]

Lord Henley: My hon friend Sam Gyimah, the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation has made the following written ministerial statement:

The Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) will take place on 12 March in Brussels. Day two on Research and Space has been cancelled.

The Council will hold an exchange of views on the European Semester 2018: Digitalisation of the EU Economy. The Council will discuss industrial policy and will look to agree upon a set of Conclusions on a future EU Industrial Policy Strategy for Competitiveness, Growth and Innovation. There will then be a discussion to mark the 25th anniversary of the Single Market. Finally, there will be a 'competitiveness check-up' discussion which I expect to focus on the Externalities of Regulation in Services on Manufacturing.

The Council will discuss a number of AOB points on the Industry 2030 Roundtable and the Plastic Strategy, both presented by the Commission. The Council will end with a point on Better Regulation presented by the Presidency.

ECOFIN

[HLWS517]

Lord Bates: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Elizabeth Truss) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

A meeting of The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) will be held in Brussels on 13 March 2018. EU Finance Ministers will discuss the following:

Early Morning Session

The Eurogroup President will brief the Council on the outcomes of the 12 March meeting of the Eurogroup, and the European Commission will provide an update on the current economic situation in the EU.

Mandatory Disclosure Rules

The Council will be invited to reach political agreement on the Council Directive regarding the mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation in relation to reportable cross-border arrangements.

Banking Package

The Council will be invited to agree on a general approach on the legislative proposals included in the Banking Package (Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive (CRD), Single Resolution Mechanism Regulation (SRMR), and the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD)).

Current Financial Services Legislative Proposals

The Bulgarian Presidency will provide an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services and the Commission will present its most recent Capital Markets Union package.

European Semester 2018

Following a presentation by the Commission on its 2018 Country Reports, the Council will hold an exchange of views on the implementation of country-specific recommendations with a focus on productivity growth. The Council will also be requested to adopt the conclusions on the European Court of Auditors Special Report on the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP).

G20 Meeting

The Council will be invited to approve the EU Terms of reference for the G20 meeting on 19-20 March in Buenos Aires.

Status of the Implementation of Financial Services Legislation

The Commission will inform the Council on the status of the implementation of financial services legislation.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

[HLWS514]

Baroness Buscombe: My honourable Friend the Minister of State for Employment (Alok Sharma MP) has made the following Written Statement

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will take place on 15th March 2018 in Brussels. I will represent the UK at the Council.

The Council will be invited to conduct a policy debate on The Future of Social Europe Post 2020.

Under an agenda item on the European Semester, the Council will be invited to adopt the following documents of the European Semester: the Joint Employment Report (JER) and Council Conclusions on the Annual Growth Survey (AGS).

The Council will receive a presentation from the Commission on its 2018 Country Reports on the implementation of Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) from 2017.

The Council will be invited to endorse the opinion of the Employment Committee (EMCO)'s on the latest biennial assessment of Member States' progress against the non-binding Council recommendation of 2013 on a Youth Guarantee for tackling youth unemployment.

The Council will be invited to adopt a Recommendation for a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. The Council will then conduct a policy debate on Closing the gender pay gap: contributing to the achievement of the goals of the European Social Pillar.

Under any other business, the Commission will present information on its awaited Social Fairness Package, the Commission and the President will present information on the Tripartite Social Summit, and the chairs of the EMCO and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) will provide information on their respective 2018 Work Programmes.

Financial Guidance and Claims Bill

[HLWS512]

Baroness Buscombe: My honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman MP) has made the following Written Statement

I am today placing in the Library of the House the Department's analysis on the application of Standing Order 83L in respect of the Government amendments tabled for Commons Report stage for the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill.

HS2 Update

[HLWS516]

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

I am pleased to inform the House that we have published our consultation response on taking forward the vision of a Crewe Hub.

This response signals how our plans will support that vision and allow for the introduction of an additional HS2 service to Stoke-on-Trent.

To enable this, we will amend our plans for HS2 Phase 2A, from Birmingham to Crewe. This includes 400 metre platforms at Crewe, which allow longer HS2 trains to split and join, opening up opportunities to serve more destinations including Stoke-on-Trent and enabling more people to access high speed, long distance services.

We also intend to ask the franchise operator, West Coast Partnership, to include a high speed service to Stoke-on-Trent in its market development and service plans.

A Crewe Hub could generate significant opportunities - not only for Crewe, but also for the surrounding region. To fully realise that vision will need central and local government to work together and require future decisions to be taken as part of Phase 2B.

We welcome the progress being made by Cheshire East Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership in identifying how they could invest in the scheme to ensure the benefits are fully realised.

The steps we are taking today will ensure Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent can benefit fully from HS2 and builds on the earlier decision to bring the benefits of HS2 to Crewe from 2027, six years earlier than originally planned.

HS2 will become the new backbone of our national rail network. It will increase capacity on our busy railways and improve connections between our biggest cities and regions. It will support our Industrial Strategy, generating jobs, skills and economic growth to help build an economy that works for all.

Local Government Policy

[HLWS515]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am today announcing how I am minded to proceed in response to the locally-led proposals that I have received for improving local government in Buckinghamshire. Currently in the administrative county of Buckinghamshire, there is a two-tier structure of Buckinghamshire County Council and the district councils of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, High Wycombe, and South Bucks.

There is broad local consent for change in Buckinghamshire, though there have been two alternative approaches for how precisely it should be configured. In September 2016 and January 2017, I received locally-led proposals for replacing the current structure, in one case with a single new unitary council and in the other case with two new unitary councils – one for the area of

Aylesbury Vale and the other for the remainder of the current county area.

Having carefully considered all the material and representations I have received, I am minded to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval and further discussions, the locally-led proposal to replace the existing five councils across Buckinghamshire with a single council for the area.

I am satisfied that this new single council, if established, is likely to improve local government and service delivery in the county, generating savings, increasing financial resilience, facilitating a more strategic and holistic approach to planning and housing challenges, and sustaining good local services. I am also satisfied that across Buckinghamshire as a whole there is a good deal of local support for this new council, and that the area of the council represents a credible geography.

Whereas, I am equally satisfied that establishing two councils for the current county area is unlikely to improve local government in the area, generate significant savings, or provide the capacity to sustain major services or to address planning and housing challenges. I believe the areas of the two councils would not represent a credible geography or clear local identity, and that there is significantly less local support for two councils than for a single council. Accordingly, I am not minded to proceed with the proposal for establishing two councils.

Notwithstanding, I am clear that in relation to establishing a single council further steps are needed to secure local consent amongst the local partners, and I hope this 'minded to' announcement will facilitate the necessary discussions to deliver this local agreement.

Before I take my final decision, there is now a period until 25 May 2018 during which those interested may make further representations to me, including that if a proposal is implemented it is with suggested modifications. The final decision would also be subject to Parliamentary approval.

NHS Dental Charges

[HLWS519]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Steve Brine) has made the following written statement:

Regulations have been laid before Parliament to uplift dental charges in England from 1 April 2018.

Dental charges remain an important contribution to the overall cost of dental services. They have existed in some shape or form since 1951, and are one of the NHS services that can be charged for under the 2006 Act.

We have taken the decision to uplift dental charges for those who can afford it, through a 5% increase this year.

This means that the dental charge payable for a band 1 course of treatment will rise by £1.00 in 2018-19, from £20.60 to £21.60. The dental charge for a band 2 course of treatment will increase by £2.80 in 2018-19, from £56.30 to £59.10. The charge for a band 3 course of

treatment will increase by £12.20 in 2018-19, from £244.30 to £256.50.

