

Session 2017-19
No. 114



Tuesday
22 May 2018

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers.....4

[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/>

Members who want a printed copy of Written Answers and Written Statements should notify the Printed Paper Office.

This printed edition is a reproduction of the original text of Answers and Statements, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>.

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
Baroness Manzoor	Whip
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

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2018

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/

Written Statements

Tuesday, 22 May 2018

Clean Air Strategy

[HLWS685]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Right Hon Friend the Secretary of State (Michael Gove) has today made the following statement.

Today, the Government published its consultation on a Clean Air Strategy. At the most fundamental level, our health and prosperity depend on the health of the planet on which we live. From the air we breathe to the water we drink, the food we eat and the energy which powers our homes and businesses, we need to ensure we have a healthy and sustainable environment.

Nowhere is this more true than in the case of air quality. Air pollution is a major public health risk ranking alongside cancer, heart disease and obesity. It causes more harm than passive smoking.

This Clean Air Strategy sets out the case for action and demonstrates this Government's determination to improve our air quality. Leaving the EU provides us with an excellent opportunity to be even more ambitious in achieving cleaner air for the health of the nation, and for our environment and the biodiversity it sustains. We want to do all that we can to reduce people's exposure to pollutants like nitrogen oxides, ammonia, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter and sulphur dioxide.

Air pollution has improved since 2010 but we recognise that there is more to do. This comprehensive Clean Air Strategy sets out how we will tackle all sources of air pollution, making our air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy.

Government must act to tackle air pollution which shortens lives. We are already acting to reduce concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) around roads from cars. But vehicles are not the only source of toxic emissions. Air pollution is a result of the way we currently generate power, heat our homes, produce food, manufacture consumer goods and power transport. Better, cleaner technologies and simple changes in behaviour will tackle the pollution that claims lives.

The new Strategy is a key part of our 25 year plan to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. It sets out the comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of Government and society to meet the challenge. By 2025, we will halve the number of people living in locations where concentrations of particulate matter are above the World Health Organisation guideline limit of 10 µg/m³, protecting public health.

Through the introduction of new primary legislation, we will introduce a stronger and more coherent legislative framework for action to tackle air pollution, giving local government new powers to take decisive action in areas with an air pollution problem.

We are investing £10m in improving our modelling, data and analytical tools to give a more precise picture of current air quality and the impact of policies on it in future. Alongside this, we will seek ways to support further investment in research and innovation, in partnership with UKRI, which will help the UK become world leaders in clean technology and secure further emissions reductions.

From farming to consumer products there are a large range of other day to day practices, processes and products that produce harmful emissions. Of particular concern is burning wood and coal to heat a home which contributes 38% to harmful particulate matter emissions. Which is why we will ensure only the cleanest fuels will be available for sale and only the cleanest stoves will be available to buy and install.

For the first time, the government will take concerted action to tackle ammonia from farming by requiring and supporting farmers to invest in the infrastructure and equipment that will reduce emissions. The agriculture sector accounts for 88% of UK emissions of ammonia and action by farmers can make a big difference in reducing the impacts of excess nitrogen to sensitive habitats and reducing the overall background levels of particulates in the atmosphere.

Government cannot act alone in tackling air pollution and our strategy sets out how we will work with businesses, farmers and industry to implement lasting solutions to reduce air pollution, and the importance of each of us taking action and playing an important role in cleaning up our air for the next generation.

These actions will, we hope, ensure that this country is recognised as the leading global champion of cleaner air for the next generation.

Foreign Affairs Council - 16 April 2018

[HLWS683]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

My Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs attended the Foreign Affairs Council on 16 April. The Council was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP), Federica Mogherini. The meeting was held in Luxembourg.

Foreign Affairs Council

Syria

The Council discussed the latest developments in Syria, including the targeted US, French and British airstrikes on chemical weapons facilities. Ahead of the Brussels Conference on Syria and the region, Ministers discussed the need to relaunch a political solution to the conflict in the framework of the UN-led Geneva process. The Council adopted conclusions on Syria.

Iran

Ministers agreed on the need for unity on continuing the implementation of the Iran nuclear deal (JCPoA). They encouraged the diplomatic efforts to ensure that there continues to be strong commitment to the agreement by all the parties involved. Ministers also discussed other issues outside the scope of the JCPoA, in particular the role of Iran in regional conflicts, not least in Syria and Yemen, as well as the EU's concerns at Iran's ballistic missiles programme and its human rights situation.

Russia

The Council agreed unanimously on the continued relevance of the five guiding principles that were agreed in March 2016. Following the Salisbury attack and the European Council Conclusions that were agreed in March 2018, Ministers highlighted the need to strengthen the resilience of the EU and its neighbours against Russian threats, including hybrid threats such as disinformation campaigns. Ministers commended the work carried out by the East StratComms taskforce in the European External Action Service. Ministers also highlighted the importance of supporting Russian civil society and continuing to develop people-to-people contacts.

Western Balkans

Over lunch, Ministers discussed the Western Balkans in preparation for the EU-Western Balkans summit in Sofia on 17 May 2018.

External action financing instruments

The Council held a preliminary exchange of views on the future financing of external action instruments after 2020. The Commission is preparing its proposal for the EU's next long-term budget (the future multiannual financial framework, MFF).

Members agreed a number of measures without discussion:

The Council approved the annual progress report on the implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which covers activities carried out in 2017; The Council adopted conclusions on chemical disarmament and non-proliferation ahead of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to review the operation of the chemical weapons convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction. This session will take place in The Hague on 21-30 November 2018; The Council adopted conclusions on South Sudan; The Council adopted conclusions on malicious cyber activities that underline the importance of a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace where human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law fully apply; The Council approved the High Representative's six-monthly report on Operation Althea, which covers the period from 1 September 2017 to 28 February 2018; The Council adopted a decision approving Mazars and KPMG S.A. as the external auditors of the Banque de France, the National Central Bank of France, for the 2018-23 period.

Media Matters

[HLWS684]

Lord Keen of Elie: My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Rt Hon Matthew Hancock) has made the following Written Statement:

On 7 May 2018, Comcast Corporation formally notified the European Commission of its intention to acquire the entire issued share capital of Sky plc.

Under section 58 of the Enterprise Act 2002 ("the Act"), the Secretary of State has the powers to intervene in certain media mergers on public interest grounds.

Having reviewed the relevant evidence available, I can confirm that I have today written to the parties to inform them that I am minded not to issue an EIN on the basis that the proposed merger does not raise concerns in relation to public interest considerations which would meet the threshold for intervention.

This is a quasi-judicial decision and I am required to make my decision independently, following a process that is scrupulously fair and impartial, and as quickly as possible.

I will now allow until 5pm on Thursday 24 May for interested parties to submit written representations, and I aim to come to a final decision on whether to intervene in the merger shortly.

Prison Service Pay Review Body

[HLWS686]

Lord Keen of Elie: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Justice (Rory Stewart OBE) has made the following Written Statement.

"I am pleased to announce that the Prime Minister has extended the appointment of Dr Peter Knight CBE as Chair of the Prison Service Pay Review Body for the period 1 March - 31 July 2018. The extension has been made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments."

Suspect Vehicles: Police Pursuits

[HLWS682]

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:

I announced in September 2017 that the Home Office would lead a review of the legislation, guidance and practice surrounding the police's pursuits of suspect vehicles. As I said in September, this Government is determined to get ahead of and tackle emerging threats like motorcycle-related crimes, including those involving mopeds and scooters. People must be able to go about their daily lives without fear of harassment or attack and criminals must not think they can get away with a crime by riding or driving in a certain way or on a certain type of vehicle.

I am today publishing the review's findings for public consultation. The findings will be available on Gov.uk and a copy will be placed in the House Library. The consultation sets out and seeks views on a number of proposals, including:

- Judging whether a police officer's driving is careless or dangerous against the standard of a careful and competent police driver of a similar level of training and skill, rather than any careful and competent driver, as now;
- Requiring that specific driving tactics employed by the police are authorised appropriately and are both necessary and proportionate to the circumstances;

- Making clear that the police are not responsible for the standard of driving of a suspect being pursued; and
- Clarifying the various emergency service exemptions to traffic law to reduce the potential for confusion.

