

Session 2017-19
No. 82



Thursday
15 March 2018

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

Thursday, 15 March 2018

Baseline Profit Rate 2018-19

[HLWS531]

Earl Howe: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence (Gavin Williamson), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am today announcing that I have set the baseline profit rate for single source defence contracts at 6.81%, in line with the rate recommended by the Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO). I have also accepted the methodology used by the SSRO to calculate this figure.

I am also announcing new Capital Servicing Rates and an SSRO funding adjustment as recommended by the SSRO, which can be found at Table 1 below. These rates have also been published in the London Gazette, as required by the Defence Reform Act 2014.

All of these new rates will come into effect from 1 April 2018.

Table 1: Recommended Rates agreed by the Secretary of State for Defence

<i>Element</i>	<i>2017 rates</i>	<i>2018 rates</i>
Baseline Profit Rate (BPR) (% on contract cost)	7.46%	6.81%
Fixed Capital Servicing Rate (% on Fixed Capital employed)	4.84%	4.38%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on positive Working Capital employed)	1.37%	1.21%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on negative Working Capital employed)	0.59%	0.53%
SSRO Funding Adjustment	-0.025%	-0.024%

Commission for Countering Extremism

[HLWS527]

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

I am today confirming Ms Sara Khan's appointment to the role of Lead Commissioner of the Government's new Commission for Countering Extremism. All necessary pre-employment checks have been completed.

Ms Khan's appointment follows a rigorous and transparent competition carried out in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public

Appointments. I am delighted that Ms Khan will drive forward the vital work of the Commission for Countering Extremism. Ms Khan's extensive experience in countering extremism and defending the rights of women and girls, and her determination to confront and challenge extremism wherever it resides makes her ideally suited to this role.

Extremism causes a wide range of harms, including the promotion of hatred and division, discrimination against women and girls, the encouragement of isolation, and the rejection of our democratic system and the rule of law. The Commission for Countering Extremism will have a clear remit to identify extremism in all its forms, whether online or in our communities.

As we consider new approaches to tackling extremism, I believe that there is much that can be learnt from how society sought to tackle racism in the last century. In particular how the state and civil society worked together to take on and challenge a set of attitudes and beliefs that have no place in this country.

I have agreed with Ms Khan that her early priorities will include:

- Engaging widely and openly on extremism and Britain's values across the public sector, communities, civil society, and with legal and academic experts.
- Producing a strategic assessment of the threat we face from extremism, and the current response.
- Advising Ministers on the Commission's future structures, work programme and the appointment of further commissioners. This advice will in part be informed by the Lead Commissioner's engagement with stakeholders.

The Commission will also produce an annual report on its work.

Alongside this statement, I have today published a Charter for the Commission, which sets out its relationship with the Government and the public. The Commission for Countering Extremism will initially be established as a non-statutory expert committee of the Home Office. It will operate independently, at arm's length from Government.

The Commission will play a crucial role in supporting the Government and its partners to tackle the scourge of extremism and stand up for the shared values of the mainstream majority. I look forward to working with Ms Khan on this shared agenda.

Employment and Support Allowance

[HLWS530]

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

On 14 December 2017 my predecessor provided a statement to the House on how the Department will be undertaking work to correct underpayments that may have

occurred as a result of how a proportion of Incapacity Benefit claims were transitioned to Employment and Support Allowance between 2011 and 2014. I wanted to take this opportunity to update the House on how this work is progressing.

My Department will be reviewing close to 300,000 cases, of which just under a quarter have been underpaid. We have begun contacting individuals and making payments. We are actively recruiting staff and have scaled up the team undertaking the work from 10 to 50 in December last year, which will grow further to 400 from April, allowing us to deal with the situation at pace.

I know many Members will want to provide reassurance to their constituents who think they may have been affected. I can assure the House that my Department will be contacting all those identified as potentially impacted. We have been engaging with external organisations that often provide support and advice to our claimants, so that they too can be confident that we have a robust process in place, and can provide individual advice should they be contacted.