The uplift announced today continues with the aim of finding an appropriate balance between the costs paid by service users and those met by the NHS through the contributions of taxpayers. If this uplift was not implemented resource savings from other parts of the NHS would need to be generated to make up the shortfall.

Those who qualify for free dental treatment will remain entirely exempt from charges. Those under the age of eighteen, those under the age of nineteen and in full-time education, pregnant women or those who have had a baby in the previous twelve months, and those on qualifying low income benefits will not be impacted by these changes.

Even those not entitled to exemption from dental charges, but who are on low incomes, are eligible to receive full or partial help with dental charges through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

This policy will allow us to continue to protect the most vulnerable through exemptions and the NHS low income

scheme. We therefore consider that the proposed uplifts in charges are fair and proportionate and will support NHS front line services.

Details of the revised charges for 2018-19 can be found in the table below;

<i>New Charge (£)</i>	
<i>Dental Charges</i>	
Band 1 course of treatment (this band includes examination, diagnosis (including radiographs), advice on how to prevent future problems, scale and polish if clinically needed, and preventative care (e.g. applications of fluoride varnish or fissure sealant). This band also covers emergency care in a primary care dental practice such as pain relief or a temporary filling).	£21.60
Band 2 course of treatment (this band covers everything listed in band 1, plus any further treatment such as fillings, root canal work or extractions)	£59.10
Band 3 course of treatment (this band covers everything in bands 1 and 2, plus course of treatment including crowns, dentures, bridges and other laboratory work)	£256.50

Written Answers

Monday, 12 March 2018

Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences

Asked by *Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 20 February (HL5414), in which countries the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative projects listed included the gathering of evidence to support future prosecutions. [HL5905]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is funding projects to build capacity for evidence gathering using the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Rwanda, Somalia, Syria and Ukraine. Our projects are not designed to gather evidence themselves.

In addition to the projects listed in HL5414, the PSVI Team of Experts has been deployed 20 times to 10 countries, including Iraq, Syria, Colombia, Uganda, Sri Lanka, in the past 12 months to provide capacity building on the gathering of evidence in line with the International Protocol. Further deployments to Bangladesh will take place later this month.

Armed Forces: Cadets

Asked by *Lord De Mauley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Ofsted recognises the contribution of an in-school cadet movement when reporting on its inspection of a school; and if so, how. [HL5867]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to my noble Friend and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Arrest Warrants: Turkey

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have received evidence showing that Turkey has used Interpol or Europol notices to harass politically active Turks and non-Turks who have no connection to crimes or terrorism. [HL5952]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Interpol has an independent review body, the Commission for the Control of Files, which seeks to ensure that the processing of personal information by Interpol is in compliance with the Interpol's regulations. This minimises scope for abuse of Interpol procedures, and we are not aware of successful abuse of Interpol procedures that are outside of the organisation's framework by any member country.

Whilst Turkey has a strategic cooperation agreement with Europol, the agreement does not authorise the transmission of data related to an identified individual or identifiable individuals. Turkey therefore does not have access to any personal data held by Europol.

Asylum: Housing

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many bedrooms in accommodation allocated to asylum seekers in (1) the North East of England, and (2) Yorkshire, under Home Office COMPASS contracts, are shared by two or more unrelated individuals; and what proportion of the total number of bedrooms available in those areas that figure represents. [HL5945]

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how are "vulnerable people" defined when allocating shared bedrooms to unrelated asylum seekers under Home Office COMPASS contracts. [HL5946]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Asylum accommodation Providers are contractually required to take account of any particular circumstances and vulnerability of those that they accommodate to ensure that destitute asylum seekers are housed safely and securely. Such an assessment is made on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific needs of that individual. There are strict criteria set out in the contract around when room sharing can take place and who can share a room. Providers must also comply with local regulations including advice from social services and primary and secondary care bodies on whether room sharing is inappropriate.

The use of individual properties across provider's portfolios changes daily subject to demand. Information on the current number of bedrooms shared between unrelated individuals could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual provider property records.

Asylum: LGBT People

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take to protect LGBTI asylum seekers facing discrimination and violence in asylum accommodation managed by private companies on behalf of the Home Office. [HL6060]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Housing providers are contractually required to take account of any particular circumstances and vulnerabilities of those that they accommodate, including sexual orientation or gender identity. The Home Office and our accommodation providers take complaints extremely seriously and have robust procedures in place to inspect, investigate and

resolve any complaints raised, where specific information is provided.

We urgently investigate any complaints we receive where standards have fallen short of what we would expect. When there is clear evidence of this we work with our providers to ensure issues are quickly addressed and when they are not, we can and do impose sanctions.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people who are claiming asylum, and have made reference to a reason being their sexual orientation or gender identity, have been held in detention in the last three years for more than (1) six months, (2) 12 months, (3) 18 months, and (4) 24 months. [HL6061]

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of those individuals being held in detention who are claiming asylum and have made reference to a reason being their sexual orientation or gender identity, what is the longest time in days that any such individual has been held. [HL6062]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Department does not hold pre-July 2015 data in a reportable format however experimental data on asylum claims lodged on the basis of sexual orientation, including the number of claimants who were granted asylum, between 1 July 2015 and 31 March 2017 is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/asylum-claims-on-the-basis-of-sexual-orientation>

Unfortunately specific information on the length of time, that those who have claimed asylum on the basis of their sexual orientation, have spent in detention, is not currently published and could only be obtained by a manual check of each record.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Asylum Claims - Sexual Orientation [asylum-claims-basis-sexual-orientation.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-05/HL6061>

Aviation: Ukraine

Asked by Baroness Falkner of Margravine

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the UK is not a party to the Joint Investigation Team considering the downing of MH17 given the number of victims who were UK citizens. [HL5825]

Asked by Baroness Falkner of Margravine

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current investigation into the downing of MH17 and the establishment of a tribunal in the Netherlands. [HL5826]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Metropolitan Police Service's approach to overseas acts of terror where there are UK victims is that the crimes are usually best prosecuted by the national authorities where the attack occurred. However, while the UK is not part of the MH17 JIT, the Metropolitan Police Service has provided operational support to the JIT including direct liaison officer support and extensive victim identification support.

The Government cannot comment on the current investigation into the downing of MH17 and the establishment of a tribunal in the Netherlands, as we are unable to comment on ongoing investigations.

Bahrain: Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Bahrain regarding the decision of the Bahraini High Military Court of Appeals to uphold the death sentences issued to six civilians in December 2017 for planning to target Bahraini security forces; and what assessment they have made of the case and the Court's decision to reject the appeal. [HL5890]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The United Kingdom is firmly opposed to the use of the death penalty. It is the Government's longstanding position to oppose capital sentences in all circumstances and countries. We continue to make this clear to the Government of Bahrain and have raised these particular cases at senior levels.

We understand that those handed the death sentence in these cases now have a further right of appeal.

Bahrain: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Bahrain regarding the fairness of trials of female pro-democracy activists on 21 February and the three-year prison sentences handed down by the Bahraini High Criminal Court. [HL5889]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We understand that the prison sentences relate to charges of harbouring wanted criminals and were given to six individuals. We understand that all six people have the right to appeal before the Court of Appeal and then the Court of Cassation. We will monitor proceedings.

