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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Earl Howe	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Lord Bates	Minister of State, Department for International Development
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
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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

Tuesday, 20 March 2018

Access to Work Scheme

[HLWS543]

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.

In March 2015, as part of a package of improvements to Access to Work, the former Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work and the right honourable member for Forest of Dean announced the introduction of an annual limit on the amount of an Access to Work grant of 1.5 times average salaries in order to encourage better use of public funds and to enable Access to Work to support more people – particularly traditionally under-represented groups. The cap has been in place since October 2015 but a period of transitional protection was granted to enable those who were spending above the level of the cap on introduction time to adjust to the new limits.

During this transitional period for people to adjust to the need to source their support within a limit, we have seen considerable progress. The average spend amongst the remaining transitionally-protected customers has fallen from around £57,000 each to around £45,000 each. This suggests that it is achieving the intended incentive effects on individuals and employers to make best use of funding as well as freeing over £2m per year, to support growing numbers of people benefitting from the scheme, alongside the extra resources provided in the Spending Review. I am therefore persuaded that the principle of the cap is sound, balancing the need to provide support to the largest number of people, and at a significant level for some, with the need to make the best use of public funds.

At the same time, the Government have always said that we would also use this time to monitor the impact of the cap on individuals and work with customers and other stakeholders to see if any further practical mitigations could be applied to those whose needs still remain above the cap. This includes emphasising the duties that employers have to play their part and make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. At the same time it was agreed that we would lead a review of communication support for Deaf people, which we published last year.

I am therefore pleased to announce that as a result of this engagement – particularly with the UK Council on Deafness (because the majority of capped customers are Deaf), but also with others groups and individuals that as of April 2018, the cap will not rise to £43,100 in line with 1.5 times average earnings. Instead it will rise to £57,200, double average earnings, and will be uprated annually on that basis. This means that considerably fewer British Sign Language users now remain affected by the cap. I believe it is important to retain this link to average earnings so that high-value awards, which are

overwhelmingly used to purchase human support, retain their purchasing power over time.

Alongside this change, existing capped customers will, where applicable, have their needs considered against this new limit when their awards are due for their annual review.

As we continually seek to improve Access to Work, which last year approved provision for 8% more people than in 2015/16 – including 13% more people who were Deaf or had hearing loss - we will introduce the following measures:

- extra support to customers with high-value awards via automatic workplace assessments promoting available technology and reasonable adjustments and voluntary cost-share from employers as well as signposting to advice and guidance provided by third parties;
- working with stakeholders to co-produce guidance and share best practice as well as continued monitoring of the impacts on the cap;
- discretion in exceptional cases of multiple disability, to consider award limits averaged over a longer period – for example where a customer's on-going need for a support worker may be below the cap but when coupled with a periodic need for say a wheelchair, would exceed the cap in that year;
- introduction of managed personal budgets to enable greater choice and control for customers in the way grants are spent;
- taking applications 12 weeks ahead of a job start date rather than the current six weeks to allow more time for support to be agreed and put in place;
- continuing to invest in our digital improvements such as developing the facility to submit invoices online;
- allowing more flexibility in how people can use Access to Work to support short periods of work experience where there is a likelihood of a paid job in the near future; and
- encouraging uptake of technological solutions that can both reduce costs and promote independence, we will allow risk free trials of technological solutions so that customers can revert to their old award if they wish, and also introduce a "Tech Fund" that will mean the mandatory cost-sharing contributions from employers for such items are waived where their use will save the taxpayer money.

Competitiveness Council

[HLWS545]

Lord Henley: My hon friend Richard Harrington, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has made the following written ministerial statement:

The Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) took place on 12 March in Brussels. I represented the UK.

EU Industrial Policy

Ministers had a wide-ranging discussion on the future of EU industrial policy and the need for European industry to adapt to changes in the global economy and the digital revolution. The UK noted that its recently published industrial strategy identified many of the same challenges and drivers of growth, and stressed our commitment to an open, liberal market economy based around fair competition and high standards. Commissioner Bieńkowska updated Ministers on the first meeting of the 'Industry 2030' High Level Roundtable which took place in February. The Roundtable would work towards a future vision for EU industry. Ministers also agreed the draft Council Conclusions (doc. 2793/18).

The UK also raised concerns at the recent announcement by the US administration to introduce tariffs on steel and aluminium imports. The UK stressed that unilateral tariffs were not the right way to tackle global overcapacity. Other Member States stressed the need for a solution that respected the role of the WTO which Commissioner Bieńkowska supported in her response

Digitalisation of the EU economy

Ministers considered how to better focus national reform efforts and funding decisions, to seize the opportunities presented by digitalisation for European industry and citizens. There was wide agreement on the need to boost digital skills, to provide clear regulatory frameworks, and to see SMEs and the public sector as potential beneficiaries as well as large businesses. Member States considered that both private sector and EU funding should be easier to access and complement existing national investment in infrastructure.

Single Market

Ministers held a policy debate on the Single Market to mark the anniversary of the Treaty of Maastricht. A number of Member States, including the UK, called for better enforcement of Single Market rules and an analysis of barriers to the services market to realise the Single Market's full potential.

Commissioner Bieńkowska hoped that Member States would reflect their aspirations for the Single Market in responding to Commission legislative proposals. The UK underlined our continuing interest in the success of the Single Market and support for ongoing efforts to reduce barriers, and reiterated the Prime Minister's call for an ambitious UK-EU partnership.

Other items

Commissioner Bieńkowska set out the key elements of the Commission's Plastics Strategy and highlighted the objectives of a review of the REACH regulation. On Better Regulation, the Presidency presented work to highlight the role of scientific evidence in the EU's regulatory decision making. Belgium presented a short note to highlight the risk of start-ups and scale-ups being captured by the rescue and restructuring guidelines in the State Aid rules. Under the regular 'Competitiveness Check-up' Commissioner Bieńkowska gave a

presentation on the link between services reforms and productivity in manufacturing. Commissioner Jourova updated Ministers on the forthcoming package of consumer protection proposals which are due in April.

Corporate Governance

[HLWS542]

Lord Henley: My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Greg Clark) has today made the following statement:

The Government is launching a consultation on improving the corporate governance framework to ensure the highest standards of behaviour from those who control companies.

The UK is already recognised as having a leading international reputation for corporate governance. After consulting last year, the Government is preparing secondary legislation to implement a range of reforms that build on and enhance the current framework in relation to executive pay, strengthening the employee and wider stakeholder voice in the boardroom, and corporate governance in large privately held businesses.

Today's consultation takes this essential work further by improving the corporate governance of firms when they are in or approaching insolvency, and seeking views on a number of areas where our existing rules and processes may need updating. This consultation seeks to respond in a balanced and proportionate way to reinforce public trust and confidence in business, so that the vast majority of responsible companies do not have their reputation besmirched by a small few.