Today I can confirm that, based on departmental analysis, we will be prioritising any individuals whom we know from our systems to be terminally ill. Thereafter we will work through the cases identified as most likely to have been underpaid according to our systems. We have also undertaken an Equality Analysis to support this prioritisation approach.

Once an individual is contacted, and the relevant information gathered, they can expect to receive appropriate payment within 12 weeks. I can also confirm that once contacted, individuals will be provided with a dedicated free phone number on which they can make contact with the Department.

Like my predecessor, I am committed to ensuring that all cases are reviewed and paid by April 2019.

Hong Kong: Sino-British Joint Declaration

[HLWS525]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The latest six-monthly report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2017. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office). I commend the report to the House.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

THE SIX-MONTHLY REPORT ON HONG KONG [Flag A - 6
Monthly Report Jul-Dec 2017 - v2 Final.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2018-03-15/HLWS525/>

Justice and Home Affairs: Post-Council Statement

[HLWS529]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My right hon Friend the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (Nick Hurd) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The EU Justice and Home Affairs Council of Ministers met on 8 and 9 March in Brussels. I represented the UK for Interior day.

Interior day (08 March) began with a discussion on co-operation between Common Security and Defence Policy operations and EU JHA agencies. Ministers endorsed an initiative to more effectively co-ordinate the activity and improve the exchange of information between JHA agencies and EU security and defence missions in third countries.

This was followed by an exchange of views on the implementation of the Directive on the use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data. Member States provided updates on progress of their implementation. I intervened to reiterate the UK's existing capability for processing PNR data, and offered to share expertise with other Member States.

Ministers then discussed cooperation with the Western Balkans on security and counter-terrorism, with reference to the European Commission's Western Balkans Strategy, which was published in February. The Government is supportive of the EU's efforts to building stronger cooperation in this region. The Government is committed to working closely with European partners on this issue and will be hosting the Western Balkans Summit 2018 in July, at which security will form a strong element.

Over lunch, Ministers discussed progress made on combating the threat posed by terrorist use of the internet, including engagement with industry and the work of the EU Internet Forum. The Government remains committed to preventing terrorist use of the internet and is supportive of both the EU Internet Forum and the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism in tackling this issue. I conveyed the Government's development, announced by the Home Office in February, of new technology to automatically detect terrorist content on any online platform and offered to share the tool with European partners.

In the afternoon, there was a discussion on the increasing role of JHA agencies in counter-terrorism with a focus on the potential future strategic direction of these agencies. The Government welcomes the growing role of JHA agencies in helping Member States counter terrorism and recognises the need to maximise the effectiveness of existing systems. I reiterated the UK's commitment to appropriate data sharing with Europol and supported improved co-operation between JHA agencies and third

countries, as long as human rights and data protection safeguards are in place.

Ministers then discussed the proposed Regulation on establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems for enhancing external border management and internal security. Member States agreed to aim for conclusion of Council negotiations by the end of June to allow agreement with the European Parliament by the end of 2018. I intervened to underline the importance of all EU Member States and Schengen states having access to information from all EU databases under this system.

On Migration, Member States generally agreed with the Presidency's priorities on the way forward, including strengthening the external border, improving returns and cooperation with third countries. I announced that the UK will be resettling up to 100 of the most vulnerable refugees evacuated from Libya, and that the UK has also now resettled over ten thousand vulnerable refugees affected by the Syrian crisis since 2014. I also announced that the Government has renewed our offer to continue specialist deployments to Greece.

Justice day (09 March) began with a discussion on the recast of the Brussels IIa Regulation, which focussed on how to best ensure adequate resourcing of Central Authorities, which play a key role in judicial cooperation on matters of parental responsibility. The Presidency concluded, in line with the position taken by the UK and a majority of Member States that adequate resourcing for Central Authorities was important, but that the level of resourcing should be left to the Member States.

A General Approach was reached on the proposed Directive on combating fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment. The UK has not opted in to this Directive.

There was an update on the preparatory steps needed to be taken to ensure that the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) becomes operational in 2020. The UK is clear that it will not participate in the EPPO.