Bees

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the health of the bee population in the UK. [HL5837]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The current honey bee health programme aims to manage pests and diseases present to low levels whilst keeping harmful exotic pests and diseases out of the UK. The programme was developed with beekeeping experts and stakeholders and is actively monitored by Defra and the National Bee Unit each year. Bee inspectors monitor for changes in pest and disease prevalence through an annual surveillance programme of over 5000 apiary inspections. Trends in prevalence are published on the National Bee Unit website.

As part of the National Pollinator Strategy, Defra is undertaking work to establish baselines for wild bee population trends and to monitor UK species distribution.

Carillion: Insolvency

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that the collapse of Carillion may have on the numbers of engineering apprenticeships. [HL5833]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has been working closely with Carillion and the department to closely monitor the impact on apprentices and apprenticeship provision following the collapse of Carillion.

The government's priority is to minimise disruption to apprentices and is intent on finding new employers for the apprentices that have been affected by the liquidation of Carillion. The ESFA has taken steps to protect learners by identifying the Construction Industry Training Board, as the best placed alternative provider.

There were 45 apprentices within the engineering and manufacturing technologies sector subject area and those relate specifically to plumbing and heating and electro technical frameworks. They fall within construction trades alongside the vast majority of Carillion apprenticeships.

37 of these apprentices were employed directly by Carillion, along with five other employers offering employment to the remaining eight apprentices. Therefore, we anticipate little impact on availability of engineering apprenticeships because these frameworks were sub-contracted by Carillion and therefore not directly impacted by their collapse.

Coastal Areas: Environment Protection

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of calls from the Maritime Foundation for urgent action to institute measures to protect the UK's maritime littoral zone post-Brexit. [HL5814]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Marine Maritime Organisation [Defra] has made an assessment of the

measures needed, from a fisheries perspective, to protect England's Exclusive Economic Zone which includes the maritime littoral zone referenced by the Maritime Foundation.

We are working with the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and the Marine Management Organisation, which together are responsible for enforcement in England's Exclusive Economic Zone out to 200 nautical miles, as well as the Royal Navy, Border Force, and other organisations to make sure the appropriate arrangements to enforce fisheries regulations are in place to protect our waters when we leave the EU.

Colombia: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the political situation in Colombia, following the government of Colombia's announcement of the suspension of peace talks with the National Liberation Army. [HL5957]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: A temporary ceasefire between the Colombian Government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla group ended on 9 January. The ELN launched new attacks on 10 January, following which the Colombian Government decided to suspend negotiations in Quito. On 28 February, President Santos announced he was contemplating breaking peace talks with the ELN after five police officers were killed in a bomb attack on 26 February. It is clear that trust needs to be re-established before talks can resume.

Community Orders

Asked by Lord Swinfen

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether community service sentences may include picking up litter in (1) rural, and (2) urban, areas. [HL5893]

Lord Keen of Elie: Where a court imposes an unpaid work requirement as part of a community sentence or suspended sentence order, the local Community Rehabilitation Company provides work placements in accordance with a range of criteria including:

- that the work benefits the local community;
- that the work undertaken is not a direct substitution for paid employment; and
- the views of local people and community stakeholders such as the police are taken into account.

Any proposal for unpaid work involving litter collection would have to be considered with reference to the requirements for unpaid work placements which form part of the service specifications and can be found at https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/probation-instructions/pi_02_2010_unpaid_work_community_payback_service_specification.pdf.

Degrees: Ceremonies

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to cap the amount that universities charge for students attending degree ceremonies. [HL5919]

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support students from low income families who would like family members to attend a degree awarding ceremony but cannot afford the guest charges. [HL5920]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Higher education providers are autonomous and independent organisations and as such, decisions on graduation ceremonies and whether to provide support to family members are a matter for individual providers.

The government expects higher education providers to consider access arrangements when planning graduation ceremonies, including any legal obligations they have under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published the attached guidance on their website for providers on avoiding discrimination at graduation and certificate ceremonies, which is available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/avoiding-discrimination-graduation-and-certificate-ceremonies>.

This government is committed to widening participation to higher education for students from disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Our ongoing reforms are helping provide talented young people from all backgrounds with the opportunity to study at our world-class universities. The Higher Education Act (2017) has established the Office for Students (OfS) which will have a statutory duty to have regard to promote equality of opportunity in access to and participation in higher education. As a result, widening access and participation will be at the core of the OfS's functions.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Avoiding discrimination at award ceremonies [Avoiding discrimination - Graduation and certificate ceremonies.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-02-27/HL5919>

Democratic Republic of Congo: Freezing of Assets

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to freeze the UK assets of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and his close associates, until such time as the Saint Sylvestre Agreement is implemented. [HL5829]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government is increasingly concerned about the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and has repeatedly called on President Kabila to honour both the Constitution and the 31 December 2016 St Sylvestre agreement. We are appalled by the violence used by Democratic Republic of Congo forces against peaceful protestors. We have publicly condemned the excessive use of force on both 31 December 2017 and 21 January 2018. With our European Union colleagues, the UK has already sanctioned sixteen Democratic Republic of Congo individuals (including some close associates of President Kabila) for serious human rights violations and for obstructing the democratic process. The Government does not currently have plans to sanction the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, alongside regional and international partners, we will continue to press the Democratic Republic of Congo authorities to adhere to their electoral commitment, to open up political space, and to allow for peaceful assembly.

Developing Countries: Rule of Law

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following their grant to Tunisia, they plan to provide support, either in the form of funding or professional help, to assist with (1) upholding the rule of law, (2) ensuring the independence of the judiciary, (3) due process in criminal investigations and the prosecution of suspects, and (4) the establishment of land registers and adequate title to properties, in post-conflict and developing states. [HL5828]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Strengthening justice systems around the world, particularly in developing countries and those affected by conflict, is essential to combating global poverty and addresses a root cause of instability, thereby building safer communities.

The UK is providing over £10 million in programme support to Tunisia this financial year. We plan to deliver more next year. The rule of law and protection of human rights are central to that work. The Crown Prosecution Service has deployed a Criminal Justice Advisor to Tunis to help build the capacity of prosecutors, investigators and the judiciary. We also fund projects to help the Tunisian authorities translate commitments in their constitution into effective legislation. We are not currently funding work on property rights in Tunisia, though we recognise the importance of making progress in this area.

Developing Countries: Sustainable Development

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to facilitate the involvement of civil society organisations in reporting on the UK's progress in implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. [HL5937]

Lord Bates: Reporting processes agreed at the UN mean that it is the national statistics office of each Member State that is responsible for reporting national data to the UN on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In the UK, this role is undertaken by the independent Office for National Statistics, which carried out a public consultation on its approach to reporting last summer.

The Government is committed to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals and has embedded the Goals across all of its work. We will present the UK's voluntary national review of progress towards the Goals in 2019, and will be consulting with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, as we develop our plans.

Civil society organisations have a vital role to play with regard to both contributing to delivery of the Goals to ensure no-one is left behind, and in communicating their importance to keep up momentum on implementation.

For example, the Leave No One Behind Partnership, founded by CIVICUS, Project Everyone and Development Initiatives with DFID support, has supported national dialogues with civil society platforms in thirty countries to raise awareness of the Goals, as well as discuss priorities and good practice for delivery. We are keen to ensure these important contributions are captured.

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bates on 12 February (HL5337), how the Department for International Development will monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the poorest developing countries; and whether this will require any additional staff. [HL5983]

Lord Bates: Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is reported through various means, including the UN's SDG indicators website, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>, which captures data reported to the UN by Member States under the global indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda. In addition, Member States are expected to complete voluntary national reviews of progress towards the Goals at least once in the period to 2030. The reviews are presented to the annual UN High Level Political Forum each July.