I have been clear from the outset that we must ensure that the end result of these changes enables the police to do their job effectively and keep us safe while ensuring that we continue to keep our roads among the safest in the world. It is important therefore that we seek the public's views on these proposals, given their potential to affect all those who use our roads. I look forward to hearing the views of all those interested in the proposals before the consultation closes on 13th August.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 22 May 2018

Agriculture: Subsidies

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the accessibility of the new Rural Payments Scheme online-only registration form; and whether they plan to extend the time limit set for registration as a result of delays arising from the new system. [HL7803]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The application window for the Basic Payment Scheme 2018 opened on 13 March and over 71,000 applications were submitted online by the 15 May initial regulatory deadline. In addition, a paper application was provided to those that chose not to use the online system. Applications can still be submitted up until 10 June, the final regulatory deadline, but penalties will apply.

The Government is not aware of any delays to the service and as such there are no plans to extend the deadlines.

Alvaro Uribe Velez

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Colombia about the effectiveness of witness protection measures in connection with politically sensitive judicial proceedings in Colombia, including those involving former Colombian President, and current Colombian Senator, Alvaro Uribe Velez. [HL7639]

Asked by *Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have sent, or will send, observers to the criminal proceedings against former Colombian President, and current Colombian Senator, Alvaro Uribe Velez, including proceedings in the Colombian Supreme Court for alleged interference with witnesses; and whether they have offered assistance in investigations. [HL7640]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Through our advocacy and project work we support efforts by the Government of Colombia to strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals, including witnesses in judicial cases. On 25 April, Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials in London were briefed by a non-governmental organisation's supporting of witnesses in this case, about the threats against them and protection measures provided by the Colombian Government National Protection Unit. We currently have no plans to send observers to follow this specific case.

Asylum

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported working practices in the office of the Next Generation Casework project requiring staff to meet targets or face disciplinary action, in relation to the handling of asylum cases. [HL7772]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office has plans to reduce the number of outstanding undecided asylum claims. Part of this included the creation of a new team in Bootle which has been established to help tackle older cases in the asylum system. This team has been designed to establish and roll out best practice in the management of older cases.

Across the business, fully trained asylum decision makers are expected to carry out five interviews or decisions a week. Staff who are not meeting this will be offered support and more training as part a personal improvement plan.

Asylum: Vietnam

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported incident of a Home Office caseworker using a Lonely Planet guide to determine how safe it would be for an asylum applicant to return to Ho Chi Minh City. [HL7773]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All claims for asylum are considered on their individual merits in line with Home Office guidance, and where people establish a genuine need for protection, or a well founded fear of persecution, refugee status will be granted.

Bahrain: Technical Assistance

Asked by *Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure transparency while providing funding for technical assistance to Bahrain; and who have been the beneficiaries of the Integrated Activity Fund and Global Britain Fund. [HL7775]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our programmes undergo continual assessment throughout their implementation, to ensure that they are on track for delivery, as well as upon completion of each individual project. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has provided numerous updates on its programme work in its annual Human Rights Reports, as well as through Freedom of Information Act requests. This information can be found on the gov.uk website.

The Government works with a number of implementation partners and beneficiaries to support Bahraini-led reform. These programmes aim to support progress on building effective and accountable

institutions, strengthening the rule of law, and justice reform. All of our work is in line with international standards and aims to share the UK's expertise and experience. Any training provided by or on behalf of the British Government fully complies with its domestic and international human rights obligations. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not in a position to make precise details available as it has a duty to maintain the confidentiality and confidence of its partners.

Birds

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the size of the UK population of circl bunting; and what steps they are taking to protect that population. [HL7902]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government's agri-environment schemes have been designed to encourage habitat management to promote circl bunting conservation in targeted areas, specifically to provide suitable nesting and all year round foraging habitats.

Circl bunting populations have increased significantly in the south west, where they only occur because this is the edge of their European range. The Government's wild bird statistics, which measure relative abundance, show an increase in the circl bunting population of 79% between 1970 and 2015.

The British Birds Survey of circl buntings in 2016 estimated the UK population at 1,079 pairs. This represents a nine fold increase since the bird became the subject of a dedicated species recovery programme in Devon and Cornwall.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of grey partridges in the UK. [HL7903]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Defra wild bird statistics, which measure relative abundance, show decreases for grey partridge of 92 percent in the long term (1970-2015) and 15 percent in the short term (2010-2015).

In 2009 the Avian Population Estimates Panel estimated a UK grey partridge population of 43,000 breeding pairs.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government which species of birds in the UK are most at risk of population decline. [HL7904]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There are many different risk factors affecting bird species but trends in populations from the UK wild bird statistics show greatest recent (2010–2015) declines in the turtle dove, Bewick's swan and quail.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to establish reserves for birds in England. [HL7905]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The England terrestrial network of protected sites covers an area of over one million hectares and nearly 23 million hectares in the marine environment. This provides valuable habitat for many rare, threatened and regularly occurring migratory birds, even where not specifically designated for that purpose. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, competent authorities also have a duty to take steps to preserve, maintain and re-establish habitat for wild birds.

Brexit

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Callanan on 10 May (HL7529), why leaving the EU in accordance with Article 50(1) without being bound by Articles 50(2) and 50(3) would prevent the UK from being a law abiding country under international treaty law and practice. [HL7770]

Lord Callanan: Article 50 is the only lawful way to withdraw from the Union under the EU Treaties. Article 50 should be considered as a whole and sets out all the relevant procedures for a legal withdrawal. The UK is a law-abiding country and does not pick and choose which of its obligations to abide by and which to ignore. Negotiating and concluding a Withdrawal Agreement as provided for under Article 50 is in the interests of both the UK and the EU.

Asked by Lord Morris of Aberavon

To ask Her Majesty's Government at what level in Government the drafting instructions to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for the original clause 11 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill were approved; and whether they were approved at Ministerial level. [HL7912]

Lord Young of Cookham: The policy for clause 11 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, as introduced to Parliament, was approved by the Cabinet through the standard processes for collective agreement. Drafting instructions to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to give legal effect to this policy were approved at official level in accordance with normal practice. The final drafting of the clause was then collectively agreed by the Cabinet for introduction of the Bill.

British Constitution

Asked by Lord Norton of Louth

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Cabinet Office is presently structured at official level to

address holistically the constitution of the UK; and, if so, how. [HL7706]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Constitution Group, based in the Cabinet Office, sits within the wider UK Governance Group which is also made up of the Scotland Office, the Office of the Advocate General and the Wales Office. Close links are also maintained across Whitehall departments in order to ensure constitutional issues are properly considered including in the appropriate Cabinet Committee.

British Council

Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning

To ask Her Majesty's Government which countries hosted a British Council office and staff in (1) 1990, (2) 2000, (3) 2010, and (4) 2015. [HL7623]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: (1) In 1990, as stated in the 1989-1990 Annual report, the British Council had offices in the following countries*:

* Details were correct as at 1 September 1990.

Algeria	Argentina	Australia	Austria	Bahrain
Bangladesh	Belgium	Botswana	Brazil	Brunei
Bulgaria	Burma	Cameroon	Canada	Chile
China	Colombia	Cote d'Ivoire	Cyprus	Czechoslovakia
Denmark	East Jerusalem	Ecuador	Egypt	Ethiopia
Finland	France	Germany, Federal Republic of	Ghana	Greece
Hong Kong	Hungary	India	Indonesia	Iraq
Ireland, Republic of	Israel	Italy	Jamaica	Japan
Jordan	Kenya	Korea	Kuwait	Lesotho
Malawi	Malta	Mauritius	Mexico	Morocco
Mozambique	Namibia	Nepal	Netherlands	New Zealand
Nigeria	Norway	Oman	Pakistan	Peru
Philippines	Poland	Portugal	Qatar	Romania
Saudi Arabia	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Singapore	South Africa
South Pacific Soviet Union		Spain	Sri Lanka	Sudan
Swaziland	Sweden	Tanzania	Thailand	Tunisia
Turkey	Uganda	United Arab Emirates	USA	Venezuela
Yemen, Republic of	Yugoslavia	Zambia	Zimbabwe	

(2) In 2000, as stated in the 1999-2000 Annual Report, the British Council had offices in the following countries*:

*Details are correct as at 31 March 2000.