There was also a policy debate on work to improve law enforcement access to cross-border e-evidence. The Commission will publish a legislative proposal in April. The discussion focussed on ensuring that EU and US law is complementary and Member States supported the exploration of an EU-US agreement on e-evidence. The UK intervened to recognise the importance of addressing the obstacles to obtaining e-evidence.

Over lunch, representatives from Member States discussed radicalisation in prisons, agreeing on the importance of continuing to share experience and best practice.

The Commission also presented Recommendations concerning illegal content on online platforms that were published on 1 March and highlighted the link with the Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online.

Local Government

[HLWS526]

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.

On 9 January, I announced to the House the appointment of Max Caller CBE as inspector to conduct an independent inspection of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) to better understand the NCC's compliance with its Best Value duty.

The inspector has today sent me his report which he has also copied to the Council. I am placing a copy of that report in the House libraries and a copy can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northamptonshire-county-council-best-value-inspection>

The report contains challenging findings:

The inspector has identified that the Council has failed to properly comply with its Best Value duty for some time. This is not because of lack of funds: as the report states, the Council's "Mind the Gap" analysis "does not demonstrate that NCC has been particularly badly treated by the funding formula". The report sets out in some detail the governance failings which have culminated in the Council's Chief Finance Officer issuing a section 114 notice to stop new spending and KPMG's Advisory Notice on the Council's Budget. It concludes "living within budget constraints is not part of the culture of NCC".

These findings appear very serious indeed both for the Council and its residents. The inspector has made recommendations for how improvement can be secured. He rules out the option of an internally led strategy and suggests that Commissioners should be appointed in the short term to ensure the proper running of the Council and delivery of services for its taxpayers, whilst proposals for restructuring are developed as a longer term solution.

I am grateful to the inspector and his team for the thoroughness of their work and the clarity of their conclusions. I will now consider in detail their report's findings and proposals for the future. I will make another statement to the House setting out my proposals for next steps, including whether or not to exercise my powers of intervention under section 15 of the 1999 Act, in due course.

School Condition Allowance

[HLWS528]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Today, I am announcing the allocation of £1.4 billion in 2018-19 to maintain and improve the condition of the education estate. Investing in our school buildings is a key part of the Government's plan to ensure that every child has the opportunity of a place at a good school, whatever their background.

For the financial year 2018–19, the £1.4 billion of funding includes approximately:

- £0.7 billion for local authorities, voluntary aided partnerships, larger multi-academy trusts and academy sponsors, to invest in their own condition priorities.
- £0.5 billion for academies and sixth-form colleges through the Condition Improvement Fund - the outcomes of bids to this fund will be announced later this year.
- £0.2 billion of Devolved Formula Capital to be allocated directly to schools later in 2018.

To provide stability for schools while we review the approach to capital funding for 2019 - 2020, we have continued the existing capital funding approach for the financial year 2018 - 2019.

In addition, £100m of revenue generated from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy will be provided in 2018-19 for the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund. This fund is intended to improve children's and young people's physical and mental health - for example, by improving playgrounds and sports facilities, or kitchens, dining or medical facilities. The Healthy Pupils Capital Fund is being allocated alongside 2018-19 school condition funding.

Details of today's announcement will be published on the GOV.UK website, and copies will be placed in the House Library.

UK-Gibraltar Relationship

[HLWS532]

Lord Callanan: My Hon. Friend, Robin Walker MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, made the following statement on Monday 12 March.

I chaired the sixth meeting of the UK-Gibraltar Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar EU Negotiations) on Thursday 8 March. We agreed a series of measures that will ensure that the valued and historic links between the UK and Gibraltar grow, deepen and endure.

The UK will guarantee Gibraltar financial services firms' access to UK markets as now until 2020. Ahead of

this, the UK Government will work closely with the Government of Gibraltar to design a replacement framework to endure beyond 2020 similarly based on shared, high standards of regulation, and enforcement of this regulation, and underpinned by modern arrangements for information-sharing, transparency and regulatory co-operation.