The consultation considers:

- The sale of businesses in distress: The consultation explores potential changes to ensure that directors responsible for the sale of an insolvent subsidiary of a corporate group take proper account of the interests of the subsidiary's stakeholders. The proposals seek to ensure fair outcomes when major companies get into difficulties, but to avoid putting barriers in the way of credible business rescue efforts.

- Reversal of value extraction schemes: The Government wants all creditors to be treated fairly in an insolvency situation and is seeking views on potential changes to how certain transactions, or a series of transactions, entered into before insolvency can be challenged and clawed back if unlawful.

- Investigation into the actions of directors of dissolved companies: There are difficulties caused when companies are dissolved with outstanding debts or allegations of director misconduct, which the Insolvency Service does not currently have the necessary powers to investigate.

- Strengthening corporate governance in pre-insolvency situations:

- o Whether steps should be taken to improve governance, accountability and internal controls within complex company group structures;

o Whether there are further opportunities to strengthen the role of shareholders in stewarding the companies in which they have investments,

o Whilst the payment of dividends should remain for the directors to decide, having regard to their obligations and guidance, whether the legal and technical framework within these decisions are made could be improved and made more transparent;

o Whether the commissioning and use of professional advice by directors is done so without a proper awareness of their duties as directors; and

o Whether and how a supply chain and other creditors can be better protected in the event of a major insolvency, whilst preserving interests of shareholders.

Today I will be placing copies of the consultation document in the Libraries of the House.

Digital Economy Act 2017

[HLWS546]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: My Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, has today made the following statement in the House of Commons.

This statement is to inform the House that Regulations were made on 15 March 2018 to bring into force specified provisions in Parts 5 and 6 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 (“the Act”). The Part 5 provisions, also known as the “Digital Government” provisions, provide powers enabling public authorities and other persons to share information for particular purposes, as well as introducing new powers of access to information for the UK Statistics Authority to assist them in exercising their functions.

The Digital Government provisions in Part 5 of the Act allow information-sharing in the areas of Public Service Delivery, civil registration, debt, fraud, research and statistics. Between 21st September and 2nd November last year, the Government carried out a public consultation and obtained the views of statutory consultees on draft codes of practice and other guidance which support these provisions, and on draft regulations which set objectives for the Public Service Delivery provisions. The government expects to lay the draft codes and regulations for consideration by Parliament shortly.

The Research and Statistics provisions (at Chapters 5 and 7 of Part 5) will be brought into force in Northern Ireland as well as in England, Wales and Scotland. Some of the purposes for which information may be shared under Part 5 are devolved with respect to Northern Ireland.

Although it was intended that a legislative consent motion (LCM) would be sought from the Northern Ireland Assembly during the passage of the Act, the Assembly was dissolved before the motion itself could be passed. With that in mind, the Government has sought to keep open the ability to commence the provisions separately in Northern Ireland, in the hope that a restored Executive

could seek legislative consent from the Assembly before the provisions were commenced.

In the light of the ongoing absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, however, a point has been reached whereby a decision on whether to commence the Research and Statistics provisions cannot be further deferred. The UK Government has therefore decided to proceed with UK-wide implementation on a limited basis for those provisions, taking into account representations from officials and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland. This decision has not been reached lightly. Not commencing these specific provisions UK-wide at this time would undermine the comprehensiveness and consistency of statistics about society and the economy for both the UK as a whole, and for Northern Ireland in particular. It could also affect the ability of bodies in Northern Ireland to access essential statistical data and to make policy on the basis of relevant research. In both respects it would impact on the ability to make effective, timely and evidenced decision-making at the local and national levels. Given this, and noting the support the measures commanded from the previous Executive (with a Legislative Consent Motion laid in the Assembly albeit not passed) and as part of a public consultation which included Northern Ireland, we assess that now is the right time to move forward with commencement.

When an Executive has been restored, we will write to Northern Ireland Ministers to confirm that they are content for the commenced provisions to remain in place. We will also consider carefully any further representations from stakeholders in Northern Ireland to commence other provisions in the Digital Economy Act 2017, while recognising the broad support that these measures have commanded previously.

Fire Reform

[HLWS550]

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

Improving firefighter diversity is a key priority for the Government’s ambitious fire reform programme. The most recent 2017 operational data, published on 26 October, showed that only 5.2% of firefighters in England are women and 3.9% are from an ethnic minority group. This is unacceptable and needs to be significantly improved so that firefighters are representative of the communities they serve.

While in 2017 we did see movement in a positive direction in terms of new joiners to the firefighter role: 8.7% were women and 5.1% from ethnic minorities, there is still further to go. This is why the Home Office will shortly be launching a national campaign with a focus of ‘Join the Team; Become a Firefighter’ to raise awareness of the role of a modern firefighter and help improve diversity.

The campaign which is being supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA) and Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) will: (i) target those from underrepresented groups that may not have previously been interested in the role; (ii) provide information on the breadth of role across prevention, protection; and response; and (iii) produce guidance and toolkits to help those interested in the role overcome any challenges they face during the recruitment rounds. The campaign will enhance and not duplicate the work already being undertaken by fire and rescue services in England to improve diversity.

General Medical Services Contract Negotiations for 2018-19

[HLWS547]

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

I am today updating the House on the outcome of the General Medical Services (GMS) contract negotiations with the General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association and NHS Employers on behalf of NHS England.

The GMS contract for 18/19 comprises of a pay uplift together with a CPI uplift of 3% to expenses totalling £102.9m, as part of the overall investment of £256 million. The investment includes £60 million which has been allocated to cover increased indemnity costs incurred in the past financial year.

Other key parts of the contract include:

- An agreement that will pave the way to general practitioners no longer issuing paper prescriptions, instead using the NHS Electronic Prescription Service.
- The roll out of the NHS e-referral service into general practice. NHS England has allocated £10 million to facilitate GPs uptake of the electronic referral service.
- An agreement with the GPC to work with DHSC and NHSE to establish the extent and reasons behind locum use and cost.

We understand that NHS England will apply the provision to Personal Medical Services and Alternative Provider Medical Services where appropriate.

Full details of the agreement can be found at www.nhsemployers/GMS201819

Local Government Finance

[HLWS549]

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.

The current 50% business rates retention scheme for local government is yielding strong results. Local authorities estimate that in 2017-18 they will keep around £1.3 billion in business rates growth, which we expect

will be at least maintained into 2018-19 and 2019-20. On top of the 50% business rates retention scheme which is in place for all local authorities, in 2017-18 the Government established pilots of 100% business rates retention in five areas of England and extended business rates retention to 67% in London. The pilot programme will be expanded further in 2018-19 to cover an additional ten areas.

My officials have worked through the necessary calculations to prepare for the extension of the piloting programme in 2018-19. In doing so, an historic error has been identified in the methodology used to calculate the sums due to pilots. An adjustment is therefore required to the methodology, which will reduce the amount due to these local authorities for participating in the pilot programme to the correct level. This adjustment does not affect the Local Government Finance Settlement nor the Core Spending Power of the local authorities concerned. The relevant local authorities have been informed today.