Albania	Algeria	Argentina	Australia	Austria
Azerbaijan	Bahrain	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Bangladesh	Belarus	Belgium	Luxembourg	Bolivia
Bosnia- Herzegovina	Botswana	Brazil	São Paulo	Brunei
Bulgaria	Burma (Myanmar)	Cameroon	Canada	Chile
China	Colombia	Croatia	Cuba	Cyprus
Czech Republic	Denmark	East Jerusalem (West Bank and Gaza)	Ecuador	Egypt
Eritrea	Ethiopia	Finland	France	Georgia
Germany	Ghana	Greece	Hungary	India
Indonesia	Ireland	Israel	Italy	Jamaica
Japan	Jordan	Kazakhstan	Kenya	Korea
Kuwait	Lebanon	Lesotho	Macedonia, former Yugoslav Republic of	Malawi
Malaysia	Malta	Mauritius	Mexico	Morocco
Mozambique	Namibia	Nepal	Netherlands	New Zealand
Nigeria	Norway	Oman	Pakistan	Peru
Philippines	Poland	Portugal	Qatar	Romania
Russia	Saudi Arabia	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Singapore
Slovakia	Slovenia	South Africa	Spain	Sri Lanka
Sudan	Swaziland	Sweden	Switzerland	Syria
Tanzania	Thailand	Trinidad and Tobago	Tunisia	Turkey
Uganda	Ukraine	United Arab Emirates	USA	Uzbekistan
Venezuela	Vietnam	Yemen	Yugoslavia	Zambia
Zimbabwe				

(3) In 2010, as stated in the 2009-10 Annual Report, the British Council had offices in the following countries*:

*Details were correct as at 31 March 2010.

Afghanistan	Albania	Algeria	Argentina	Armenia
Australia	Austria	Azerbaijan	Bahrain	Bangladesh
Belgium	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Botswana	Brazil	Bulgaria
Burma	Cameroon	Canada	Chile	China
Colombia	Croatia	Cuba	Cyprus	Czech republic

Denmark	Egypt	Eritrea	Estonia	Ethiopia
Finland	France	Georgia	Germany	Ghana
Greece	Hungary	India	Indonesia	Iraq
Ireland	Israel	Italy	Jamaica	Japan
Jordan	Kazakhstan	Kenya	Korea, Republic of	Kosovo
Kuwait	Latvia	Lebanon	Libya	Lithuania
Macedonia	Malawi	Malaysia	Malta	Mauritius
Mexico	Montenegro	Morocco	Mozambique	Namibia
Nepal	Netherlands	New Zealand	Nigeria	Norway
Oman	Pakistan	Palestinian Territories	Philippines	Poland
Portugal	Qatar	Romania	Russia	Saudi Arabia
Senegal	Serbia	Sierra Leone	Singapore	Slovakia
Slovenia	South Africa	Spain	Sri Lanka	Sudan
Sweden	Switzerland	Syria	Taipei	Tanzania
Thailand	Trinidad and Tobago	Tunisia	Turkey	Uganda
Ukraine	United Arab Emirates	United Kingdom	United States of America	Uzbekistan
Venezuela	Vietnam	Yemen	Zambia	Zimbabwe

(4) In 2015, as stated in the 2014-15 Annual Report, the British Council had offices in the following countries*:

*Details were correct as at 31 March 2015.

Afghanistan	Albania	Algeria	Argentina	Armenia
Australia	Austria	Azerbaijan	Bahrain	Bangladesh
Belgium	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Botswana	Brazil	Bulgaria
Burma	Canada	Chile	China	Colombia
Croatia	Cuba	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Egypt
Estonia	Ethiopia	France	Georgia	Germany
Ghana	Greece	Hungary	India	Indonesia
Iraq	Ireland	Israel	Italy	Jamaica
Japan	Jordan	Kazakhstan	Kenya	Korea, Republic of
Kosovo	Kuwait	Latvia	Lebanon	Libya
Lithuania	Macedonia	Malawi	Malaysia	Malta
Mauritius	Mexico	Montenegro	Morocco	Mozambique
Namibia	Nepal	Netherlands	New Zealand	Nigeria

Occupied Palestinian Territories	Oman	Pakistan	Peru	Philippines
Poland	Portugal	Qatar	Romania	Russia
Rwanda	Saudi Arabia	Senegal	Serbia	Sierra Leone
Singapore	Slovakia	Slovenia	South Africa	South Sudan
Spain	Sri Lanka	Sudan	Switzerland	Taiwan
Tanzania	Thailand	Trinidad and Tobago	Tunisia	Turkey
Uganda	Ukraine	United Arab Emirates	United Kingdom	United States of America
Uruguay	Uzbekistan	Venezuela	Vietnam	Yemen
Zambia	Zimbabwe			

Colombia: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Colombia about the increase of human rights defenders being killed in that country. [HL7637]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned about the high number of attacks against human rights defenders and local community leaders in Colombia. The UK raised these concerns during the session on Colombia at the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review in Geneva on 10 May. The Minister for Europe and the Americas also discussed the situation of human rights defenders with the Colombian Ambassador and visiting Colombian ministers.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance and support they have provided to the government of Colombia and relevant organisations to protect human rights defenders in Colombia; and what assessment they have made of protection measures for those defenders. [HL7638]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Through projects delivered by the British Embassy in Bogota, the UK has supported training in individual and collective protection measures for human rights defenders. The UK has also supported the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Colombia, which monitors the human rights situation and works closely with the civil society. On 20 December 2017, the Minister for Europe and the Americas announced that the OHCHR would benefit by £400,000 from a package of additional UK financial support to the Peace Process in Colombia.

Contraceptives

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord O'Shaughnessy on 10 May (HL7348), whether some oral contraceptive pills are more expensive for GPs to prescribe than others. [HL7865]

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord O'Shaughnessy on 10 May (HL7348), what is the difference in price between the oral contraceptive pills that can be prescribed by GPs. [HL7866]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: General practitioners can prescribe any oral contraceptive pill, according to clinical need. The costs are paid for by clinical commissioning groups. Some oral contraceptives pills cost more than others for the National Health Service. The latest reimbursement price for each oral contraceptive pill held by the NHS Business Services Authority as at 1 May 2018 is provided in the attached table due to the size of the data.

For most of the products listed the pack size covers three months. The difference in pack sizes means that different prices are not necessarily directly comparable. Reimbursement prices are the amounts paid to community pharmacies for dispensed products against an NHS prescription.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Reimbursement price for oral contraceptives [HL7865 7866 table formatted.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-05-14/HL7865>

Credit: Interest Rates

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the money lender Oakam charging an APR of 1,421 per cent; and what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the interest rate cap, introduced in 2015, on reducing high-cost short, and medium-term loans. [HL7632]

Lord Bates: The government is committed to protecting consumers from unfair lending practises, including excessive interest rates. To this end, the government legislated to require the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to introduce a cap on the cost of payday loans, which came into force on 2 January 2015. All firms which offer payday loans, including Oakam, are restricted by the payday price cap, and the FCA has strong powers to take action against any firms which do not comply with these rules.

The cap consists of three parts: a daily interest cap of 0.8%; a £15 cap on default charges; and a total cost cap of 100% to ensure that consumers never need to pay back more than twice the sum they have borrowed.

The FCA reviewed the payday price cap and published its findings last summer, showing that the price cap has been effective, leading to savings of approximately £150 million for the 760,000 individuals using payday loans each year. The price cap will remain at the same level, and the FCA has committed to review it again in three years.

The FCA is also reviewing the high-cost credit market more broadly, focusing on rent-to-own, doorstep lending, catalogue credit, and overdrafts. The FCA will publish an update at the end of May.

Dental Health

Asked by Lord Palmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that all Government health campaign messaging is comprehensive, particularly in regard to dental health. [HL7644]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Public Health England's (PHE) health campaigns are developed with expert guidance from the relevant PHE teams to ensure messaging is comprehensive and evidence-based.

Change4Life is PHE's flagship social marketing campaign, inspiring families to eat well and move more. Dental health content is included in the campaign and has been developed with guidance from PHE's Diet and Obesity and Dental Public Health teams. The *Top tips for teeth* dental toolkit includes materials to help support dental professionals in their engagement with parents. The toolkit focuses on delivering three key messages to parents: cut down on sugar; brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste; and visit the dentist regularly. The toolkit is available for National Health Service dental practices to order.