We will continue to use these sources to monitor progress towards the SDGs by Least Developed Countries. We will not require additional staff to do so.

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to provide in-country training for government officials and others engaged in (1) monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, and (2) data collection, following United Nations guidelines; and to what extent the Commonwealth could provide this training. [HL5984]

Lord Bates: DFID provides a range of support and training to National Statistics Offices in developing countries to gather, analyse and use a wide range of information, including data relevant to the SDGs. For example, through the UN Statistics Department, we are supporting 20 developing countries to disseminate SDG data through National Reporting Platforms, including technical assistance and training. We are also funding such support through the World Bank, the IMF and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) is also planning to host a meeting of Commonwealth heads of National Statistics Institutes (NSI) later this year. The ONS is proposing including in the agenda a focus on data gaps for global SDG indicators. This will build on publication on 19 March of a report on UK data gaps, including our initial Inclusive Data Action Plan.

Digital Broadcasting

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to announce the dates for digital television transmitter changes that will take place after 2018. [HL5602]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: The Government will announce the schedule at an appropriate time before the changes take place.

Disclosure of Information: International Cooperation

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government with which countries the UK has no data sharing agreements. [HL5805]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Under the Data Protection Act 1998 (which implements the EU's 1995 Data Protection Directive), personal data can be transferred to countries within the European Economic Area and with other countries or territories that have an 'adequate' level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data. The Data Protection Bill currently before Parliament will provide for the continuation of these arrangements under the new EU framework, the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Directive, from May 2018. The UK is currently party to EU adequacy decisions that enable data sharing with Andorra, Argentina, Faroe Islands, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Israel, Jersey, New Zealand, Switzerland and Uruguay. The EU has reached partial findings of adequacy in relation to Canada, and in relation to the USA for data transfers under the Privacy Shield Framework. The UK is also party to several EU agreements on Passenger Name Records with the US, Australia and Canada (PNR) and on law enforcement (EU-US Umbrella Agreement).

EU Countries: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 20 February (HL5413), whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will receive additional funds from HM Treasury to offset the £4.2 million cost of creating 50 new diplomatic posts in Europe. [HL5879]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The 50 new diplomatic positions we have created in Europe are being funded through internal reprioritisation. Our revised estimate for the cost of these positions is £4.1 million. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has secured additional funding from HM Treasury for EU Exit preparations and with this funding we are now in the process of creating more than 150 additional positions in London and the overseas network to support EU Exit. At the 2017 Autumn Budget, HM Treasury made another £1.5 billion of funding available for EU Exit preparations in 2018/19. We are currently working with the Treasury to determine our allocation for 2018/19 with the aim to agree this soon. The Treasury has committed to informing Parliament of these allocations once they are made.

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 20 February (HL5413), what are the 50 new diplomatic posts being created in Europe, broken down by (1) country, (2) diplomatic post, (3) grade of post holder, and (4) whether the post is currently filled or vacant. [HL5881]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The 50 new diplomatic positions we have created in Europe are to support the EU Exit process and to strengthen bilateral relationships with our European partners as we prepare for life outside of the EU. These positions are being deployed to our missions in Athens, Belgrade, Berlin, Berne, Bratislava, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Copenhagen, Dublin, Helsinki, Istanbul, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Luxembourg, Madrid, Oslo, Paris, Prague, Riga, Rome, Skopje, Sofia, Stockholm, Tallinn, The Hague, Tirana, Valletta, Vienna, Vilnius, Warsaw and Zagreb, as well as to the UK's Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. Two positions are at SMS level, eight are at Band D level, and the remaining positions are at Band C level. These positions have been filled and all but two officers have now arrived at post. In addition to creating these new positions we have also upgraded 7 of our Ambassadors so that all of our Ambassadors in EU Member States are at the SMS level. We keep the size and structure of our diplomatic network under constant review to ensure it is appropriate for delivering UK objectives, and the number and grades of staff in particular locations may change over time as required.

European Rail Traffic Management System

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are requiring all new-build passenger coaches to be equipped with compatible European Train Control System equipment to reduce the delays and costs of retrofitting. [HL5864]

Baroness Sugg: The Department for Transport's current policy is to require that all newly-built rolling stock meet the industry standards either for full fitment or to be made ready for European Train Control System (ETCS) fitment. Full fitment is appropriate where trains will be operating over routes fitted with ETCS signalling. 'Made ready' is appropriate to reduce the delays and costs of retrofitting once a route has been identified as being part of a fully funded ETCS deployment plan. This ensures that, when fitted, the trains will have the latest version of software compatible with the infrastructure equipment being deployed and that costly upgrades to trains fitted with out-of-date software are avoided.

Financial Reporting Council

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Henley on 20 February 2018 (HL5467), whether the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) will make a statement to its levy payers that the charges it has levied were not required to be paid; and whether they will make an assessment of the impact of improper charging including (1) whether the practice of speculative invoicing has created grounds for full refunds in a similar way to which Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) mis-selling has, (2) whether such practices have affected tax deductibility of payments made given that voluntary payments may not be tax deductible, (3) additional legal issues that the FRC is considering, (4) whether the FRC's own auditors have raised the matter as a concern, and (5) whether the amount received from Carillion plc by the FRC will be refunded to Carillion's liquidator. [HL5865]

Lord Henley: As stated in the reply given to the noble Baroness on 22nd January 2018 to question HL4627, requests from the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) for voluntary payments explain that the payments are non-statutory and voluntary. The FRC also explains to funders that, should the system of voluntary payments prove unsustainable, they would request that the Secretary of State make regulations to put the funding requirements on a statutory basis. The Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004 includes provisions to enable this.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Henley on 20 February 2018 (HL5469) and to the statement by the Minister for Trade on 29 March 2007 (Col 137WS), whether the Minister for Trade was informed of the intentions of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) regarding its classification when making that statement; if not, why not; and when were ministers informed, if at all, that the FRC's attempts to seek reclassification had been unsuccessful. [HL5904]

Lord Henley: The ministerial statement on 29th March 2007 set out the changes to the Financial Reporting Council's (FRC) governance. These were part of a process at the time aimed at securing the increased independence of the FRC from Government and its reclassification so that it was no longer a public body.

It is an established convention that Ministers of one administration cannot see the documents of a previous administration. I am therefore unable to provide the information requested by the noble Baroness.