Background

Under the business rates retention system, local authorities retain a percentage of the business rates they raise locally. Since 2014-15, locally-raised business rates have been lower than they would have been because Government has under-indexed the business rates multiplier in each of 2014-15, 2015-6 and 2018-19. To compensate local authorities for their loss of income, therefore, the Government has calculated the extent of the loss caused by under-indexation and paid that amount as a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The compensation to be paid to local authorities is paid on account during the course of a year, based on estimates made by authorities before the start of that year. It is then adjusted once outturn figures are available, following the end of the year.

When on account compensation payments were calculated for the six 2017-18 pilot areas, the methodology used to adjust tariffs and top-ups contained an error. This resulted in 27 local authorities and the Greater London Authority being over-compensated by £36 million.

These local authorities will have been operating on the understanding that this funding has already been secured and, at this late stage in the year, a sudden reduction in their funding could potentially have an impact on the delivery of the objectives agreed as part of their devolution deals. Therefore, although the rules of *Managing Public Money* indicate that the Department should recover the overpayment, I have issued a Direction requesting that the Permanent Secretary does not do so in this extraordinary circumstance. My correspondence with the Permanent Secretary will be published on the Department's website.

In respect of the payments due to 2018-19 business rates retention pilot authorities, my department will use the corrected methodology to calculate the Section 31 grant compensation due to authorities. Local authorities will shortly be notified of these amounts.

Review

In recognition of the importance of the business rates retention system to the sustainability of local government, I am also today announcing an independent review of the internal processes and procedures that underpin the department's oversight of business rates and related systems. This should include modelling and analytical work, how officials manage the interface with policy decision-making, and resourcing and skills.

NHS Planning in 2018-19

[HLWS551]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Health (Stephen Barclay) has made the following written statement:

In accordance with the NHS Act 2006, I have today laid before Parliament the Government's mandate to NHS England for 2018-19. To further support the NHS to meet the challenges it faces, I am also today publishing the remit letter for NHS Improvement.

NHS England oversees the commissioning of health services in England and so has a key role in setting direction across the health and care system. The mandate sets objectives that Government expects NHS England to achieve and its budget, which now includes £2.8 billion additional funding between 2017/18 and 2019/20, taking NHS funding to over half a trillion pounds from 2015 to 2020.

Since 2016/17, we have taken a multi-year approach to the mandate, setting enduring objectives to 2020, underpinned by specific 2020 goals and annual deliverables for each financial year. This stability has supported NHS England, working with NHS Improvement and other health and care system partners, to transform services and deliver real improvements for patients, while also working to ensure the sustainability of the NHS for future generations, as set out in its *Five Year Forward View* and *Next Steps on the NHS's Five Year Forward View*.

As the NHS approaches its 70th anniversary, this stability and focus is more important than ever. The NHS is facing unprecedented levels of demand and must meet the immediate challenges of reducing this demand and continuing to improve NHS productivity and efficiency, so that all who need access to vital NHS services can get access within agreed timeframes.

The mandate for 2018-19 is therefore a mandate of consolidation and renewal. It continues the multi-year approach already established, making only one change to the enduring objectives. This is to reflect the important role that NHS England will need to play in ensuring a smooth and orderly withdrawal from the European Union in the best interests of patients. It will include supporting the many EU nationals making an enormous contribution to our health and care services.

Mandate objectives in 2018/19 will therefore be:

- to improve local and national health outcomes, and reduce health inequalities, through better commissioning;
- to help create the safest, highest quality health and care service;
- to balance the NHS budget and improve efficiency and productivity;
- to lead a step change in the NHS in preventing ill health and supporting people to live healthier lives;
- to improve and maintain performance against core standards;
- to improve out-of-hospital care; and
- to support research, innovation and growth, and to support the Government's implementation of EU Exit in regards to health and care.

I have agreed with colleagues at Her Majesty's Treasury and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government that it is not necessary to impose any requirements for the purpose of ensuring that it achieves its objectives in 2018/19. The Better Care Fund is now well-established, with two-year local plans now underway and progress being made to better join up care around the needs of people and communities. Now is therefore the time for Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authorities, supported by Government and NHS England, to work together to continue implementation and reach joint solutions in the interests of their local populations. In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care is currently undertaking a triennial review of its Framework Agreement with NHS England, to ensure that it is up-to-date, including reflecting *Managing Public Money* principles.

This year, I expect NHS England to step up the joint work that it does with NHS Improvement to ensure that the NHS lives within its means. I have therefore also sought to ensure that, where they share responsibility for delivery, the mandate and the annual remit letter to NHS Improvement are more closely aligned than previously. Both the mandate and the NHS Improvement remit letter are, for the first time, being published simultaneously on gov.uk today.

As required by the Act, I have consulted both NHS England and Healthwatch England in developing the mandate.

As in previous years, I have also re-laid the mandate for 2017-18, reflecting NHS England's increased budget for 2017-18.

Copies of the mandate for 2018-19, revised mandate for 2017-18, and NHS Improvement remit letter for 2018-19 are attached.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

NHSE Mandate 2018-19 [NHSE_Mandate_2018-19.pdf]

NHSE Revised Mandate 2017-18 [NHSE_Mandate_2017-18.pdf]

NHSI remit letter [NHS Improvement Remit Letter 2018-19F.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2018-03-20/HLWS551/>

Rail Update

[HLWS544]

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

I have today launched an invitation for investors who want to invest in rail infrastructure to bring forward proposals for the new southern rail link to Heathrow. In addition they are being invited to propose schemes around the country that could enhance and expand the rail network. Promoters and investors now have two months to start working up proposals which are financially credible without Government support.

This Government is already making the biggest investment in the railway since the Victorian era, delivering better journeys for passengers across the network. However, I want to go further by unlocking new private sector funding to invest in railway infrastructure across the country. This will be in addition to the Government's significant commitment to invest £48 billion in railway infrastructure in the next funding period.

Governments do not have a monopoly on good ideas for the railways. I have been clear that I want the knowledge and expertise of investors and local partners to contribute to delivering new connections, more services and better journeys for passengers.

This approach has already proved effective on a number of roads schemes in the UK. By encouraging innovative ideas and new investment on our railways, we can relieve the burden on taxpayers and fare payers with schemes that match our transport needs, support our economic and housing aspirations and ensure everyone benefits from an enhanced rail network.

Heathrow is a perfect example of how this approach can make a real difference. The Department is continuing to work on a western rail link to Heathrow. The proposed southern rail link to Heathrow is an exciting opportunity to harness new and innovative ideas from the private sector and there are already a number of consortia looking to construct it. I am certain that there are other opportunities nationwide for third parties to work with government improve the railway.