The Start4Life Information Service for Parents email programme also encourages pregnant women to take up free dental care and advises expectant and new parents on caring for the oral health of their babies and young children.

In addition, NHS England has launched Starting Well: A Smile4Life Initiative. This programme of dental practice-based initiatives aims to reduce oral health inequalities and improve oral health in children under the age of five years. The programme has been launched in 13 high priority areas chosen on the basis of decay experience at a local authority area level, existing oral health improvement plans and trends in oral health.

Discrimination

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ongoing UN investigation on

discrimination and racism in the UK by UN Special Rapporteur on discrimination Tsendayi Achiume. [HL7864]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance visited the United Kingdom from 30 April to 11 May.

As part of our commitment to universal human rights and the rules-based international system, the United Kingdom offers a standing invitation to all UN Special Rapporteurs to review the situation in the United Kingdom relating to their mandates, and encourages other UN Member States to do the same. The Government will respond to the Special Rapporteur's country visit findings, conclusions and recommendations when these are presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2019.

Electronic Training Aids

Asked by Lord Mancroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government what specific research they have commissioned into the use of electronic collars in containment systems for (1) cats, and (2) dogs. [HL7695]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government has not commissioned any specific research into the use of electronic training collars for containment systems. However, Defra did fund research into the use of remote controlled electronic training collars. We are carefully considering all the responses and evidence received during the consultation and will respond in due course.

EU Grants and Loans

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Portsmouth

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish the consultation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. [HL7855]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The government announced in the Industrial Strategy white paper that we intend to launch a full public consultation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and we will do so later in the year.

European Social Fund

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Portsmouth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund provides adequate levels of support for people to find work, improve their skills and contribute to their communities. [HL7856]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Portsmouth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure continuity between the European Social Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure there is no

break in funding for disadvantaged individuals and communities. [HL7857]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The government knows the value of projects funded by the European Structural Fund to disadvantaged communities and individuals. We continue to develop the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will seek to reduce inequalities across the whole of the UK.

In the mean time the UK will remain in European Structural and Investment Funds until the 2014-20 programme closes, under the terms of the Joint Report made in December 2017.

This will ensure that local areas across the UK continue to have access to their notional allocations, providing the projects are aligned to domestic priorities and represent value for money and is subject to agreed performance and spend targets, under a business as usual approach.

Exports

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to provide guarantees to UK exporters that they will have continued access to preferential tariffs secured through the EU's free trade agreements; and if so, what progress they have made on ensuring that such guarantees can be made. [HL7630]

Baroness Fairhead: The Government is committed to securing continuity of existing EU trade agreements and other preferential arrangements as we leave the EU. At the March European Council, we agreed with the EU that the UK is to be treated as a Member State for the purposes of international agreements, for the duration of the implementation period.

We are also engaging with partner countries to ensure continuity of existing arrangements beyond the Implementation Period.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the breakdown by sector in the latest overseas trade export figures to the end of March 2018. [HL7744]

Lord Young of Cookham: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Letter from John Pullinger CB, National Statistician, to The Lord Kennedy of Southwark, dated 17 May 2018.

Dear Lord Kennedy,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what the breakdown is, by sector, in the latest overseas trade export figures to the end of March 2018 (HL7744).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) trade statistics are currently produced on a product basis and not by industry sector. However, we are engaged in a wide

development of UK trade statistics and are working towards producing our trade statistics by industry sector for the latter end of 2018. Further details can be found in our published trade development plan. ^[1]

You can find data on trade in goods and services in the [Quarterly Balance of Payments release](#). This data is broken down by service type and by goods commodity group. The latest data available is from 2017, and 2018 Quarter 1 data will be released on 29 June 2018. You can find the data on the ONS website^[2], Table E for goods and Table F for services.

In addition, we produce trade in goods further detail on a quarterly basis by [Classification of Product by Activity](#), the latest data for which covers 2017 Quarter 4. This data can be accessed on the ONS website^[3]; in Table 1 for total exports, Table 3 for EU exports and Table 5 for non-EU exports:

You may also wish to note the latest export figures at an aggregate level via the UK Trade statistical bulletin^[4] and corresponding publication^[5].

Yours sincerely,

John Pullinger

[1]<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/articles/uktradedevelopmentplan/2017>

[2]<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/datasets/balanceofpaymentsstatisticalbulletintables>

[3]<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/datasets/publicationtablesktradedecpa08>

[4]<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/bulletins/uktrade/march2018>

[5]<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/bulletins/uktrade/march2018/relateddata>

Financial Reporting Council: DAC Beachcroft

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Henley on 3 May (HL7149), what was the procurement process undertaken by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) for the appointment and retention of DAC Beachcroft; what was the involvement, if any, of the FRC's Company Secretary and General Counsel, Anne McArthur, formerly an Associate at DAC Beachcroft; and whether they will place details of any relevant tender processes in the Library of the House. [[HL7590](#)]

Lord Henley: The firm was instructed on discrete pieces of work only and no tender exercise was undertaken. As General Counsel, Anne McArthur was involved in some of the instructions to DAC Beachcroft.

Since being confirmed as a public sector body the FRC has been working with the Department to review of all internal processes and practices in order to ensure that

they comply with managing public money guidance. Sir John Kingman's review of the FRC will also consider the transparency and appropriateness of FRC's procedures in all aspects of its activities.

Financial Reporting Council: Fieldfisher

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Henley on 3 May (HL7149), what assessment they have made of the application of the public body procurement rules to the Financial Reporting Council's adoption of Fieldfisher LLP as its "preferred legal provider since 2006"; and whether they will place details of any relevant tender processes in the Library of the House. [[HL7591](#)]

Lord Henley: The Government has made no such assessment. During the period in question, the status of the Financial Reporting Council as a public sector body was being reconsidered by the Office for National Statistics. As such the full requirements of the managing public money guidance were not applied to the FRC.

Since being confirmed as a public sector body, the FRC has been working with the Department to review of all internal processes and practices in order to ensure that they comply with managing public money guidance. Sir John Kingman's review of the FRC will also consider the transparency and appropriateness of FRC's procedures in all aspects of its activities.

Financial Reporting Council: Herbert Smith Freehills

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Henley on 26 April and 3 May (HL7046 and HL7149), how much in fees was paid in each year from 31 March 2005 to 31 March 2018 by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) to Herbert Smith, the law firm at which Richard Fleck, formerly a member of the FRC board, was partner and is currently a consultant; and whether they will place details of any relevant tender processes in the Library of the House. [[HL7589](#)]

Lord Henley: The fees paid (inclusive of disbursements and VAT) from the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) to Herbert Smith during the period cited are as follows:

2004 - £5,415
 2005 - £22,169
 2006 - £7,683
 2007 - £40,423
 2008 - £85,262
 2009 - £43,798
 2010 - £2,420
 2011 - £176,413

2012 - £651,476
 2013 - £494,528
 2014 - £230,664
 2015 - £169,758

The FRC have not used Herbert Smith since 2015.

Save for approximately £62,000 incurred in 2011, all the fees relate to enforcement cases. The non-enforcement fees followed a tender process with bids received from two firms. Richard Fleck was not involved in the tender process in 2011 and he was not involved in the selection of any firm for enforcement cases.

The selection of firms for enforcement cases was not the subject of a public tender. Since being confirmed as a public sector body the FRC has been working with the Department to review of all internal processes and practices in order to ensure that they comply with managing public money guidance. Sir John Kingman's review of the FRC will also consider the transparency and appropriateness of FRC's procedures in all aspects of its activities.

Fly-tipping

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to combat the illegal dumping of waste. [HL7746]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Illegal dumping of waste is a serious crime which damages the environment and causes misery to local communities. The government is committed to bearing down on the perpetrators and tackling all forms of waste crime is a government priority. We ensure that the Environment Agency (EA) and local authorities (LAs) have the necessary powers to tackle crime effectively across the waste sector. We brought in regulations earlier in the year to give the EA two additional powers to tackle problem waste sites. This enables the EA to restrict access to a waste site by locking the gates or barring access, and requiring all the waste to be removed from a site, not just the illegally deposited waste.

We have also recently given LAs the power to issue £400 fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping offences and have enhanced the powers available to LAs and the EA, such as the ability to search and seize the vehicles of suspected waste criminals.