Firearms: Licensing*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many registered firearms owners there are in England and Wales, broken down by police force area. [HL5840]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office publishes data on the number of Firearm certificate holders by police force area as part of the 'Firearm and Shotgun Certificates in England and Wales Statistics - Financial Year 2016/17' publication. These data can be found in the Table E1 below and at the following link.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/624004/firearm-shotgun-certificates-england-wales-march-2017-tables.ods

Table E1 Firearm certificate holders, shotgun certificate holders and firearm and/or shotgun certificate holders by police force area, 2016/17'

England and Wales			
<i>Police force area</i>	<i>Firearm certificate holders</i>	<i>Shotgun certificate holders</i>	<i>Firearm and/or shotgun certificate holders</i>
Cleveland	1,117	2,726	2,925
Durham	2,593	5,772	6,135
Northumbria	3,697	8,936	9,368
North East Region	7,407	17,434	18,428
Cheshire	2,815	11,424	11,800
Cumbria	3,284	8,631	9,062

<i>Police force area</i>	<i>Firearm certificate holders</i>	<i>Shotgun certificate holders</i>	<i>Firearm and/or shotgun certificate holders</i>
Greater Manchester	2,203	7,850	8,274
Lancashire	3,076	12,045	12,458
Merseyside	1,025	3,512	3,747
North West Region	12,403	43,462	45,341
Humberside	3,163	9,866	10,209
North Yorkshire	6,733	18,164	18,767
South Yorkshire	2,123	8,680	8,986
West Yorkshire	3,076	10,610	11,157
Yorkshire and the Humber Region	15,095	47,320	49,119
Derbyshire	3,421	12,275	12,647
Leicestershire	2,430	11,433	11,707
Lincolnshire	4,076	14,215	14,597
Northamptonshire	2,623	9,973	10,208
Nottinghamshire	2,081	8,644	8,933
East Midlands Region	14,631	56,540	58,092
Staffordshire	3,095	13,093	13,558
Warwickshire	2,146	7,882	8,110
West Mercia	6,448	24,098	24,832
West Midlands	1,934	8,079	8,578
West Midlands Region	13,623	53,152	55,078
Bedfordshire	1,608	6,348	6,593
Cambridgeshire	3,010	12,263	12,583
Essex	4,899	18,604	19,295
Hertfordshire	2,407	10,382	10,726
Norfolk	5,258	21,389	21,862
Suffolk	4,725	17,162	17,597
East of England Region	21,907	86,148	88,656
London, City of	3	29	31
Metropolitan Police	4,481	25,989	27,056

<i>Police force area</i>	<i>Firearm certificate holders</i>	<i>Shotgun certificate holders</i>	<i>Firearm and/or shotgun certificate holders</i>
London Region	4,484	26,018	27,087
Hampshire	5,413	21,858	22,785
Kent	5,490	20,552	21,446
Surrey	3,107	12,864	13,570
Sussex	6,934	21,344	22,209
Thames Valley	6,240	26,265	27,207
South East Region	27,184	102,883	107,217
Avon and Somerset	6,095	20,767	21,543
Devon and Cornwall	11,144	30,827	32,344
Dorset	3,487	10,817	11,271
Gloucestershire	2,777	11,223	11,502
Wiltshire	3,514	13,391	13,740
South West Region	27,017	87,025	90,400
ENGLAND	143,751	519,982	539,418
Dyfed-Powys	4,499	15,636	16,089
Gwent	1,466	5,918	6,076
North Wales	2,814	11,344	11,646
South Wales	2,237	6,969	7,429
WALES	11,016	39,867	41,240
ENGLAND AND WALES	154,767	559,849	580,658

1. Experimental statistics published for the second time in 2016/17. These statistics should be treated with caution as they are still being developed and have not been subjected to the same levels of quality assurance as the other figures in this publication. As the Home Office continues to report on these new figures in future years, it will aim to develop its quality assurance procedures, with a view to increasing confidence in the quality of the data

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table E1 [Copy of PQ HL5840 V2.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-02-23/HL5840>

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of firearms legally held in people's homes as opposed to being held for their owners by gun clubs. [HL5841]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All firearms held in a person's home must be licensed to the satisfaction of the police. In addition, shooting clubs need to be approved from the Home Office to show that they meet the criteria for Home Office approved shooting clubs.

Fisheries

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the future of the fishing industry in upcoming negotiations with the EU. [HL5963]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Leaving the EU provides an opportunity through negotiations with the EU and coastal states and through domestic reform, to develop arrangements for fishing that can create a more financially self-sufficient, profitable and responsive seafood sector, as well as delivering a cleaner, healthier and more productive marine environment.

We will publish a fisheries White Paper shortly before the introduction of the Fisheries Bill. As well as preparing for the Fisheries Bill, it will set out our medium term vision for sustainable fisheries management.

Foreign Companies: Property

Asked by Baroness Gardner of Parkes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the proposal by the Mayor of London to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy that a new public register of foreign ownership of properties be established, to combat their use for tax evasion, theft and terrorist activities. [HL5975]

Lord Henley: The dataset containing title records of properties in England and Wales registered to companies incorporated outside the UK is already available to the public. The government made HM Land Registry's Overseas Companies Ownership Data available for free for the first time on 7 November 2017.

The Government is committed to establish the new public register of beneficial ownership of overseas entities that own property in the UK and recently issued a written ministerial statement to confirm the timetable for implementation (HLWS417).

This register will be the first of its kind in the world. We need to make sure the new requirements are workable, proportionate and that the register strikes the right balance between improving transparency and minimising burdens on legitimate commercial activity.

Free School Meals

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the net reduction in eligibility for free school meals in England following the implementation and roll out of universal credit. [HL5844]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Under our new criteria for how free school meals eligibility will operate under Universal Credit, there will be no net reduction in eligibility for free school meals. The department has estimated that, by 2022, around 50,000 more children will benefit from a free school meal compared to the previous benefits system.

Gambling: Regulation

Asked by Lord Chadlington

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are taking steps to establish an independent regulator for the gambling industry; and if so, what. [HL5866]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: The Gambling Act 2005 created the Gambling Commission as the independent regulator for the gambling industry.

Genocide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 14 March 2016 (HL6611), what "international judicial system" bodies they accept as legitimate to make a determination on whether genocide has occurred. [HL5861]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to believe that the recognition of genocide should be a matter for competent courts, and be decided by judges after consideration of all the evidence available in the context of a credible judicial process. A recent example was in November 2017, when the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia convicted Ratko Mladić of genocide for his role in the Srebrenica massacre. The UK position is clear that there must be no impunity for the most serious international crimes.

Gibraltar: Airports

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reports that the government of Spain is seeking joint management of the airport in Gibraltar after Brexit. [HL5894]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK and Gibraltar continue to support the 2006 Cordoba Agreement on Gibraltar Airport which already provides for its enhanced use to benefit communities in both Gibraltar and Spain. We believe that a thriving Gibraltar airport can help deliver shared prosperity for the wider region.

Hedgehogs: Conservation

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to prevent further decline in hedgehog numbers, particularly in rural areas. [HL5959]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government is taking action to support the hedgehog.

Our 25 Year Environment Plan is committed to creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network, focusing on priority habitats as part of a wider set of land management changes providing extensive benefits for species such as the hedgehog.

Agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship provide funding to restore, extend and link important habitats and boost food resources for a range of species including hedgehogs. Over 100,000 hectares of new priority habitat have been created since 2011. The scheme's Wild Pollinators and Farm Wildlife Package funds specific management focused on improving farmland biodiversity across most farming systems. The management options for grassland, the conservation and enhancement of hedgerows and the creation and maintenance of field margins will help to provide suitable habitat for a range of species including hedgehogs.

In addition we recognise and support the work being undertaken by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and the People's Trust for Endangered Species, such as the Hedgehog Street campaign and the 10 year hedgehog strategy. Natural England is taking action that seeks to address some of the objectives of the 10 year strategy through actions identified in the work of the Species Taxon Action Groups, which underpins Biodiversity 2020.

Home Office: Impact Assessments

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) environmental impact assessments, (2) child rights impact assessments, (3) regulatory impact assessments, and (4) equality impact assessments, have been conducted by the Home Office in each of the last two financial years; and of those, how many have resulted in published assessments. [HL5816]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: This information is not held centrally and to obtain it would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold.