The UK and Gibraltar have agreed to recognise the importance of enhancing our liaison on all of the environmental and fisheries implications of EU exit that are relevant to Gibraltar, whether by sharing information as openly as possible, by providing specialist expertise across a range of policy areas to support Gibraltar with its own preparations, or by considering with Gibraltar where its interests might be promoted in future through regional or international agreements.

The UK has provided assurance to the Government of Gibraltar that, following EU Exit, British Citizens resident in Gibraltar will continue to be eligible for higher education home fee status at English Institutions (both during the Implementation Period and afterwards) subject to concluding a reciprocal agreement for UK students studying at Higher Education Institutions in Gibraltar.

The UK has provided assurance that gambling operators based in Gibraltar will continue to access the UK market after we leave the EU in the same way they do now - and we are working towards agreement of a MOU which will enable closer working and collaboration between gambling regulators in Gibraltar and the UK.

The UK is committed to work closely with the Government of Gibraltar towards transport arrangements post EU Exit that support Gibraltar's prosperity.

The UK will maintain the current reciprocal healthcare arrangement between the UK and Gibraltar. This means that Gibraltar can continue to refer an unlimited number of their patients to the UK for free elective treatment. The UK remains committed to fully involving Gibraltar as we leave the EU. We will continue to work together through the JMC process to ensure we take account of Gibraltar's priorities in our negotiations with the EU.

Written Answers

Thursday, 15 March 2018

Absent Voting

Asked by **Lord Maginnis of Drumglass**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total number of postal votes issued in (1) England, (2) Scotland, (3) Wales, and (4) Northern Ireland, for each general election from 2010 to 2017; and what were the comparative (a) percentages of the total poll in each of the four UK electoral areas, and (b) percentage increases in each region, at each general election. [HL6046]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Government does not hold this information. The data required is provided by each Returning Officer directly supplying information on postal votes to the Electoral Commission, which collates and publishes it.

The information can be found at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/our-research/electoral-data/electoral-data-new>

Brexit

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Prime Minister on 28 February (HC Deb, col 823) that "no UK Prime Minister could ever agree to" the draft withdrawal text published by the EU Commission, how they plan to advance negotiations for withdrawal from the EU. [HL6067]

Lord Callanan: It remains our shared aim to reach agreement on the entire Withdrawal Agreement by October. This is a negotiation and you would not expect us to be in absolute agreement at this stage.

Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press Inquiry

Asked by **Baroness Hollins**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the total number and proportion of direct respondents to their consultation on the Leveson Inquiry Part 2 and section 40 who (1) wrote unique or individual letters or emails, (2) sent in coupons cut out from newspapers, (3) sent in pro-forma, standard or identical email responses, and (4) provided other responses; and for each of those categories, how many were in favour of their preferred options for (a) section 40, and (b) Leveson Part 2. [HL6240]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government received 174,730 direct responses to the consultation and two petitions, offering a variety of views. Of the direct responses, 79 percent were in favour of full repeal, compared to 7 percent who favoured full commencement. A full

breakdown of responses can be found in the government response.

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), how many UK-based staff there were at UK diplomatic posts in (1) Asia, (2) the Americas, and (3) Africa, (a) before the staff savings made to fund the creation of 50 new posts in Europe, and (b) after those staff savings. [HL5877]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Total numbers of Foreign and Commonwealth Office UK-Based and Local staff at posts in Africa, Americas and Asia, on 31 January 2018, are listed below. Reprioritisation of resource from these regions to the Europe network will involve changes to 31.6 of these jobs. The answer to Parliamentary Question HL5876 provides further detail on the type of changes being made to front-line jobs in these regions.

Region	FCO Local Staff (31 Jan 2018)	FCO UK-Based Staff (31 Jan 2018)
Africa	1758	213
Americas	1070	193
Asia Pacific	928	232
South Asia & Afghanistan	1188	161
Total	4944	799

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 staff savings being made in Asia, the Americas and Africa include (1) the planned closure of any UK diplomatic posts, and (2) the localisation of positions previously held by UK-based staff; and what is the breakdown of any such changes. [HL5878]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are not planning to close posts to fund the increase in resources to our Europe network, but the plans do involve some localisation of UK-based roles. We keep our network under constant review to ensure we have the right resources in the right locations to deliver current and emerging priorities; we do not expect the overseas diplomatic network to remain static. The answer to parliamentary question HL5876 provides further detail.