Earlier this year we published our consultation on proposals to introduce a new fixed penalty for householders who pass their waste to a fly-tipper. We also intend to provide updated guidance for householders about how to ensure their waste is disposed of correctly. We are currently analysing consultation responses. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we will seek to implement the changes later this year. As two thirds of fly-tipping is household waste, these additional measures will help tackle fly-tipping.

We have also committed £30million in additional funding to the EA for waste crime enforcement until March 2022. This means that since 2014, an additional £60million in funding has been committed to the EA.

With effect from April this year HMRC have introduced two changes to the Landfill Tax regime. These changes will further help tackle illegal dumping by making the disposal of waste less profitable.

Food: Safety

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK food and drink industry will maintain access to the risk assessment expertise of the European Food Safety Authority until a UK scientific risk assessment body is fully functioning. [HL7763]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The United Kingdom has a long tradition of close scientific collaboration with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) which we greatly value and hope to continue in the future. A range of options are being considered for the future of risk assessment and scientific advice in the UK. The nature of the UK's future relationship with EFSA will be subject to forthcoming negotiations. After the UK has left the European Union, our priority will be to maintain the UK's high standards of food and feed safety.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Internet

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cloud services contracts that were previously delivered by British cloud services providers for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are now delivered by multinational cloud service providers; what is the value of those contracts; and what are the names of the previous providers. [HL7606]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has placed one contract with UK Cloud Ltd, now AWS, who host some of the FCO's digital and Consular services. No contracts are being delivered by multinational cloud service providers.

Overall expenditure over the last three financial years for the service listed above:

Financial Year 2014-15: £36,863 Financial Year 2015-16: £152,093 Financial Year 2016-17: £231,012

General Elections

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what changes there have been to the population eligible to vote in General Elections in (1) England, (2) Scotland, (3) Wales, and (4) Northern Ireland, between 1 December 2015 and 3 May 2018. [HL7716]

Lord Young of Cookham: Information regarding the total number of registered electors is not held centrally by the Government as each local authority maintains their own local register. Full registration statistics are accessible from the Office for National Statistics website (www.ons.gov.uk) including Parliamentary elector statistics for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Global Britain Board

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government who are the members of the Global Britain Board referred to in the National Security Capability Review published in March; and what is the role and function of that Board. [HL7612]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Preparatory work is under way, and the membership of the Board will be finalised shortly.

Gulf States: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the overall spend for the Integrated Activity Fund in financial year 2016–17; which countries have benefited from that fund; and what was the breakdown of the spending for each beneficiary state. [HL7776]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Overall spend from the Gulf Strategy Integrated Activity Fund (IAF) in financial year 2016/17 was £5,786,905. The IAF funded activity in all six Gulf States: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. As many of the projects and programme activities are delivered regionally, it is not possible to provide a breakdown by beneficiary state

Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce secondary legislation to implement the provisions of the Health Services Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017 relating to remuneration in respect of special medicinal products. [HL7945]

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish proposals for further consultation relating to the implementation of their powers in the Health Services Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017. [HL7946]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The powers in the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017 enable the Government to reimburse for special medicinal products (also known as 'specials') dispensed in primary care in

different ways such as considering quotes of suppliers and not reimbursing pharmacies at all if for example they have been provided the medicine by a central service. The Government is considering how to implement its powers in the 2017 Act and any proposals to implement changes will be subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Further to the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017, the Government ran a consultation on new Regulations for the provision of information about health service products. We are finalising the Regulations which are expected to be laid and come into force later this summer. The Information Regulations include requirements in relation to special medicinal products which will ensure that the Government obtains information from all manufacturers and importers. This information will make the reimbursement arrangements for the most commonly used special medicinal products more robust. However, where there are concerns about an individual price, it will also enable us to request from suppliers' information on the costs of supplying a product.

In 2017 the Government also consulted on the Statutory Scheme to control the cost of branded medicines. Those Regulations were made under powers in the NHS Act 2006 that were amended by the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017 and are now in force.

Hearing Impairment: Telecommunications

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the take up in Scotland of free to access video relay service for public services. [HL7784]

Baroness Buscombe: Contact Scotland was launched in 2016 for calls via video relay service to public sector bodies only. In 2017 the ability to call third sector organisations via video relay service was added.

Contact Scotland will be able to provide further information and advise on take-up of the service and can be contacted either by calling 0141 419 0420 or emailing them at: info@contactscotland-bsl.org.

We will continue to look at lessons from developments in Scotland to inform our thinking for England and Wales.

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost of providing a national free to access video relay service in England; and whether they are considering setting up such a service for public services. [HL7785]

Baroness Buscombe: Under the EU Universal Service Directive, Member States must ensure that access to, and affordability of, voice telephony for end-users with disabilities is equivalent to the level enjoyed by the majority of end-users.

In the UK, the Directive is implemented through the Communications Act and the Universal Service Order. The Order requires Ofcom to ensure the provision of relay

services (defined as providing facilities for the receipt and translation of voice messages into text and text into voice messages).

The Government has not made any formal assessment of costs of providing a national free to access video relay service in England.

We are aware of international comparisons with other countries, for example, Australia, Canada and the USA, where video relay service is provided for free to users and costs between £0.48 and £2.62 per citizen per year, plus state-level levies where relevant. There are a range of funding models, including general taxation and levies on communication providers.

The Government's position is that a voluntary approach to video relay should be followed and not a mandatory approach funded by taxation or general levies.

Hereditary Peers: By-elections

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many peers are eligible to (1) stand, and (2) vote, in the forthcoming hereditary by-election. [HL7734]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: 211 peers are eligible to stand in the forthcoming hereditary by-election and 31 are eligible to vote.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how much the forthcoming hereditary by-election will cost the House Administration to run. [HL7735]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The costs for the forthcoming Crossbench hereditary peers' by-election are expected to be similar to those for the last Crossbench hereditary peers' by-election held in 2017. The total cost to the House of Lords for the services provided by Electoral Reform Services (ERS) in respect of the 2017 by-election was £1,140. This includes VAT at 20%. This is in addition to the cost of House of Lords staff time spent organising the by-election which forms part of their normal duties and is not costed separately.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what are the criteria for the candidates to be eligible to stand in hereditary by-elections. [HL7736]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: In order to be eligible to stand in a by-election, a hereditary peer must petition the House of Lords to be included in the Register maintained by the Clerk of the Parliaments under Standing Order 10(5). The petition is referred to the Lord Chancellor who reports to the House on whether the peer has proved his or her claim to the title and established his or her right to be included in the Register. If the Lord Chancellor is satisfied that the peer has established his or her right, then the peer is added to the Register; but if the Lord Chancellor is not satisfied, then the matter is referred to

the Committee for Privileges and Conduct which considers the matter and reports to the House.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many women are eligible to stand in the forthcoming hereditary by-election. [HL7737]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: One woman is eligible to stand in the forthcoming hereditary by-election.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how many people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are eligible to stand in the forthcoming hereditary by-election. [HL7738]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The House does not collect data on the ethnic background of those listed in the Register of Hereditary Peers.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the role of the House of Lords Appointments Commission in relation to the forthcoming hereditary by-election. [HL7739]

Lord Young of Cookham: The House of Lords Appointments Commission does not have a role in the hereditary by-election process. Under the Standing Orders of the House, this process is conducted in accordance with arrangements made by the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Holiday Accommodation

Asked by Baroness Gardner of Parkes

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following recent actions by Palma and Valencia to ban the use of apartments as short-term holiday lets, what assessment they have made of the need for similar action in the UK. [HL7792]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There are no plans to ban the use of residential properties for short term letting.

The Government supports the sharing economy. Short term lettings enable households to supplement their income by renting out their under used accommodation and it promotes economic growth from tourism by increasing the amount of competitively priced accommodation available for tourists.

There is a responsibility on people who short term let out their homes, or rooms in their homes, to do so responsibly. Where short term lets breach the rules, responsibility for enforcement lies with the local authority, as it does for any breaches of planning control, and householders who breach the rules potentially face significant fines.

We are taking a non-regulatory approach by encouraging the Short Term Accommodation Association to improve standards and promote best practice in the industry, and to share data on booking with local

authorities to aid their enforcement and monitoring functions.

Introducing further legislation would be overly bureaucratic, and would place unnecessary regulatory burdens on households which could act as a barrier to letting out their properties on a short term basis.