Immigration Controls

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they routinely inform the government of the Republic of Ireland of the details of all persons who have been deported from the UK or who are subject to exclusion orders from the UK. [HL5982]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Common Travel Area (CTA) is a special border-free zone encompassing the UK, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. To protect this arrangement there is a high level of collaboration between the UK and Ireland to strengthen the external border of the CTA.

A joint programme of work includes the sharing and use of data to inform immigration and border security decisions, as well as the sharing of information to increase understanding of respective border arrangements.

To protect the UK's border operations and CTA arrangements, the UK does not provide detailed information on the data shared with Ireland to help protect the CTA.

Islamic State: British Nationals Abroad

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British citizens who travelled to the Middle East to join the armed forces of the Islamic State are known to have returned to the UK; and how many of those are currently held in custody in the UK. [HL5980]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Approximately 400 UK-linked individuals of security concern have returned from the conflict in Syria. While it would not be appropriate to provide a breakdown of the investigation status of returners, a significant proportion of the individuals who have already returned have been assessed as posing little or no national security concern.

The Home Office Statistical Bulletin publishes data about convictions quarterly but does not distinguish those which relate to Syria and Daesh. People who are investigated and charged with offences relating to the conflict in Syria and Iraq are prosecuted in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Although official figures do not show how many were Syria or Daesh related, of the 97 persons charged with a terrorism-related offence in the year ending September 2017, 30 had been prosecuted (as at the time of data provision to the Home Office, 6 November 2017), 30 of which were found guilty. A further 65 were awaiting prosecution.

Islamic State: Crimes against Humanity

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendation to establish an international tribunal to prosecute Daesh fighters for genocide and other crimes set out in the Council of Europe report of Special Rapporteur, Pieter Omtzigt, Prosecuting and punishing the crimes against humanity or even possible genocide committed by Daesh, published on 22 September 2017. [HL5858]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is proud to be at the forefront of global efforts to bring

Daesh to justice. In 2017, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted the UK-drafted United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2379, which requests the Secretary General to establish an Investigative Team to gather evidence of Daesh crimes, beginning in Iraq. Evidence gathered by that team can support later prosecutions.

In many cases, prosecutions for any Daesh crimes will be best left to national authorities. Indeed, under UNSCR 2379, Iraq remains the 'primary intended recipient' for the evidence collected by the team. However, it is too early at this stage – and not for the UK alone – to determine what particular judicial mechanism will be appropriate in the future. The appropriate process will depend on the individual circumstances.

Islamic State: Genocide

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the Netherlands concerning (1) that government's recognition of Daesh atrocities as genocide, and (2) the steps taken by that government towards a proposal for prosecuting Daesh fighters. [HL5859]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly discuss all aspects of our work on Daesh Accountability with like-minded partners, including the Netherlands. We will continue to collaborate with partners, including the UN, on this issue.

This Government shares the House's condemnation of Daesh's crimes and is aware of the strength of feeling on this matter both nationally and internationally. This Government maintains that the attribution of genocide should be a matter for judicial bodies and not a political decision. The growing body of evidence that terrible crimes have been committed by Daesh is one reason why we continue to work to bring Daesh to justice.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with their international partners, including the government of the Netherlands, about the application of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide to crimes perpetrated by Daesh fighters against religious minorities in Syria and Iraq; and what stance they took in those discussions. [HL5860]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is at the forefront of global efforts to bring Daesh to Justice for their crimes. We have consulted widely with international partners on the issue, including on the consideration of relevant legal frameworks. Following these consultations, on 21 September 2017, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted UK-drafted Daesh Accountability Resolution 2379, which was co-sponsored by 46 Member States including the Netherlands. I am pleased that the Terms of Reference for the investigative team, which is

mandated by the Resolution to collect evidence of Daesh atrocities, have now been agreed. We will continue to work closely with both the UN, the Government of Iraq and other international partners to help achieve our shared goal of holding Daesh to account.

Kenilworth Station

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date the refurbished Kenilworth Station will reopen; and why the opening has been deferred on several occasions. [HL6053]

Baroness Sugg: We are advised by Warwickshire County Council, who are responsible for the design and construction of the new station, and for setting the opening date, that the station will be opening shortly.

M6

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to provide northbound access to the M6 motorway at Junction 31A. [HL5901]

Baroness Sugg: Her Majesty's Government has no plans to introduce additional slip roads at Junction 31A of the M6. North facing slip roads here would introduce additional lane changing manoeuvres by vehicles on the short busy length of the M6 between Junctions 31A and 32. This represents an unacceptable risk to the road safety performance of the motorway.

Marcos Amaral Gourgel

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Portuguese citizen, Marcos Amaral Gourgel, who died in Westminster Underground station on 14 February and who had been deported from the UK after his release from serving a custodial sentence for child sex offences, was able on two occasions to re-enter the UK. [HL5979]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do not routinely comment on individual cases.

We conduct border security checks on all passengers arriving in the UK at passport control. Where we are aware of individuals who pose a risk, Border Force officers can - and do - refuse them entry.

Meat: Animal Feed

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government, what assessment they have made of (1) the safety of feeding food waste containing meat unsuitable for human consumption from all stages of the supply chain to omnivorous

animals, and (2) the contribution that lifting restrictions on feeding such food waste to omnivores could make to food security when the UK leaves the EU. [HL5911]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The EU-wide Animal By-Product (ABP) legislation bans the feeding of farmed animals with catering waste or feed material containing, or derived from catering waste. The purpose of the legislation is to reduce the risk of major exotic notifiable diseases in Member States of the EU, including the UK, through illegally imported meat and other products of animal origin.

It can be argued that cooking to sufficient temperatures for a sufficient time period can kill viruses responsible for these diseases. However, experience has shown that the requirements for heat treatment and storage cannot be consistently guaranteed in certain environments such as commercial and household kitchens. It is already possible to feed certain food waste originating from food producers, manufacturers and retailers under the regulations, provided operators can demonstrate there are no prohibited animal by-products, which may present a risk of spreading diseases.

Defra has looked at the evidence underpinning the ban and undertaken studies which have shown that a wider range of food waste could be safely fed to livestock if there was proper segregation of ABPs from other material but that non-segregated material still presented an unacceptable disease risk. The degree of risk associated with the former would be dependent on the specific method of production, distribution, and the effectiveness of risk management measures put in place. However, it is inherently difficult to sort catering waste to remove ABPs which could present a disease risk and it is unlikely to be economically viable for operators to comply with the controls that we would consider necessary to ensure protection of livestock from serious diseases.

Given that it is unlikely that operators would pursue this activity, Defra has not assessed any likely impacts on food security.

Metals: Theft

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the number of metal thefts in England and Wales since 2013; and what steps they are taking to address this issue. [HL5847]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data published by the Office for National Statistics on 6 December 2017 shows that there were 12,970 metal theft offences recorded by police forces in England and Wales in the year ending March 2017. This was a reduction of 22 per cent compared with the previous year and a fall of 79 per cent from the year ending March 2013. These statistics are set out in the report of the Government's review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 which was published on 11 December 2017.