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 proposals being developed to generate £4.2 million of savings from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office budget to fund the

creation of 50 new diplomatic posts in Europe includes the sale of any properties in the UK diplomatic network overseas; and if so, in which countries any such property sales are being considered. [HL5880]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are not planning to sell properties to contribute towards the £4.1 million (revised estimate) that we are reprioritising to fund new jobs in the Europe network

Edward Heath

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 1 March, whether they have the power to set up a judge-led review of the report of the Chief Constable of Wiltshire into the allegations against Sir Edward Heath. [HL5978]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Operation Conifer report is an operational matter for the local police force. It is a vital principle at the heart of British policing that police carry out their duties free of political interference.

It is for the locally elected Police and Crime Commissioner to decide how best to hold his force to account. The Police and Crime Commissioner has the power to commission a review if he considers it appropriate.

Environmental Health

Asked by Lord Krebs

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the withdrawal and archiving of guidance by Defra, as part of its Smarter Guidance Review, on the ability of local authority environmental health officers to deal effectively and appropriately with statutory nuisances. [HL6199]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Issues that could be 'statutory nuisances' are local issues best dealt with at a local level. The Government believes that current legislation provides local authorities with the necessary powers to deal with statutory nuisances and does not consider it appropriate to provide 'best practice' guidance to local authorities. Local authorities need to be able to take account of local circumstances when determining how best to apply the powers available to them.

Detailed guidance was withdrawn under the 2010-2015 government's Smarter Guidance review and replaced with user-friendly general guidance setting out the duties of local authorities under the statutory nuisance regime. The Smarter Guidance review was part of the Red Tape Challenge and was launched in response to a detailed review that found a lack of clarity between legal obligation and an accumulation of 'best practice' guidance which, in many cases, could be better provided by other bodies.

The Smarter Guidance review therefore consulted on proposals to simplify guidance to focus on legal obligations. This consultation process sought views on user needs, including those of environmental health officers (EHOs). EHOs therefore had an opportunity to express any views about the impact of the guidance changes on their ability to perform their role before a final decision was taken on whether or not to revise or archive specific documents.

Exclusion Orders

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals are currently subject to exclusion orders from the UK; and whether their names are available online to all immigration officers so that they can be prevented from re-entering the UK. [HL5981]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The last Annual Transparency Report on Disruptive and Investigative Powers published in February 2017, reports the number of individuals excluded between 11 May 2010 and 31 December 2015. These exclusion cases primarily cover national security, unacceptable behaviour (such as extremism), international relations or foreign policy, and serious and organised crime. The transparency report February 2017 is attached for reference.

Additional exclusions from the UK are made following convictions for broader categories of criminality, these statistics are not currently published and cannot be provided without a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

The next Annual Transparency Report, covering data for 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2017, is due for publication in Spring 2018.

All exclusion orders are recorded on a UK watch list which is available to immigration officers.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Annual Transparency Report - February 2017
[58597_Cm_9420_Transparency_report_web.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-01/HL5981>

HIV Infection: Discrimination

Asked by Baroness Gould of Potternewton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Global Disability Summit to be held in July will consider discrimination by association of people living with HIV infection, such as members of the LGBT community and sex workers, as part of its deliberations on stigma and discrimination. [HL6107]

Asked by Baroness Gould of Potternewton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Global Disability Summit to be held in July will address actual

or perceived HIV status as part of its deliberations on stigma and discrimination. [HL6108]

Lord Bates: The systematic inclusion of people with disabilities in development and humanitarian action is a top priority for the Department for International Development. On 24 July, the UK will co-host the Global Disability Summit to increase action and investment, lock-in progress and share best practice. The summit aims to drive forward a step change in global efforts to eliminate stigma and discrimination against all persons with disabilities. This includes realising the rights of persons with disabilities that are often among the most excluded in society and those that experience “double discrimination”, including those living with HIV and members of the LGBT community. In line with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the active participation of all people with disabilities will be at the very heart of the summit.