Home Office: Internet

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cloud services contracts that were previously delivered by British cloud services providers for the Home Office are now delivered by multinational cloud service providers; what is the value of those contracts; and what are the names of the previous providers. [HL7608]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is difficult to accurately compare cloud service contracts previously held with British Companies to the hosting arrangements the Home Office currently has with multi-national cloud companies, as the services in question are not precisely like-for-like. At present, the Home Office has a number of cloud services contracts with different providers ranging from multi-nationals to British owned companies such as UK Cloud.

The Home Office process for selecting appropriate cloud service providers is closely aligned to the wider Government Cloud Strategy and a rigorous competitive commercial process is followed when awarding such contracts, layered with a rigorous technical decision process on aligning cloud service providers to various programmes and projects.

Homicide: Reoffenders

Asked by Lord Tebbit

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many offenders with previous convictions for homicide were convicted of homicide in (1) 2014, (2) 2015, (3) 2016, and (4) 2017. [HL7730]

Lord Keen of Elie: The table below provides the number of offenders who were convicted of a further offence of homicide* between 2014 and 2017 and who were subject to probation supervision for a previous homicide conviction at the time.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total number of people convicted of homicide offences at both index offence and SFO</i>
(1) 2014	3
(2) 2015	3
(3) 2016	0
(4) 2017	3

Serious further offences by supervised offenders are rare, but each one is taken extremely seriously and

investigated fully to identify any necessary actions when managing other cases.

Data is not available on offenders with a previous conviction for homicide who have completed their sentence and associated supervision by probation and then go on to commit a further homicide.

*Answer interprets homicide to include offences of murder, manslaughter, death by dangerous driving and death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs

Horn of Africa: EU Immigration

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made under the EU–Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative to tackle irregular migration from the Horn of Africa. [HL7592]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Khartoum Process has made good progress to address people smuggling and human trafficking in the Horn of Africa. The UK chaired two thematic meetings in 2016 and 2017 and Egypt hosted a trilateral meeting (Khartoum/Rabat Processes and Horn of Africa Initiative) in November 2017 to understand progress to date; ongoing challenges and the solutions needed for a joined-up and concerted response.

The Khartoum Process has approved 147 programmes under its Better Migration Management (BMM) programme in this area and it also continues to implement the Regional Operation Centre of Khartoum (ROCK) which aims to improve cooperation and information sharing between law enforcement agencies to effectively disrupt the people smuggling and trafficking rings exploiting migrants. The 2018 Italian Chairmanship will build upon these efforts with further thematic and training workshops alongside a review of thematic conclusions to ensure tangible future delivery. There will also be a Joint Senior Officials Meeting in November to assess the progress made under the Joint Valletta Action Plan.

Israa Jaabees

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the imprisonment of Israa Jaabees and allowing her to receive necessary medical attention. [HL7662]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. We continue to urge the Israeli authorities to ensure that prisoners are provided with the necessary health care and other provisions that they require in line with international obligations.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the United States State Department's report, Israel and the Golan Heights 2017 Human Rights Report, published on 20 April, in particular (1) its reference to the conclusion of the UNICEF Report of 2013 that "the maltreatment of Palestinian children appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalised", and (2) its reference to the findings of the Military Court Watch, based on 400 testimonies collected since 2013, that 90 per cent of children continue to be denied access to a lawyer prior to questioning; and what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel on those issues. [HL7619]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention remains a human rights priority for the UK. We will continue to call upon Israel to improve its practices in line with international law and obligations. We have offered to help the Israeli authorities through expert-to-expert talks with British officials. That offer still stands. While we recognise that Israel has made some improvements, it needs to do much more to safeguard vulnerable people in its care. Most recently I raised the issue of children in detention with Israeli Justice Minister Shaked during my trip to the region in April 2018.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding their reported refusal to release the bodies of those they categorise as terrorists to their families. [HL7660]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not raised this issue recently but officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have previously raised the return of Palestinian bodies with the Israeli authorities.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the imprisonment of Palestinian minors as young as 12. [HL7661]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I raised concerns over the treatment of Palestinian minors in detention with the Israeli Justice Minister during my visit on 11 April. The treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention remains a human rights priority for the UK. We will continue to call upon Israel to improve its practices in line with international law.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel in regard to the reported use of a new type of live

round ammunition, known as the "butterfly bullet", against Palestinian demonstrators. [HL7665]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are not aware of any credible reports of such ammunition being used. The Government has made clear directly to the Israeli Government on many occasions its concerns about the use of live fire.

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to combat uncertainty in the Middle East in view of the delay in the release of the United States' Israeli-Palestinian peace plan. [HL7754]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We share with many the desire to see an end to this conflict. We remain of the view that the best way to achieve this remains a two-state solution negotiated between the parties, to be pursued with urgency. We regularly press both parties to resume direct negotiations.

Israeli Settlements

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the work started on new settlement homes for former members of the Israeli security forces in East Jerusalem. [HL7664]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise our concerns on the issue of settlements with the Government of Israel and urge it to reverse its policy of settlement expansion. The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

Local Government: Elections

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to contact Returning Officers responsible for the conduct of the local elections in England in 2018 to ask how many tendered ballot papers were issued as a result of people turning up to a polling station to find that their vote had already been cast. [HL7712]

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to contact Returning Officers responsible for the General Election in 2017 in (1) England, (2) Scotland, (3) Wales, and (4) Northern Ireland, to ask how many tendered ballot papers were issued as a result of people turning up to a polling station to find that their vote had already been cast; and whether they will do so before 8 June when such lists will be destroyed. [HL7713]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Government has no plans to ask Returning Officers to provide this information. It is for the Returning Officers to ensure they run free and fair elections. It is open to candidates, parties and accredited observers to scrutinise polls and raise any issues. Whilst details of tendered ballot papers issues are recorded at each polling station, numbers are not totalled and there is no requirement to record this number.

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many allegations of personation or attempted personation in the 2018 local elections in England have been reported to the police. [HL7711]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Electoral Commission collates information on allegations of electoral fraud at elections and in due course will publish a report covering polls held in 2018.

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to provide funding for, and ask the Electoral Commission to undertake, a representative survey of people taken from the marked registers showing that a vote had been cast in their name at a polling station in the 2018 local elections so as to obtain an indication as to how many of them did not vote, but had a vote claimed by another person who attended the polling station. [HL7714]

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to provide funding for, and ask the Electoral Commission to undertake, a representative survey of people who voted by post in the 2018 local elections so as to obtain an indication as to how many of them may not have cast the vote themselves, or without proper conditions of privacy in keeping with the spirit of the Ballot Act 1872. [HL7715]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Government believes that electoral fraud is unacceptable on any level and is taking steps to ensure our elections are even more secure. At the 2018 local elections a number of local authorities volunteered to conduct Voter ID pilots to ensure that voters provided a form of identification before voting.

The Electoral Commission will produce its own reports on the 2018 polls and will collate information on allegations of electoral fraud. The Government has no plans to ask the Electoral Commission to conduct an additional survey.

Three further areas, Tower Hamlets Peterborough Slough undertook postal vote pilots looking at the security of postal votes. The Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission will undertake detailed evaluation of the pilots.

Local Government: Northamptonshire

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the appointment of Commissioners to Northamptonshire County Council, what assessment they have made of the implications for any reorganisation of local government in Northamptonshire. [HL7745]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: On 27 March we invited all of the principal Northamptonshire local authorities to make proposals for a restructuring of local government across Northamptonshire. We understand all eight councils, including the county council, are working well together to develop a locally led proposal, and we are confident that the appointment of Commissioners at the County Council will not change this.

Marine Conservation Zones

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the number of (1) prosecutions, and (2) convictions, for unlawful disturbance of Marine Conservation Zones around England during the last 12 months for which figures are available. [HL7851]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) does not collate this information centrally. During the last 12 months, we are aware that there have been three prosecutions resulting in convictions under byelaws or other regulations for unlawful disturbance in Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in English waters. The prosecutions were delivered by Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA). There was a successful prosecution in Ashlett Creek, a part of the Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) related to fisheries offences (this is not an MCZ but is part of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) network). In this case, Southern IFCA successfully prosecuted two fishermen for obstructing Fisheries Officers, which resulted in a penalty fine. Cornwall IFCA is currently investigating three cases of vessels using bottom-towed gears in a prohibited area.