I have published my Guidance for Market-led Proposals to provide clarity on what Government is looking for from these ideas and the process by which it will consider them. I have also published the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

When I published my High level output specification and Statement of funds available for the railway in England and Wales for the next investment period, I made clear that the Government was developing a new process for rail enhancements - the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline provides this. This is designed to ensure that

future rail projects are planned and scrutinised to deliver maximum value and benefit to rail users and taxpayers.

Taken together this provides a clear framework for how we will improve the way we enhance our railway.

The changes I have outlined today lay the foundations for improving rail access to Heathrow. They also set in motion ambitious proposals on new rail schemes that could deliver significant improvements for passengers across the network and to maintain the record levels of investment this government is delivering in our railways.

Safeguarding in the Aid Sector: Update

[HLWS548]

Lord Bates: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Development has today made the following statement:

Following the safeguarding issues exposed through the case of Oxfam in Haiti, I am updating the House on three key areas of work DFID has undertaken.

1. Statements of assurance from UK charities and follow up on cases

All UK charities that I wrote to on 12 February have replied and provided me with a clear statement of their assurance on their organisations' safeguarding environment and policies, organisational culture, transparency and their handling of allegations and incidents.

This exercise has delivered results in terms of increasing reporting of live and historic cases to the relevant authorities. As of 5 March, 26 charities funded by DFID had made Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission, concerning some 80 incidents. There has also been an increased level of reporting of safeguarding concerns into DFID's 'Reporting Concerns' hotline and inbox.

I cannot provide information on live investigations, but will keep the House informed on developments with partners and with regard to DFID's internal case review.

Writing to UK charities was the first stage in a broader process, which also includes requesting assurances from our top 30 suppliers, 43 multilateral organisations and other partners. Assurances received are a first step, but do not constitute a final conclusion by my Department on the quality of safeguarding. We will test this further through the measures I announced at the Safeguarding Summit held on 5 March and set out below.

A high-level summary of the returns from UK charities and a list of organisations we have written to will be published on gov.uk today. It can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-level-summary-safeguarding-assurance-returns-from-uk-charities>.

2. Safeguarding Summit follow up

On 5 March, DFID co-hosted a Safeguarding Summit with the Charity Commission where I challenged UK charities to drive up standards and ensure that the aid

sector protects the people it serves. As a result a number of actions were agreed. These include immediate short-term measures and longer term initiatives.

Four working groups, including civil society and independent experts, have been established and are meeting this week to refine and test ideas further. They will report back on concrete actions in time for the international Safeguarding Conference that the UK will host this autumn. The working groups are taking forward the following areas:

- Accountability to beneficiaries and survivors - prioritising those who have suffered and survived exploitation, abuse and violence, and designing systems of accountability and transparency that have beneficiaries at their centre;
- How the aid sector can demonstrate a step change in shifting organisational culture to tackle power imbalances and gender inequality;
- Ensuring that safeguards are integrated throughout the employment cycle, including work on the proposal for a global register / passport; and
- Ensuring full accountability through rigorous reporting and complaints mechanisms, and make sure that concerns are heard and acted upon.

At the Summit, I announced new, enhanced and specific safeguarding due diligence standards for all organisations that work with DFID. A pilot of these new standards starts this week and they will be rolled out shortly. No new funds will be approved to organisations unless they pass these new standards, which will be integrated into DFID's due diligence Assessments, Supply Partner Code of Conduct and ongoing programme management and compliance checking processes.

Major UK charities, the Charity Commission and DFID agreed on initiatives to be taken forward to improve safeguarding standards - including immediate short term measures, and longer term initiatives to be developed in the coming weeks and months. These include:

- Exploring options for an international safeguarding centre to support organisations to implement best practice on safeguarding and maximise transparency in the sector. This work could include conducting safeguarding reviews, offering guidance and support to organisations, and a deployable team of experts on sexual exploitation and abuse who can advise organisations on the ground.
- Carrying out an urgent review of referencing in the sector. At the Summit, it was agreed that vetting and referencing standards are required for: UK-based staff; international staff and locally-employed staff – to ensure no offender can fall through the cracks.

- Planning for a systematic audit of whistleblowing practices across the sector to ensure individuals feel able to report offences, and developing and implementing mandatory standards which would make organisations accountable to beneficiaries – ensuring those receiving aid are able to identify and raise concerns.

- Making annual reports more transparent, with specific information published on safeguarding including the number of cases. Also carrying out mandatory inductions on safeguarding for all staff to ensure any issues are identified and acted upon.

- Establishing clear guidelines for referring incidents, allegations and offenders to relevant authorities - including the National Crime Agency.

Those in attendance at the Summit agreed a Joint Statement which has been published on the Bond and gov.uk websites.

DFID is now building on the 5 March Summit outcomes and working with a wide range of stakeholders, including other nations, to shape and deliver an ambitious agenda for the Safeguarding Conference to be held later this year.

3. Driving up standards in the UN and multilateral organisations

I have written jointly with the Foreign Secretary and with the support of other donor countries to the UN Secretary-General.

Last week, I was in New York to speak at the Commission of the Status of Women to highlight that we will only prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, if we deliver our commitments on gender equality.

I hosted a roundtable and held meetings with senior UN partners, calling for a step change across all constituent parts of the UN to ensure they put beneficiaries first, shift their organisational culture, integrate safeguards throughout the employment cycle and ensure that there are robust systems for reporting, complaints and whistleblowing. I challenged the UN to set out concrete actions to take this forward.

I will take this message to other multilateral organisations at the Spring Meetings next month.

A donor group has been established to capitalise on our collective leverage to deliver changes across the international aid sector at the Safeguarding Conference.

I am determined that the UK will continue to lead this agenda to drive up safeguarding standards across the sector and keep people safe from harm.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 20 March 2018

Abortion

Asked by **Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any GP surgeries are approved for the purpose of terminating an unwanted pregnancy; if so which; and what consideration they have given to approving GP surgeries as designated areas for medical abortions as recommended by the World Health Organisation. [HL6139]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: There are currently no plans to approve general practitioner surgeries as a separate "class of place" for medical abortions under the Abortion Act 1967.

Apprentices: Taxation

Asked by **Lord Fox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma courses have been terminated as a result of new rules arising out of the Apprentice Levy. [HL6105]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Further information on qualifications within apprenticeship standards is available on the Institute for Apprenticeships website at: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/developing-new-apprenticeships/developing-and-writing-an-apprenticeship-occupational-standard/>. The latest information we have on the number of Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas is from the 2016/17 academic year, and as such covers a period prior to the levy coming into effect.

Children in Care

Asked by **Lord McColl of Dulwich**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that personal budgets for looked after children, those at risk of entering care, adopted children, and care leavers, are spent on evidence-based interventions and not on the replication of services offered by universal provision. [HL6115]

Asked by **Lord McColl of Dulwich**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are taking steps to ensure that where there is a lack of evidence about the most suitable interventions for looked after children, those at risk of entering care, adopted children, and care leavers, the use of resources such as personal budgets and the post-adoption support fund is monitored and evaluated, and, where possible,

that interventions purchased are subject to a suitably designed research trial. [HL6116]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Personal health budgets and the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) are generally used for interventions that are not universally offered or commissioned locally, offering access to support that would not ordinarily be available to meet the child's needs.