The Government will continue to work with the police and others through the police-led National Metal Theft Working Group to see what more can be done to prevent metal theft

Motorcycles: Delivery Services

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what health and safety requirements must be met by motor cycle delivery drivers. [HL5921]

Baroness Sugg: All persons who use our roads must comply with road traffic legislation and have a duty to comply with the rules in the Highway Code. Road traffic legislation includes the requirement that all drivers must hold an appropriate driving licence (holders of provisional motorcycle licences must complete compulsory basic training) and the obligation to provide documentation if required to do so by an officer of the law. All drivers using roads in the UK must also be in possession of third party insurance covering the use of that vehicle and all vehicles in the UK must also meet set roadworthiness standards, including in relation to emissions levels, at all times. Regulations 16 and 17 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Rule 83 of the Highway Code states that an approved helmet must be worn on two wheeled motorcycles .

Muslim Council of Britain

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 9 February (HL5196), what were the names of those members of the Muslim Council of Britain who met most recently with Home Office officials; whether that meeting was approved by a minister in advance; and if so, by which minister. [HL6001]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has been clear through its work to tackle extremism and prevent people from becoming radicalised, the Government meets with a wide range of organisations. These organisations must be prepared to show leadership, point to solutions and challenge and confront extremist and terrorist ideologies and narratives whatever form they take.

The Government will not provide a running commentary on the private meetings it holds.

Nabeel Rajab

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement issued by the Minister for the Middle East on the sentencing of Nabeel Rajab on 21 February, whether they consider the case and sentencing a breach of Mr Rajab's freedom of expression; and, if so,

whether they will call for his immediate and unconditional release. [HL5887]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the statement released on 21 February by the Minister for the Middle East (Mr Burt) made clear, we are concerned by the five year sentence handed to Mr Rajab, in addition to the two year sentence that he received in 2017. We have raised the case at the highest levels with the Government of Bahrain. We understand that Mr Rajab now has a right of appeal in this particular case and we will continue to closely monitor proceedings.

We continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to protect freedom of expression for all of its citizens, in line with its international obligations.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement issued by the Bahraini Embassy in the UK on the sentencing of Nabeel Rajab on 21 February, what is their response to the Embassy's view that Mr Rajab's cases "do not relate to political views or political expression". [HL5888]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the statement released on 21 February by the Minister for the Middle East (Mr Burt) made clear, we are concerned by the five year sentence handed to Mr Rajab, in addition to the two year sentence he received in 2017. We have raised the case at senior levels with the Government of Bahrain. We understand that Mr Rajab now has a right of appeal in this particular case and we will continue to closely monitor proceedings.

We continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to protect freedom of expression for all of its citizens, in line with its international obligations.

Peers: Correspondence

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to ensure that letters from Members addressed to ministers are sent straight to the Minister's Private Office and not to the general correspondence section of Departments. [HL5977]

Lord Young of Cookham: Letters from members of parliament and peers are given priority over correspondence from the general public. Performance tables are published to show how promptly they reply.

Police: Firearms

Asked by Lord Hogan-Howe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the outcome of the review into the use of guns by police officers in the UK, initiated by the then Prime Minister David Cameron on 20 December 2015. [HL5908]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is important that firearms officers are supported to make the difficult decisions necessary to protect the public, and are able to carry out their duties without fearing that a justified use of force will damage their careers. It is also essential that decisions by the police to use force of any kind are subject to proper scrutiny.

This is why the former Home Secretary commissioned officials to review the legal and procedural framework governing police use of firearms and post-incident investigation. The review is ongoing.

Pregnancy: Conditions of Employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase understanding of, and compliance with, employment laws relating to pregnant women and new mothers. [[HL5854](#)]

Lord Henley: In November 2017 ACAS published comprehensive guidance on pregnancy and maternity discrimination for both women and for businesses.

The Government has recently updated the MAT B1 form (the form which enables a pregnant woman to claim Statutory Maternity Pay from her employer or Maternity Allowance from Jobcentre Plus) to include a link to advice and guidance on employment rights for pregnant women and new mothers. The NHS's Start4Life campaign (an information service for expectant and new parents) now provides the same link in its emails. In the Government response to the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices we further committed to update and consolidate the pregnancy and maternity discrimination pages on GOV.UK by summer 2018.

The Government continues to work with EHRC and its Working Forward campaign. This nationwide campaign, backed by some of the UK's leading businesses and industry bodies, aims to make workplaces the best they can be for pregnant women and new parents. HSE's web page on protecting new and expectant mothers provides a wide range of guidance on pregnancy related issues in the workplace. There is also clear guidance for employees to report concerns if they believe health and safety law is being broken. In addition, Government funds both the ACAS helpline and the Equality Advisory and Support Service, which provide free advice in this area.

Railways: Leeds

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of proposals to increase the capacity of the railway line east of Leeds station by building two more tracks or in other ways. [[HL5872](#)]

Baroness Sugg: We are committed to improving journeys on the Transpennine route between Manchester, Leeds and York, bringing in state of the art trains, longer

carriages and more frequent services for passengers by 2020.

But we want to go further. We expect to spend around £3 billion to upgrade this key route as soon as possible. Improvements we are targeting include journey times of around 62 minutes between Manchester and York, as well as the ability to run more frequent and longer trains, and improvements to reliability. We are working with Network Rail and Rail North to determine the best way to achieve these major improvements for passengers, through a rolling programme of upgrades. To support this, Network Rail has now established options for infrastructure works that could deliver these improved journeys. We will now consider these before making further decisions later this year.

The Government is also supporting the development of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) which aims to improve connectivity between the main cities of the North, including Leeds. We are providing Transport for the North with £60 million of funding from the Transport Development Fund to develop the business case. Furthermore, In October the Chancellor announced £300 million of funding to futureproof HS2 to accommodate future NPR junctions. One of these junctions would directly enable enhanced services between Leeds and York.

Railways: North of England

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is (1) the process, and (2) the timetable, for taking decisions on the electrification of all or part of the railway line between Stalybridge and Leeds. [[HL5873](#)]

Baroness Sugg: Network Rail has now established options for infrastructure works that could deliver passenger improvements. We are considering these before making further decisions later this year.

We are committed to improving journeys on the Transpennine route, bringing in state of the art trains, longer carriages and more frequent services for passengers.

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government which organisations are responsible for drawing up proposals for a new high-speed railway line between Leeds, Bradford and Manchester; and what is (1) the timetable, and (2) the budget, for that work. [[HL5874](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The Department for Transport and Transport for the North (TfN) are working in partnership to develop proposals for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), to improve connectivity between the main cities of the North, including between Manchester and Leeds.

A range of proposals are being considered which will form the basis of the business case for NPR, which is due at the end of 2018. Throughout this work, TfN are

engaging with Local Authority Partners across the North including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The Government is supporting TfN throughout this phase of the work with £60 million of funding from the Transport Development Fund.

Refugees: Syria

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of the 20,000 refugees that the UK pledged to receive from Syria by 2020 have arrived. [HL5917]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Latest statistics published on 22 February confirmed that a total of 10,538 vulnerable people have been resettled under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) since the start of the scheme.

The statistics are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>.

Salih Muslim

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of a European Arrest Warrant by Turkey to arrest Salih Muslim. [HL5899]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We understand from reporting from Prague, where Mr Muslim was arrested on 24 February, that the arrest was made under a "red notice" submitted to the Czech authorities via Interpol by the Turkish government, rather than through a European Arrest Warrant. We note that Mr Muslim was released without charge on 27 February and is free to carry on his travels.

Social Services: Finance

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord O'Shaughnessy on 31 January (HL5313), whether the funding that was set aside to implement the cap on care costs and other adult social care reforms will be released to local government immediately following publication of the Social Care Green Paper; and when an announcement on changes to spending decisions is expected. [HL5912]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: As stated in my earlier answer to Written Question HL5313, any decisions on funding will be set out in due course.