The UK’s global HIV response prioritises those left behind by the huge progress made in recent years. For example, we are proud to be a founding supporter of the Robert Carr Civil Society Networks Fund, which supports the grassroots response for inadequately served groups including men who have sex with men and sex-workers.

Jerusalem: Churches

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the decision by the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem on 25 February to close the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, what representations, if any, they have made to the government of Israel concerning the need to resolve the dispute between the Heads of Churches and the Municipality of Jerusalem in a manner that respects the Status Quo of Jerusalem and the rights of Christian communities. [HL5988]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate General in Jerusalem are closely following developments, and have sought clarifications from the relevant Israeli authorities. We welcome the statement from the Israeli Government making clear its commitment to freedom of religion, its announcement of the suspension of tax collection actions, and the establishment of a team to formulate a solution on the issue of municipal taxes. We hope that this team will have a constructive and fruitful dialogue with the Heads of the Churches. We expect all Church bank accounts to be unfrozen by the Municipality as part of this process. We encourage the parties to continue to uphold the status quo in Jerusalem.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what meetings they have had, or intend to have, with the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem following the decision of 25 February to close the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. [HL5989]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Consulate General in Jerusalem routinely meets representatives of the multitude of faith groups in Jerusalem. Our Consul General in Jerusalem last met the Heads of the Churches on 2 March.

Mayors

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth on 20 February (HL5546), what steps may be taken when a city mayor has abolished an overview and scrutiny committee. [HL6209]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Principal councils in England are required by statute to have at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

Any concerns about the legality of a council’s actions should first be addressed to the council’s Monitoring Officer who is responsible for ensuring the authority complies with its legal obligations. Councils not complying with their statutory obligations can be challenged by way of judicial review.

Middle East: Christianity

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 6 November 2017 (HL2966), what is their assessment of (1) the Status Quo as it refers to the relations between the Christian Communities of the Holy Land with the governments of that region, and (2) Her Majesty's Government's historic and current responsibilities in maintaining and defending that agreement. [HL5985]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 6 November 2017 (HL2967), whether they plan to undertake a detailed assessment of the Church Lands Bill which is being considered by the Israeli Knesset, and of the impact that Bill might have on the Status Quo of the Holy Land sites in Jerusalem. [HL5986]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to undertake a detailed assessment of the Municipality of Jerusalem’s proposals to tax Church property and of the impact of those proposals on (1) the Christian presence, and (2) Christian institutions, including hospitals and schools, in Jerusalem. [HL5987]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 6 November 2017 (HL2964), what assessment they have made of the impact of (1) the Church Lands Bill, which is being considered by the Israeli Knesset, and (2) the

Municipality of Jerusalem's proposals to tax Church property, on religious freedom in Israel. [[HL5990](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We encourage the parties to do all they can to work together to uphold the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate General in Jerusalem are closely following developments on both the Church Lands Bill and the Jerusalem Municipality Tax. We welcome the Israeli Government's announcement that the draft legislation and tax collecting activities will be suspended to allow dialogue to take place, and the commitment given to maintaining freedom of religion. We expect all Church bank accounts to be unfrozen by the Municipality as part of this process.

Nuclear Safeguards

Asked by Lord Teverson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement in the letter of 28 February from Lord Henley to Lord Carlile of Berriew, that "As part of these discussions, both sides have agreed that the UK will have sole responsibility for its international safeguards obligations from the date of withdrawal", whether the Office for Nuclear Regulation will be the UK's safeguarding authority from the date of the UK leaving Euratom rather than at the end of a transition period. [[HL6070](#)]

Lord Henley: The Government is working closely with the European Commission to ensure a smooth implementation period for setting up an effective civil nuclear safeguards regime in the UK ready for withdrawal from Euratom. The precise nature of this implementation period, including the role of the Office for Nuclear Regulation (the ONR) in relation to nuclear safeguards during this period, is subject to negotiations with the European Commission.