The use of personal health budgets for looked after children and young people is being piloted and independently evaluated. The evaluation includes assessment of the benefits of personal health budgets, including impact on mental health outcomes. Regular reviews also take place at an individual level to ensure the support provided continues to meet the child's needs.

An independent evaluation of the ASF was published in August 2017, which can be found attached. The government gave a commitment, in 'Adoption: a vision for change', also attached, to strengthen the evidence base of 'what works' in terms of preventative and therapeutic adoption support. The department is currently exploring ways to achieve this, including through use of the findings of a new independent evaluation of the ASF, monitoring the impact of the fund for children, families, local authorities and providers.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Adoption Support Fund Evaluation [HL6115 HL6116 Attachment 1.pdf]

Adoption Support Fund Evaluation Appendix [HL6115 HL6116 Attachment 2.pdf]

Adoption: A Vision for Change [HL6115 HL6116 Attachment 3.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-06/HL6115>

Commonwealth: HIV Infection

Asked by **Baroness Gould of Potternewton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether issues affecting (1) people living with HIV, and (2) key populations affected by HIV, will be considered at the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference in April, in order to ensure that there are adequate protections against discrimination across all Commonwealth countries. [HL6109]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are in discussion with other member states and the Commonwealth Secretariat to finalise the agenda for the forthcoming Heads of Government meeting. We anticipate that discussion at the summit, in the four Commonwealth Forums and in the Ministerial meetings, will range widely and cover the most pressing global health challenges facing Commonwealth member states, including issues affecting people living with HIV and populations affected by HIV.

Defence: Manufacturing Industries

Asked by Lord Trefgarne

To ask Her Majesty's Government what powers ministers have in relation to national security in cases of proposed takeovers of British defence-related manufacturers. [HL6177]

Lord Henley: Under the Enterprise Act 2002, Ministers have powers to intervene in mergers that raise public interest considerations of national security, media plurality and financial stability.

In October 2017, the Government also published a Green Paper on proposals for long-term reform of the arrangements for the scrutiny of investments in relation to national security. The public consultation has now closed and the Government will bring forward a White Paper later this year.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Mining

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likelihood that the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will use funds levied from the mining industry to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in that country. [HL6187]

Lord Bates: The UK Government will continue to strongly encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to increase their own commitments to the humanitarian crisis in the country, including funds generated from the sale of minerals. Currently there is a low willingness and ability on the DRC side to do this, given the lack of transparency in the management and oversight of the mining sector.

We will do this in conjunction with other international partners, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. We will raise this directly at the upcoming UN Donor Conference on the DRC, to be held in Geneva on the 13th April 2018.

Developing Countries: Disability

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Bates on 22 February (HL Deb, cols 319–22), what assessment they have made of the extent to which older women with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups in developing countries; and what plans they have, ahead of the Global Disability Summit in July, to include older women in their disability agenda. [HL6272]

Lord Bates: The UK government recognises that historically global development has not reached marginalised groups, such as older women with disabilities. This is why we took a leading role in pushing for the global goals to be underpinned by the promise to leave no one behind.

We have been coordinating global efforts to strengthen data quality and systems that accurately capture the experience and lives of older people, women, and people with disabilities. We will continue to drive progress in this area so that we can identify those that are most at risk of being left behind and not reached by programming.

Ageing forms an important part of the UK's work on disability inclusion in international development and is integral to our approach to leaving no one behind. Older women with disabilities will benefit from the Global Disability Summit, which will lock in progress and increase action and investment in this historically neglected area.

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), what are the staff savings made in (1) Asia, (2) the Americas, and (3) Africa, broken down by (a) country, (b) diplomatic post, and (c) nature of staff saving. [HL5876]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The 50 new diplomatic positions we have created in Europe, are being funded through internal reprioritisation at an estimated (revised) cost of £4.1m. We will complete changes that will yield these savings by 2020, as part of the Diplomacy 20:20 Programme, and we will balance our budget within this Spending Round. We are seeking to deliver our frontline work efficiently, flexibly and with the same, or better, impact. In a number of overseas Posts, we are looking at different ways of doing frontline work, rather than reducing it. This will contribute about £2m in savings. Plans for changes to front-line jobs, with approximate savings estimates for each region. Other savings are being realised by changes to how we deliver corporate services and by working differently, including through use of upgraded technology.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Posts</i>	<i>Changes to front-line jobs</i>
Africa	Goma, DRC	One UK Based (UKB) job affected*
Americas	Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Washington and Bogota	1.6 UK UKB jobs and two Local Staff (LS) jobs affected*
Asia Pacific	China network and Jakarta Tokyo	Seven UKB jobs and ten LS jobs affected*
South Asia and Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Up to ten UKB jobs may be affected*
Total		Up to 19.6 UKB and 12 LS jobs may be affected*

Affected * - Could mean; transferred to a cross-government fund, localised, relocated or cut.

Electoral Register

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to promote anonymous electoral registration for people who have been victims of domestic violence, or whose personal safety is at serious risk as a result of their address appearing on electoral registers; and whether the process will be advertised, for example in GP surgeries. [HL6122]

Lord Young of Cookham: It is the role of the Electoral Commission and Electoral Registration Officers, together with domestic abuse charities, supported by the Government, to raise awareness of the anonymous registration scheme with electors who may need to use it.

The Government has supported the Electoral Commission in updating guidance for electors on www.yourvotematters.co.uk.

Women's Aid, and other domestic abuse support charities, are raising awareness of anonymous registration with their clients through their social media and general advocacy and support services.

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to encourage GPs (1) to attest to the need for anonymous electoral registration under the Representation of the People (Amendment) Regulations 2018, in order to protect victims of domestic violence, and (2) not to charge for doing so. [HL6124]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Government will work with the relevant representative bodies to raise awareness of the scheme.

It is for GPs to decide whether they can attest to an individual's safety being at risk if included on the electoral register, and whether they charge for this service. Some do this without charge.

Should an elector experience difficulties with obtaining an attestation from a GP, other avenues remain open for them to seek attestations without charge.

Electoral Register: Internet

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of allowing online electoral registration using a recognised Government identification such as a passport or driving licence instead of a national insurance number, in line with arrangements for registration by post. [HL6121]

Lord Young of Cookham: While it is possible to register to vote without a National Insurance number, the IER Digital Service uses National Insurance numbers provided by electoral registration applicants to establish identity quickly and easily (applications are processed overnight). This in turn allows Electoral Registration Officers to complete the processing of applications as

efficiently as possible. This is especially important in the run up to electoral events.