Special Protection Areas: Isles of Scilly

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what restrictions or changes to air and sea transport services are required on any operation within the Special Protection Area of the Isles of Scilly. [HL5863]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The UK has a long history of environmental protection and we will safeguard and improve on this record. The Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area (SPA) was classified in 2001 under the EU Wild Birds Directive. Natural England is preparing advice to government on a proposed extension to the existing SPA and the addition of new features.

Any plans or projects that are likely to have a significant effect on a SPA are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment by the relevant competent authorities in order to make sure that any potential impacts are avoided or mitigated. Where such impacts cannot be ruled out, planning proposals may nevertheless be approved provided certain tests are met: no feasible alternatives; imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and compensatory measures secured.

Syria: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional steps they have taken in the last six months to respond to the escalating violence in Syria. [HL5918]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is gravely concerned by the escalation of airstrikes and violence in Syria, particularly in Eastern Ghouta and Idlib, which has exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation. The UK joined our close partners in mobilising the Security Council to demand a ceasefire across the whole of Syria and the immediate delivery of emergency aid to all in need through UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2401. The resolution was unanimously adopted on 24 February. On 27 February, the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, met the Russian Ambassador to the UK, Alexander Yakovenko, to stress UK concern at the current situation in Syria, particularly the crisis in Eastern Ghouta. He urged Russia to use its influence to ensure the Syrian regime adhered to the ceasefire to allow rapid, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access and non-conditional medical evacuations. On 5 March, the UN Human Rights Council passed a UK-led resolution on the human rights situation in Eastern Ghouta.

Through our position on the UN Security Council and International Syria Support Group, the UK continues to urge all parties to engage in the UN-led Geneva process, as mandated by UNSCR 2254, whose aim is a national political settlement that would end the conflict. The UK is the third largest bilateral humanitarian donor to the Syrian crisis and has committed £2.46 billion to date. In addition, we have provided over £200 million through the Conflict,

Stability and Security Fund to support Syrians to help save lives, bolster civil society, counter extremism, promote human rights and accountability, and lay the foundations for a more peaceful future. This includes support to the White Helmets who have saved over 100,000 lives in the Syrian conflict. In December, we supported and lobbied for UNSCR 2393 which provides for humanitarian aid to be delivered cross-border into Syria. The UK will continue to use all diplomatic tools to work for a political settlement that ends the war and suffering, and provides stability for all Syrians and the wider region.

Tax Yields

Asked by Lord Inglewood

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made on the effect on tax revenues of a one per cent (1) increase, and (2) decrease, in GNP. [HL5882]

Lord Bates: The effect of changes in total economic output on tax revenues will depend upon the composition of any aggregate change, since the underlying tax bases (earnings, profits, consumption and so on) will be affected in different ways by different components of total output. For this reason, the Government does not hold a single estimate of the effects that changes to GNP (Gross National Product) would have on tax revenues.

The Office for Budget Responsibility publishes tax and spending ready reckoners. These ready reckoners show how changes to components of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) would affect tax receipts, alongside the effects of other economic variables. For example, a one percent increase in employment in 2018-19 is expected to increase tax revenues by £2.7bn in that year.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Inglewood

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Baroness Evans of Bowes Park on 29 March 2017 (HL Deb, col 611), what is their definition of "frictionless trade". [HL5883]

Lord Callanan: We are seeking a bold and ambitious economic partnership that is of greater scope and ambition than any such existing agreement.

We want to have the greatest possible tariff- and barrier-free trade with our European neighbours, as well as being able to negotiate our own trade agreements around the world. That means, for goods, we want a customs trading relationship and agreement on non-tariff barriers that enables as frictionless trade as possible between the UK and the EU.

With regards to services trade, we will be seeking the broadest ever agreement that limits the number of barriers that could prevent UK firms from setting up in the EU and vice versa and avoids discrimination of each other's

service providers. We also want to agree an appropriate labour mobility framework that enables UK and EU businesses and self-employed professionals to travel in order to provide services to clients in person.

We want to ensure that UK companies have the maximum possible freedom to trade with and operate within European markets – and to let European businesses do the same in the UK.

Undocumented Migrants: Greece

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 26 February (HL5626), how many (1) British personnel, and (2) non-British persons employed by HM Government and British agencies, including interpreters, are now working in Greece for the purposes set out in that Answer; and how many of those personnel are regularly present in the Aegean islands. [HL5910]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Further to the response to written question HL5626, between May 2016 and March 2017 the Home Office provided 115 experts to the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Greece, primarily to support implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. The exact number of UK staff deployed at any given time varies but since March 2017 we have continued to provide expert support to Greece in line with the particular needs identified by EASO. Our experts work on the Greek islands to interview arriving migrants, act as interpreters, advise on information provision and flow management and support coordination through the EU Commission team in Athens.

The majority of the interpreters are deployed via EASO on a needs basis but following a recent urgent bilateral request from the Greek government, the Home Office has also provided additional interpreters to help process migrant arrivals on the island hotspots.

We also have a Border Force cutter, HMC Valiant, based in the Aegean and provide debriefers, screeners and interpreters to support the Hellenic Coastguard and Frontex Operation Poseidon and tackle Organised Immigration Crime.

Universities: Pensions

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Office for Students has the power to compel or direct universities to increase contributions to employee pension schemes to reduce funding deficits. [HL5884]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Higher education providers are autonomous institutions and are responsible for their own pension provision. The Office for Students does not have the power to direct universities regarding contributions to their pension schemes.

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action, if any, they propose to take to improve the funding of the Universities Staff Superannuation Fund; and whether they intend to consider taking steps to allow universities to increase income, including through commercial activities, to increase employer contributions to pension schemes. [HL5885]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Higher education providers are autonomous institutions and they are responsible for making appropriate pension provision for their staff. The government believes that it is for universities to resolve the current dispute regarding reforms to the Universities Superannuation Scheme through dialogue between Universities UK and the University and College Union.

As autonomous providers, universities are already able to undertake commercial activities.

Vitamin D

Asked by Baroness Quin

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of proposals to restrict access to prescription-based vitamin D maintenance, whether they will undertake a study into how such proposals might affect at-risk groups, as set out in NICE Guidelines 56-2, and in particular those in the at-risk groups on low or fixed incomes. [HL5913]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: NHS England undertook a study into how the proposals in the consultation *Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: A Consultation*

on guidance for CCGs might affect at-risk groups by accompanying the consultation with a full Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment. The Impact Assessment, *Equality and Health Inequalities – Full Analysis Form – Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care* sets out how the proposals may affect groups protected by the Equality Act 2010 and those people on low income and ethnic minorities, including those at-risk groups, as set out in National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines. Copies of the consultation and Impact Assessment are attached.

In the summer months most people should be able to get all the vitamin D they need from sunlight on the skin. It is also found in some foods – oily fish, red meat, liver, egg yolks and fortified foods – such as most fat spreads and some breakfast cereals.

The Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances states that vitamins and minerals should be prescribed only in the management of actual or potential vitamin or mineral deficiency, and are not to be prescribed as dietary supplements. We understand that NHS England's current consultation is in line with this. Prescribing vitamin D for maintenance would be classed as a treatment for prevention or as a dietary supplement.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Equality Impact Assessment [Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment.pdf]

NHS England consultation on guidance for CCGs [2018 03 02 otc-guidance-2 nhse consultation.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-02-27/HL5913>

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