Although the outcome of these negotiations is not yet known, the Government's strategy is to seek to include Euratom in any implementation period, in line with the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement of 11 January 2018. Furthermore, the European Commission recently published its draft text for an implementation period which proposed that the period will cease at the end of December 2020 and will cover all parts of the Euratom *acquis*. We would expect this to include the Euratom safeguards regime.

Whatever the outcome of the negotiations on an implementation period for Euratom, the Government is confident that the ONR will be in a position to deliver civil nuclear safeguards to international standards on the UK's withdrawal from Euratom.

Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Gould of Potternewton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Department for International Development (DfID)

ensures that inclusion is taken into account in its development and humanitarian projects and programmes; and what is DfID's definition of "inclusion" in this context. [[HL6106](#)]

Lord Bates: The UK pledged to Leave No-one Behind as part of delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This means ensuring the inclusion of the poorest and most marginalised people for example girls and women and people with disabilities.

The International Development Act (Gender Equality 2014) requires due regard to the impact on gender inequality before providing development and humanitarian assistance. In May 2016 the UK signed up to the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action to ensure people with disabilities will benefit from development and humanitarian assistance.

DFID also works with implementing partners to improve disaggregation of beneficiary data by sex, age, disability status and geography wherever possible and relevant, including use of Washington Group questions on disability. Disaggregation helps DFID understand who is included and benefits from our development and humanitarian assistance.

Palace of Westminster

Asked by Lord Palmer

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what will happen to the various items, including green-shaded lights, computers, air conditioning units, microwaves, laptops, telephones and fridges, which are being temporarily stored in Boiler House Court. [[HL6118](#)]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: Boiler House Court is used for temporary storage of items for disposal awaiting weekly collection by the House's Approved Authorised Treatment Facility.

Private Rented Housing: Licensing

Asked by Baroness Gardner of Parkes

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to consult local authorities on the re-introduction of a licensing system similar to that operating in London until the Deregulation Act 2015 came into force, to ensure that there is a record of short-term occupants of properties. [[HL5976](#)]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We have no plans to do this. Local Authorities already have powers to act where there is a breach of planning control in respect of short term lettings.

Requiring hosts to register with their local authority an intention to let their property on a short term basis would be overly bureaucratic, and would place unnecessary regulatory burdens on households. However, some accommodation providers have already restricted bookings to 90 nights per calendar year in London. We

have asked the industry association to encourage their other members to adopt this good practice.

Radar and Torpedoes

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a requirement for a sovereign capability in radar development and production. [HL6182]

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the requirement for a sovereign capability in torpedo design and production. [HL6184]

Earl Howe: The recently published Industrial Policy refresh explained that we would seek to protect the UK's long term operational advantage and freedom of action, where essential for national security. For reasons of national security, it would not be appropriate to publicly identify what we believe our key sovereign capabilities are.

River Exe: Flood Control

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 21 December 2016 (HL4156), whether the Environment Agency intends to support the removal by Network Rail of the three weirs on the river Exe above Exeter to reduce the risk of flooding on the rail line. [HL5998]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environment Agency (EA) has been aiding Network Rail and their consultants on producing a flood and geomorphology risk assessment on the proposal to remove the three weirs near Cowley Bridge.

The EA has provided all the local flood history, river flow and river state data that it has, and the required specification and scenarios that any modelling results must produce.

Once this report is submitted, the EA will assess the impact on third parties and the environment in terms of flood risk and environmental impacts. The EA will also assess the impact, if any, on the new flood defence scheme currently being built in Exeter.

The EA recently issued flood risk activity permits for the Network Rail improvement to the flood culvert under the railway upstream of Cowley Bridge. The culvert works are expected to be completed during summer 2018 and will reduce flood risk to the railway.

Salah Hamouri

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel in regard to the extended detention without trial

of the Palestinian–French lawyer Salah Hamouri. [HL6077]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not discussed this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention. According to international law, administrative detention should be used only when absolutely necessary for security purposes rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and to either charge or release detainees.

Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution the UK made to the humanitarian aid delivered by UN aid convoys to Syria at the beginning of March. [HL6133]

Lord Bates: To date, the UK has committed £2.46 billion in response to the Syria crisis, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. Of this, £491 million has been allocated to United Nations agencies in Syria to deliver humanitarian assistance, including through aid convoys, to Eastern Ghouta and other communities in Syria.

Syria: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Ahmed

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the UN sponsored peace process in Syria. [HL5992]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government is clear that the UN-led Geneva process between the Syrian parties, mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 2254, remains the forum for reaching a lasting political settlement to end the conflict in Syria and we fully support the efforts of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. The Syrian Negotiation Commission continues to engage constructively, in good faith and without preconditions. The Assad regime must now engage credibly in Geneva talks and Russia must use all the influence it can to ensure that it does so.

Asked by Lord Ahmed

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the progress made at the Geneva talks regarding long-term political solutions for Syria. [HL5993]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government regularly discusses this topic, including at the UN Security Council, most recently when UN Special Envoy briefed the Security Council on 14 February. The UN-led Geneva process between the Syrian parties, mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 2254, remains the forum

for reaching a lasting political settlement to end the conflict in Syria. We fully support the efforts of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. The Syrian Negotiation Commission continues to engage constructively, in good faith and without preconditions. The Asad regime must now engage constructively in Geneva, and Russia must use all of its influence to ensure that this happens.

Asked by Lord Ahmed

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had at the UN Security Council in relation to finding a long-term political solution for Syria. [HL5995]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government regularly discusses this topic at the UN Security Council, most recently at the briefing to the Security Council by UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura on 14 February. The UN-led Geneva process between the Syrian parties, mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 2254, remains the forum for reaching a lasting political settlement to end the conflict in Syria, and we fully support the efforts of the UN Special Envoy. The Syrian Negotiation Commission continues to engage constructively, in good faith and without preconditions. The Asad regime must now engage credibly in Geneva talks and Russia must use all of its influence to ensure that this happens.

Type 45 Destroyers: Radar

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there has been any investment in a Ballistic Missile Defence upgrade for the Sampson radar on the T45 destroyers which will protect the new aircraft carriers. [HL6181]

Earl Howe: There has been some initial investment in support of investigating the potential for anti-ship Ballistic Missile Defence enhancements to the Type 45 capability. These investigations are ongoing and include assessments of the Sampson Multi-Function Radar. No decisions have yet been made.

UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of Brexit on UK supply chains; and how they plan to minimise potential disruptions. [HL6137]

Lord Henley: The Government is working towards a mutually beneficial outcome to the withdrawal negotiations. Nevertheless, a responsible government plans for contingency scenarios. The Department is actively considering all options in order to minimize disruption for UK supply chains. We continue to engage with UK stakeholders to understand their concerns and interests.

As we leave the EU there is an opportunity for us to do far more to engage with the wider world beyond Europe where there is so much emerging innovation and opportunity. The Industrial Strategy builds on our strengths, creating strong foundations to meet the challenges of the future, and will help us make the best of our relations with Europe and beyond, helping to ensure that minimal disruptions are made to UK supply chains.

This includes £16m, subject to business case, for an industry-led supplier competitiveness and productivity improvement programme to support a sustainable and internationally competitive UK supply chain and new measures under UK Export Finance to enhance support available for exporters and their supply chains. This builds on the extensive support Government has given to supply chains including £80m since 2013 for the Sharing in Growth programme focussing on the aerospace sector.

Western Sahara: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Steel of Aikwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the European Court of Justice decision on 27 February on the EU–Morocco Fisheries Agreement, they will meet with the new representative of MINURSO to expedite settlement of the Western Sahara status. [HL5991]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My colleague, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, has met the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, former German President Horst Koehler, twice in the last two months and our Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, Jonathan Allen, has met the new Head of MINURSO, Colin Stewart. They have underlined the UK's firm support for the UN-led efforts to find a solution to the Western Sahara issue. We note the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement. This ruling now passes to the High Court of England and Wales, so it would be inappropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

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