The operation of the Digital Service shows that making use of National Insurance numbers in this way is effective. Of the 31,407,478 total applications received between 9 June 2014 and 19 February 2018 (the latest period for which we hold data), only 446,277 or 1.4 per cent were unverifiable. Unverifiable applications are those where an applicant has not provided all of the information necessary to verify their identity. This category therefore includes all those applications received without a National Insurance number. This means that at least 98.5 per cent of those people making an application through the Digital Service have been able to provide a National Insurance number.

The small number of applicants who cannot provide a National Insurance number are still able to apply to register to vote. Applications without a National Insurance number are processed by the Digital Service and then passed to the local electoral administration team. The team will contact the applicant to provide proof of identity, such as a passport or driving licence. There is also an attestation process for people who cannot provide such alternative forms of ID.

Empty Property

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take, through housing associations, local authorities, and social landlords, to bring into use empty properties over shops, in particular for rough sleepers and families housed in bed and breakfast accommodation. [HL6110]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: One person without a home is one too many and we are determined to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

Local authorities have powers and strong incentives to tackle empty homes, and through the New Homes Bonus they earn the same financial reward for bringing an empty home back into use as building a new one. To go even further, we recently announced proposals to strengthen the powers available to local authorities to tackle empty homes which mean that local authorities will be able to charge a 100 per cent council tax premium (currently 50 per cent) to homes that have been empty for more than two years.

In order to place homeless households into settled accommodation more quickly, we changed the law in 2011 to allow councils to place families in decent and affordable private rented homes.

The Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce will drive forward the implementation of a cross Government strategy to achieve our commitment of halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027. The Taskforce met for the first time on 7th March and we will publish the strategy by July this year.

Energy: Prices

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Domestic Gas and Electricity (Tariff Cap) Bill on energy security in Great Britain. [HL6126]

Lord Henley: The Domestic Gas and Electricity (Tariff Cap) Bill requires that, in setting the price cap, Ofgem have regard to, among other things, the need to ensure an efficient supplier's ability to finance its supply activities. The price cap does not cover generation and therefore will not impact on security of supply.

The Capacity Market is at the heart of the Government's plans for a reliable energy system, and is providing the right investment incentives for a mix of secure electricity capacity in the UK. Following four successful main auctions, and the early auction, the Capacity Market has already secured the bulk of the electricity we need from the current winter through to 2021/2022.

The design of the Capacity Market drives fierce competition, creating good value outcomes for consumers. The latest auction cleared at only £8.40/kW, making it the cheapest main auction so far.

For gas, the UK benefits from a highly diverse and flexible system of supply sources, including indigenous production, imports from Norway and the continent, storage and liquefied natural gas imports, all of which contribute to a diverse and liquid market which is responsive enough to meet demand even during periods of extreme weather.

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Domestic Gas and Electricity (Tariff Cap) Bill on investment in the development of future (1) power, and (2) gas supplies, in the UK. [HL6127]

Lord Henley: The Domestic Gas and Electricity (Tariff Cap) Bill is clear that Ofgem must have regard to the need to ensure that holders of supply licences who operate efficiently are able to finance activities authorised by the licence. It would be for the independent regulator, Ofgem, to make its assessment of efficient operations. Ofgem is not required to have regard to investment projects that are outside the scope of the activities authorised by the supply licence.

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they sought from (1) Ofgem, and (2) the Competition and Markets Authority, ahead of the Prime Minister's announcement in October 2017 of an energy tariff cap. [HL6128]

Lord Henley: Ministers and officials in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy seek advice from stakeholders on a range of issues.

My noble Friend will be aware that, on a referral from Ofgem, the Competition and Markets Authority carried out an extensive investigation into the energy market in which it found that customers of the Big 6 energy suppliers are suffering an average annual detriment of around £1.4bn due to overcharging and supplier inefficiencies.

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will publish the assessment made of the costs and benefits of including a clause in the Domestic Gas and Electricity (Tariff Cap) Bill to allow organisations a right of appeal to the Competitions and Markets Authority. [HL6129]

Lord Henley: The Bill requires Ofgem to consult on its proposal for setting the level of the price cap, and to have regard to the need to ensure that an efficient supplier can finance their licenced supply activities.

A route of appeal against Ofgem's decision would be available via judicial review.

The Government is not in a position to assess or comment on the likely costs and benefits that might be incurred by third parties in relation to hypothetical legal challenges.

Food: Self-sufficiency

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the most recent figures for the UK's food self sufficiency; and what assessment they have made of whether increases in overall food production are an export opportunity or an opportunity for the UK to become more self-sufficient. [HL6204]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The UK's current production to supply ratio is 76% for indigenous-type foods and 60% for all foods. This has been stable for two decades and is not low in the context of the last 150 years; in the inter-war period, the rate was as low as 30-40%.

Self-sufficiency is not in itself an indicator of food security. The UK has historically been a net importer of food and it sources from a diverse range of stable countries. This approach will continue once we leave the EU. Achieving increased self-sufficiency in indigenous products would not insulate us from certain types of shocks. For example, severe weather and disease can have an impact on harvests and yields.

We have recently launched a new consultation, 'Health and Harmony: The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment in a Green Brexit' which sets out the proposed policy framework for agriculture after the UK leaves the EU. The Government is committed to boosting the productivity of UK agriculture through a strong focus on science, research and innovation, and by developing targeted transitional policies that reflect our farmers' needs and allow them to grow more, sell more and export more of our fantastic British food.

Homelessness: Charities

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of homeless charities with regard to upholding the rights of vulnerable people. [HL6132]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Charities, and the thousands of people who work for them and volunteer with them, make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable people. Working in close partnership with established and statutory homelessness services, they are part of vital work to provide consistent, high quality support for vulnerable people.

We all need to work together to break the homelessness cycle, and we are committed to drawing on as much expertise and experience as we can. We have established a Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel, made up of key representatives from local government, central government and homelessness charities. Together, they provide a depth of expertise on rough sleeping and will work closely with the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce, to develop the strategy to achieve the Government's commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022.

Individual Savings Accounts

Asked by Lord Cromwell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to address the decline in use of the cash Individual Savings Account; and how investment in 2016–17 compared to 2015–16. [HL6092]

Asked by Lord Cromwell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the recommendations of the cross-party Association of Accounting Technicians Individual Savings Account Working Group, that (1) the ISA name should be removed from the Help to Buy scheme, and (2) the Lifetime ISA should be closed to new entrants, and (3) all remaining ISAs should be folded into a single "Everything ISA". [HL6093]

Asked by Lord Cromwell

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have given consideration to scrapping the annual ISA savings limit in favour of a £1 million lifetime contributions limit, as proposed by the cross-party Association of Accounting Technicians Individual Savings Account Working Group; and if not, why not. [HL6094]

Asked by Lord Cromwell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken, or plan to take, to create an ISA dashboard, based on the same principles as the Pensions Dashboard project. [HL6095]

Lord Bates: The Government notes the Association of Accounting Technicians Individual Savings Account Working Group's proposals regarding ISAs. The Chancellor of the Exchequer keeps all tax policy under review and information provided to us is considered as part of this process.

The Government wants to continue to support people to save in the way that is right for them, which is why there are a range of options to help people make their money go further.

ISAs form part of this support, and remain an incredibly popular product with around half of UK households having one.

In April 2017, the ISA allowance increased by a record amount to £20,000. This, combined with the introduction of the Personal Savings Allowance in April 2016, has given savers more flexibility when choosing the product most suitable for them and means that over 95% of people have no tax to pay on their savings income.

Iraq: Islamic State

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Iraq concerning the restitution and restoration of churches desecrated by ISIS in Mosul; and what measures are being taken to protect returning minorities. [HL6086]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We consistently underline to the Federal Government in Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government in Erbil the importance of upholding and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all minority communities, including Christians. When the Prime Minister visited Iraq on 29 November she made clear that as Iraq rebuilds, and its peoples reconcile, all Iraqis' human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected, protected and promoted. She also emphasised to Prime Minister Abadi that families must be able to return home and rebuild their lives – when it is safe to do so – supported by the prospect of genuine reconciliation. I reinforced these messages during my visit to Iraq and the Kurdistan Region on 2–4 March and called on Iraqi parliamentarians to publically condemn acts of violence against minorities.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel in regard to reports of the targeting of Palestinian children by Israeli forces. [HL6144]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, the UK continues to have strong concerns about continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. While we welcome progress made by Israel following the recommendations of the Children in

Military Custody Report, we remain particularly concerned by reports of the continued heavy use of painful restraints and the high number of Palestinian children who are not informed of their legal rights, in contravention of Israel's own regulations. We will continue to push for the implementation of the recommendations of the children in military Custody report in full, and we continue to offer to support to Israel through expert level talks.

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations, if any, they are making to the government of Israel concerning reports of discrimination against Palestinians living in East Jerusalem who pay municipal taxes to Israel but receive fewer municipal and emergency services. [HL6141]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly make clear to the Israeli authorities and the Municipality of Jerusalem our serious concerns about the situation in East Jerusalem, both bilaterally and in co-operation with EU partners. These concerns include the evictions of Palestinians and demolition of Palestinian property; the construction of illegal Israeli settlements; removal of residency rights from Palestinians; possible unilateral changes to the municipal borders; and severe difficulties of access to Jerusalem for Palestinians from the West Bank or those residents of Jerusalem who live beyond the Separation Barrier.

Mohammed Tamimi

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning reports that a minor, Muhammed Tamimi, had a bullet removed from his skull and then signed a confession without legal or parental representation stating that his injuries were caused by falling off a bike. [HL6142]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are following this case closely and our Embassy in Tel Aviv will raise this case with the relevant Israeli authorities.

Natural Gas

Asked by Lord Risby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on UK natural gas demand of (1) the Carbon Price Floor, and (2) the proposal to end power generation from coal by 2025. [HL6125]

Lord Henley: UK gas demand is made up of several components of which demand for power generation contributes approximately a third of the total. Whilst Carbon Price Support (CPS) and our policy to end

unabated coal generation by 2025 may result in some coal to gas switching, overall gas demand for electricity generation has fallen by 8% and total UK gas demand has decreased by about 20% over the period from 2000 to 2016.^[1]

CPS is a tax on carbon emitted from the burning of fossil fuels by electricity generators in Great Britain. It was introduced in 2013 to provide long term certainty on the overall carbon price and supporting investment in low-carbon generation, including nuclear. In 2012 coal represented 40% (136 TWh) of generation, down to 9% (30 TWh) in 2016. Some of this capacity will have been replaced by gas with gas generation increasing from 28% (98 TWh) to 42% (141 TWh) of total generation, but there has also been an increase of renewable generation from 14% (51 TWh) to 23% (79TWh) of total generation.

Coal closure policy is intended to not only reduce harmful emissions, but also to increase revenue certainty for investment in low carbon and flexible generation capacity, and demonstrate international climate policy leadership. The department's impact assessment for coal closure policy^[2], estimates that around 1.5GW of coal capacity would remain on the system post 2025 in the absence intervention, and thus the direct impact on gas demand is expected to be limited.

^[1] *Energy statistics in this response are from Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES) -*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/digest-of-uk-energy-statistics-dukes>

^[2] *The Future of Coal Generation in Great Britain Impact assessment -*

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671959/FINAL_updated_unabated_coal_Impact_Assessment_Jan_2018.pdf

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Future of Coal Generation in Great Britain - IA
[FINAL_updated_unabated_coal_Impact_Assessment_Jan_2018.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-06/HL6125>

Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the savings that would be made if UK aid spending were based on the world average percentage spend for overseas aid. [HL6382]

Lord Bates: DFID does not make such estimates. However, data on the different percentages of Official Development Assistance of Gross National Income is published openly by the OECD, and is available with this link <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/ODA-2016-detailed-summary.pdf>. The UK Government is committed to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on Aid as set

out in the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Detailed ODA Summary - 2016 [ODA-2016-detailed-summary.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-14/HL6382>

Overseas Companies: China

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what restrictions apply to British firms seeking to acquire Chinese commercial assets. [HL6099]

Baroness Fairhead: The UK Government places no restrictions on British firms looking to invest in China and the stock of UK foreign direct investment (FDI) in China was £11.6bn in 2016, 17.7% higher than in 2015. Some UK businesses looking to invest in China face multiple restrictions and China has an overall FDI restrictiveness index of 0.327 on the OECD FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index, the fourth most restrictive of the sixty-two countries for which data is available. China's Catalogue for Guidance of Foreign Invested Industries, which is revised periodically, places sectors into approved, restricted and prohibited categories. Examples of some prohibited sectors include sensitive areas such as the exploration and exploitation of minerals, the creation of genetically modified crops, livestock and seeds and the processing of traditional Chinese medicines.

At the 9th UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue, the UK welcomed China's decision in November 2017 to raise the caps on direct and indirect equity ownership by foreign investors across a range of financial services sectors.

Overseas Students: EU Nationals

Asked by Lord Fox

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have run an impact study on the likely effect on UK university finances of EU students having to pay international fees following Brexit; and if so, what was the outcome of that study. [HL6103]

Asked by Lord Fox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the possible reduction in the number of EU students registering for UK universities in the event of those students having to pay international fees following Brexit. [HL6104]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: EU students, staff and researchers make an important contribution to our universities. We want that contribution to continue and are confident – given the quality of our higher education sector – that it will.

Analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency finance data shows that in 2015/16, EU tuition fee income accounted for around 2.3% of total higher education institution sector income in the UK. However, some institutions are more dependent on the EU tuition fee income meaning the impact of leaving the EU may be greater for some institutions than others. The precise impact will depend on the outcome of the UK's negotiations with the EU and the subsequent response of universities.

Overseas Trade: USA

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that close regulatory alignment with the EU in certain areas will have on the UK's ability to trade with the US. [HL6138]

Baroness Fairhead: We are seeking the greatest possible barrier-free trade with our European neighbours, alongside the ability to negotiate our own ambitious trade agreements around the world.

The US is already our largest single trading partner, accounting for around 15% of total UK trade, worth around £166bn billion in 2016. We expect the US to remain a key trading partner as we leave the EU and have already established a Trade and Investment Working Group to strengthen our bilateral trade and investment relationship.

Close regulatory alignment with the EU could take many different forms. There may be an impact on our ability to agree ambitious regulatory elements in a future FTA with the US (i.e. to further reduce barriers to trade) should we not be able to diverge.

Palestinians: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the findings by an Israeli economist, Shir Hever, that as much as 78 per cent of the humanitarian aid intended for Palestinians is diverted to Israelis. [HL6143]

Lord Bates: UK officials have seen the report, which claims that 78% of international development aid money for the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) is used to import goods from Israel. We cannot confirm the validity of this claim, but we note that the report does not claim that international development aid is not reaching the intended Palestinian beneficiaries for humanitarian purposes. DFID implements a robust monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that UK aid reaches the intended beneficiaries and achieves the best development outcomes, with a strong focus on ensuring value for money for the UK taxpayer. As the report notes, the Palestinian economy is highly reliant on Israel for trade, particularly for the imports of goods and services. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade

and Development, trade with Israel accounted for around half of Palestinian trade in 2016. The UK consistently calls on the Israeli Government to ease movement and access restrictions in the OPTs to help unlock trade opportunities with other countries.

Poland: NATO

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many British troops are deployed in Poland as part of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group led by the United States; what is their assessment of how successful those troops have been in deterring Russian belligerence; and whether there are any plans to increase the number of British troops deployed. [HL6309]

Earl Howe: There are approximately 150 British troops deployed to Poland in support of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). The precise number fluctuates due to routine troop rotations and activity such as exercises. UK troops have integrated well with Allied forces and we are confident that the deployment is achieving its aims as an important part of NATO's overall deterrence posture. There are no plans to increase the number of British troops deployed in Poland.

Pupil Exclusions

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will commence the review of school exclusions and implications for pupil groups disproportionately represented in exclusion statistics, including those with special needs and disabilities. [HL6040]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The government launched the attached review of school exclusions, led by the former Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families (Edward Timpson) on Friday 16 March. The review will help us to understand how and why schools use exclusion, what drives the variation we see in exclusion rates and, in particular, the disproportionate exclusion of some groups including black Caribbean boys, Children in Need, Looked After Children, and those with Special Educational Needs. The review will also explore and identify effective practice, which can be shared across the system.

As part of this review, we also published our call for evidence, at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-absence-and-exclusions-team/exclusions-review-call-for-evidence/>. We are seeking views from parents, children, schools, local authorities and other organisations, about their experiences, practice and evidence. Responses should be submitted by 6 May 2018.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Attachment 1 [A_Review_of_School_Exclusion-terms_of_reference.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-05/HL6040>

Rented Housing: Security of Tenure

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the costs and benefits of introducing five year minimum contracts for rented accommodation, in order to provide greater security for families. [HL6130]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government is committed to protecting the rights of tenants and giving them more security. We will shortly be launching a consultation seeking views on the benefits and barriers to landlords offering longer tenancies in the private rented sector. This work will inform any next steps, including costs, of how we can support landlords to offer more secure tenancies.

Schools: Registration

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a place where only religious matters are taught to children who do not reside there is required to register as a school; and if not, to what extent the teaching of general subjects, such as English and maths, is necessary before such a place is required to register as a school. [HL6113]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: To be registered as an independent school, an institution must meet the definition of a school in Section 4 of the Education Act 1996, which requires it to provide primary and/or secondary education. The provision of a single discipline, such as religious education alone, does not meet this requirement.

Registered independent schools are expected to provide the full range of subjects specified in the attached independent school standards as prescribed in regulations - which include linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Independent School Standards
[Revised_independent_school_standards.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-06/HL6113>

Stocks and Shares

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made an assessment of the Bank of America's survey of managers of global investment portfolios, which found

that UK equities were the least attractive choice. [HL6087]

Lord Bates: We do not comment on financial market movements or assessments of equity markets.

Trade Marks

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government who has the right to register a trademark in the United Kingdom. [HL6159]

Lord Henley: Any individual or legal entity who has an intention to use the trade mark on the relevant goods or services may make an application for a trade mark in the UK. Full details and guidance can be found on the Intellectual Property Office's pages on the Government's website.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government which provisions govern contesting the ownership of a trademark in the UK. [HL6160]

Lord Henley: There are a range of provisions, set out in the Trade Marks Act 1994 (as amended), under which the validity of a trade mark or its ownership may be contested. These include where another party is the owner of an earlier right, or where the application can be shown to have been made in bad faith. Full details and guidance can be found on the Intellectual Property Office's pages on the Government's website.

University Technical Colleges

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they provide for the development of University Technical Colleges. [HL6136]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Once university technical college (UTC) applications have been approved, projects receive financial support during their development as they work towards opening. Similarly, they receive funding in the early years after opening as they build up towards capacity. UTCs are also eligible for specialist equipment funding, agreed on a case-by-case basis as appropriate, to support the teaching of technical subjects.

USA: Nuclear Weapons

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the two new low-yield nuclear weapons, submarine-launched cruise missile and submarine-launched ballistic missile, contained within the US nuclear posture review; and what are the implications of the introduction of those weapons for NATO security and strategic stability with Russia. [HL6247]

Earl Howe: The US Nuclear Posture Review reflects the worsening security situation in the world. It seeks to ensure a credible and capable deterrence against the threats we face. The review also makes clear that the US decision to modify a small number of existing warheads to provide a low yield option and, in the longer term, to pursue a new sea-launched cruise missile, are intended to enhance deterrence and to counter perception of an exploitable gap in US capabilities. NATO will remain a nuclear alliance for as long as nuclear weapons exist.

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the implications of the US nuclear posture review for UK nuclear weapons and deterrence policy. [HL6248]

Earl Howe: The UK welcomes the US Nuclear Posture Review which is largely a continuation of their current policy and posture. We remain confident we have a credible and capable nuclear deterrent.

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of (1) the effect of the US nuclear posture review plans to "strengthen the integration of nuclear and non-nuclear military planning", and (2) how those plans will affect UK nuclear planning with NATO. [HL6250]

Earl Howe: The UK welcomes the recent US Nuclear Posture Review which is largely a continuation of current policy, whilst recognising the reality of the changed security environment since the last review in 2010. Crucially, it reaffirms the continued US commitment to Euro-Atlantic security through NATO. The US review does not affect the UK's continued nuclear deterrent commitment to NATO, nor does it impact on our support to NATO's planning processes.

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