Management measures in MPAs are developed in consultation with industry expressly to drive down the risk of incursion. Prosecutions, and convictions, can be a sign that effective management has not occurred.

Excluding fishing, licensable activity or development in or near an MPA is reviewed as part of the marine licensing process, which reduces any potential harm and helps mitigate risks before they develop.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Internet

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cloud services contracts that were previously delivered by British cloud services providers for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are now delivered by multinational cloud service providers; what is the value of those contracts; and what are the names of the previous providers. [HL7610]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: MHCLG have not used any cloud services prior to current providers.

National Security

Asked by Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to incorporate the Chilcot Checklist into the Cabinet Manual. [HL7826]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Chilcot Checklist is a guide to aid decision-making during planning and implementation, developed by Partners Across Government. It aligns with both military values and the Civil Service Code.

We will undertake an update of the Cabinet Manual once the UK has left the EU, and will determine at that time what revisions are necessary.

Newspaper Press

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, as part of their review of press sustainability in the UK, they will conduct research into (1) sales figures for local and national newspapers since 2010, and (2) which local and regional newspapers have ceased publication since 2010; and if so, whether they will publish any such research. [HL7732]

Lord Keen of Elie: The review of the sustainability of high-quality journalism is being led by an external chair, Dame Frances Cairncross, with support from an advisory panel of industry experts. It is for the Chair to determine what analysis and research will be carried out to inform her final report.

Alongside the review, DCMS have commissioned a piece of sector analysis, looking at the changing state of the press market and assessing new business models being deployed by news publishers at a national, regional and local level. We will publish this research in due course.

NHS: Procurement

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the likely impact of

United States health and pharmaceutical companies bidding for NHS services post-Brexit. [HL8017]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The Government will continue to ensure that decisions about public services are made by United Kingdom Governments, not our trade partners including the United States. As we leave the European Union, the UK will continue to ensure that rigorous protections for the National Health Service are included in all trade agreements it is party to.

Occupied Territories: USA

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have held with the government of the United States on the decision no longer to refer to the West Bank and East Jerusalem as "occupied territories" in the United States State Department's report, Israel and the Golan Heights 2017 Human Rights Report, published on 20 April, for the first time since the State Department began to issue Human Rights Reports in 1999; what is their assessment of the implications of this change for international law and United States policy; and whether they will re-affirm their own position on those territories and on Gaza. [HL7620]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not raised this specific issue with the US, the UK position remains clear. We consider that the level of control that Israel retains over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza amounts to occupation under international law. Hence Israel's presence is governed by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which Israel is a state party. The UK is firmly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and compliance with international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and we continue to call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law.

Overseas Students: EU Nationals

Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogna

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether EU students studying in the UK will be eligible for student loans in England during the EU transition period from 2019. [HL7605]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: EU students, staff and researchers make an important contribution to our universities. We want that contribution to continue and we are confident, given the quality of our higher education sector, that it will. We have agreed with the EU that current EU principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination will apply during the implementation period.

We have agreed as part of the Withdrawal Agreement with the EU that those who are resident in the UK before the end of the implementation period will have a right to apply for leave to remain in the UK thereafter. Those

within scope of the Withdrawal Agreement and who meet the relevant eligibility requirements will have access to home fees status and student loans after the end of the implementation period.

We recognise how important it is that students and institutions have information on eligibility for student support before applications for courses open. With regard to the academic year 2019 to 2020, we will ensure ensure that this information is available as soon as possible.

Overseas Visitors

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure the free flow of visitors to the UK following Brexit. [HL7719]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The government is carefully considering a range of options for the future immigration system and will set out initial plans in the coming months.

We will want to ensure that any decisions on the long-term arrangements are based on evidence and engagement.

Personal Injury: Compensation

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the response of the motor insurance market to the £1.3 billion they will save annually as estimated in the Impact Assessment to the Civil Liability Bill will be monitored; if so, how and by which independent body. [HL7584]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government welcomes the commitment of 84% of UK motor insurance providers to pass on to consumers savings arising from Government measures in the Civil Liability Bill and the wider whiplash reform programme.

Motor insurance is intensely competitive on price and we expect that insurance companies will have little choice but to pass on savings, or risk being priced out of the market. Insurers have pointed to how they passed on to customers the benefits of previous Government action to cut the cost of civil litigation, without the need for regulation. The Government will continue to closely monitor the industry's reaction to these reforms and will regularly engage with them on how they are meeting their commitment. If the industry as a whole sought to avoid passing on savings the Financial Conduct Authority and the Competition and Markets Authority would investigate.

Asked by Baroness Primarolo

To ask Her Majesty's Government what independent evidence there is that the Civil Liability Bill will meet their objective of reducing the average cost of a motor insurance policy by £35. [HL7648]

Asked by Baroness Primarolo

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Keen of Elie on 24 April (HL Deb, col 1480), on what independent evidence they have concluded that a compensation culture exists in personal injury for (1) road traffic claims by motor vehicle drivers, (2) road traffic claims by vulnerable road users, and (3) those injured in workplace accidents; and whether they intend to publish that evidence. [HL7649]

Asked by Baroness Primarolo

To ask Her Majesty's Government what independent evidence they have that fraudulent claims are being made in respect of (1) road traffic claims by motor vehicle drivers, (2) road traffic claims by vulnerable road users, and (3) those injured in workplace accidents; and whether they intend to publish any such evidence. [HL7650]

Asked by Baroness Primarolo

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is an independent analysis of the annual total cost or cost per case to insurers contesting whiplash personal injury claims; and whether they intend to publish any such evidence. [HL7651]

Lord Keen of Elie: The MoJ's impact assessment on the whiplash reforms sets out the analysis the Government has used to estimate the £35 savings for insurance premiums. The impact assessment was informed by DWP's Compensation Recovery Unit (CRU) data on the overall volume of claims and data from across the industry with more detailed information on these claims which shows estimated savings of £1.3bn to insurers. Assuming 85% is passed on to consumers, this translates, on average, to a £35 reduction per policy. Link to the impact assessment can be found here: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2017-2019/0090/whiplash-IA.pdf>.

Data from the Department of Work and Pensions shows that there were around 650,000 road traffic accident-related personal injury claims made in 2017/18, a rise of nearly 200,000 or 40% on the figure in 2005/06. Department of Transport figures show that in the decade to 2016/17, reported road traffic accidents went down from around 190,000 to 135,000, a fall of 30%.

The Government does not collate fraud data, as the nature of fraud makes it difficult to accurately identify the number of unmeritorious claims, meaning that not all fraud is detected. In 2016, however, the insurance industry identified around 69,000 cases of motor insurance claims which they considered to be fraudulent, worth £780m.

The Government's whiplash reform programme is about more than dealing with fraudulent and exaggerated claims, as the cost to all motorists from the high number and cost of these claims is too high. The Government's reforms will reduce the incentives for making

unmeritorious claims, and encourage defendants to rightly challenge claims they believe to be fraudulent or exaggerated, but without disadvantaging genuine claimants.

The information related to the cost of insurers contesting whiplash claims is commercially sensitive and as such cannot be published.

Police: Finance

Asked by Lord Hogan-Howe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much is the police transformation fund for the current financial year. [HL7797]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As outlined in a Written Statement on Police Funding (HLWS429) of 31 January 2018 the Police Transformation Fund will remain at £175m in the 2018/19 financial year.

Politics and Government: Sexual Harassment

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to updating (1) the Ministerial Code of Conduct, (2) the Special Advisers Code of Conduct, and (3) the Civil Service Code of Conduct, in response to allegations of sexual harassment and abuse in public life and the awareness raised by the MeToo campaign. [HL7741]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Ministerial Code was revised in January 2018 to include new wording to make clear that harassing, bullying or other inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour wherever it takes place is not consistent with the Ministerial Code and will not be tolerated. We will be looking to make similar amendments to the Civil Service Code and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in due course.

Ports: Wales

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for the future of Welsh ports following Brexit. [HL7722]

Baroness Sugg: We are working across Government with ports, and with others including the devolved administrations, to ensure that trade proceeds as frictionlessly as possible. We are confident that Welsh ports will continue to compete strongly, prosper and grow following our exit from the European Union.

Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of UK prescription charges changing should United States pharmaceutical

companies be able to raise their prices for UK patients and reduce those for US consumers post-Brexit, in the light of recent remarks by the President of the United States. [HL8018]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The Department has made no assessment.

Primary Education: Sports

Asked by Lord Palmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need for a comprehensive review of the Primary Physical Education and Sport Premium including (1) Ofsted inspection procedure, (2) differentiated guidance and outcomes for physical activity, (3) teacher development, (4) pupil attainment, and (5) participation in competition and sport. [HL7641]

Asked by Lord Palmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require that physical education provision, and specifically, the use of the Primary Physical Education and Sport premium, is part of every primary Ofsted inspection. [HL7642]

Asked by Lord Palmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to include Reception and early years' physical activity for spend within Primary Physical Education and Sport Premium funding with specific mention of play. [HL7643]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: It is important that all children have the opportunity to engage in physical activity and sport in a way that interests them. We want all schools to understand the importance of being physically active in keeping children healthy and the positive impact it can have on a child's health and wellbeing. The government has doubled the PE and sport premium from September 2017 using revenue from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy.

Use of the primary PE and sport premium is already considered as part of school inspections. The inspection framework is the specific responsibility of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted. Ofsted expect all schools to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes sporting opportunities for pupils.

The premium is intended to support schools to make additional and sustainable improvements to the quality of PE and sport they offer. Play and activity is essential for children's development in the early years and is a therefore an integral part of all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS Statutory Framework sets out a requirement that educational programmes must provide opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement to aid their physical development. In addition, the programmes set out each area of learning and development and must be

implemented through planned, purposeful play through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

Schools were required to publish information on use of the PE and sport premium on their websites by 4 April 2018. The department has committed to sample a number of schools in each local authority, with the schools chosen based on a mix of random selection and prior non-compliance with the online reporting requirements. We are considering what further use we might make of that, and other sources of information, in making an assessment of the use and impact of the premium and reviewing our future approach.

Prisons

Asked by Lord Murphy of Torfaen

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish further details about plans to cancel all prison service instructions and replace them with a national policy framework. [HL7764]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government has reviewed all existing prison service operational policies and started the process of either cancelling these where they are no longer relevant, or replacing them with Policy Frameworks. Policy Frameworks will contain clear minimum mandatory requirements to ensure a safe, decent and lawful prison system, with consistency across the estate where necessary. To date, under the Government's deregulation programme, 212 operational prison policies have been cancelled.

Policy Frameworks are currently being developed in a number of areas under a rolling programme. We expect to publish several Policy Frameworks during 2018/19, including those which contain the key levers for prison reform and the rehabilitation of offenders. Policy Frameworks will be published on the Government's website, in line with the practice for existing prison operational policies.

Public Appointments: Equality

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase gender diversity at board level positions in public bodies. [HL7727]

Lord Young of Cookham: In increasing the gender diversity of new appointees each year we have made considerable progress. In 2016/17, the proportion of women as new appointees to the boards of public bodies rose to 49% from 34% in 2013/14.

In December 2017 Government launched its Diversity Action Plan for Public Appointments. This includes a commitment that by 2022, half of public appointees should be female and 14% should be from ethnic minorities, bringing representation on public boards in line with the wider population.

Railways: Devon

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in developing the rail service between Okehampton and Exeter St Davids; and when regular train services are expected to start. [HL7816]

Baroness Sugg: Great Western Railway (GWR) is developing proposals for both a trial service and a longer term strategy for reinstatement of regular train services between Okehampton and Exeter. The reopening of this route to regular train services was included in the list of potential schemes by the Secretary of State on 29 November 2017 in Connecting People: a Strategic Vision for Rail. GWR is bringing together relevant stakeholders, Network Rail maintenance expertise and specialist consultants to produce a review of the infrastructure condition and a costed maintenance programme. The date for the introduction of regular train services will therefore depend on the outcome of that work.

Railways: EU Grants and Loans

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they applied for funding from the Connecting Europe Facility for railway projects after 2020; if so, what projects were included; and what indications they have received that any funding would be awarded. [HL7585]

Baroness Sugg: The current Connecting Europe Facility ("CEF") fund runs until 2020. Assuming the EU agrees the Commission's proposal to renew the CEF for a further 7 years from 2021 to 2027, the Commission will invite bids in 2021. It is not possible to bid now for funds from 2021.

Sayed Alwadaei

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Bahrain in relation to the judicial harassment of Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei and his family members, in particular (1) the revocation of Mr Alwadaei's citizenship in 2015 that rendered him stateless, and (2) the torture and imprisonment of his family members. [HL7774]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has concerns about the revocation of nationality when it renders a person stateless. We have raised this at a senior level with the Government of Bahrain.

The British Embassy in Bahrain and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office continue to monitor the cases of family members of Mr Alwadaei. We have raised the cases at a senior level with the Government of Bahrain.

We encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to report these to the appropriate oversight bodies and we encourage these oversight bodies to carry

out swift and thorough investigations. We understand that there have been communications between Mr Alwadaei and the oversight bodies in Bahrain on these cases.

Sign Language

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) registered sign language interpreters, and (2) sign language users, there are in the UK. [HL7782]

Baroness Buscombe: Currently there are 908 registered sign language interpreters, and 234 trainee interpreters.

It is estimated there are currently at least 24,000 people in the UK for whom British Sign Language (BSL) is their first language.

Skilled Workers: Vacancies

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the closure of the UK Commission on Employment and Skills, how they intend to track the size and shape of skills shortages. [HL7656]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Analytical work previously conducted by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), to measure the nature and scale of skills needs such as the UK Employer Skills Survey and Working Futures, was transferred to the Department for Education following the closure of UKCES.

In 2017 the department commissioned the latest UK Employer Skills Survey, which gathered information from over 87,000 employers about their skills needs and challenges. The results from the survey will be published this summer. The department is also currently commissioning an update to the Working Futures estimates – a set of quantitative forecasts of employment prospects and skills demand across the whole economy.

In addition, the Skills Advisory Panel programme, has just started to roll out across England. The programme will work with Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to help match skills provision with employer demand at the local level. The programme will also enable the department to produce a richer picture of regional, sectoral and national skills needs.

Slavery

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the report by the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration A re-inspection of Border Force's identification and treatment of Potential Victims of Modern Slavery, published on 28 March, they have made changes to the delivery of effective real-time communication between Roving Officers, Monitoring Officers and the referral desk for modern slavery; and if so, what changes have been made. [HL7825]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Further to my response of PQ HL7683, I can also confirm that, alongside the review into the existing Roving Officer guidance, that review will also consider the question of real time communications between Roving Officers, Monitoring Officers and the referral desk.

Slavery: Convictions

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Keen of Elie on 30 April (HL6886), of the six appeals against conviction under section 1 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, how many (1) have been dismissed, (2) have been upheld, and (3) are pending. [HL7595]

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Lord Keen of Elie on 30 April (HL6886), of the eight appeals against conviction under section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, how many (1) have been dismissed, (2) have been upheld, and (3) are pending. [HL7596]

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many convictions there have been under section 1 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. [HL7597]

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many convictions there have been under section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. [HL7598]

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many appeals against sentence there have been under section 1 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. [HL7599]

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many appeals against sentence there have been under section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. [HL7600]

Lord Keen of Elie: In 2015 and 2016 there were no convictions under Sections 1 or 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 reported to the Ministry of Justice. In 2017, a total of 7 offenders were convicted of offences under Section 1 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and 8 offenders were convicted of offences under Section 2 of the Act.

Recorded figures relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences the principal offence is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the principal offence recorded is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

The figures appearing in the Written Answer of 30 April [HL6886 and HL 6887] were taken from the Crown Court case management system and provided a total of appeals initially lodged but not at the point of being categorised by appeal type. Consequently, these figures included cases that the Criminal Appeal Office would later have recorded as appeals against other offences. Figures taken from Criminal Appeal Office records, which do categorise appeal types, show that:

No applications for leave to appeal against conviction under section 1 of the Modern Slavery Act have been received.

1 application for leave to appeal against conviction under section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act has been received and is still pending.

1 application for leave to appeal against sentence under section 1 of the Modern Slavery Act was received but was abandoned by the applicant and is now closed.

3 applications for leave to appeal against sentence under section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act have been received. Of those, 1 is still pending and 2 have lapsed after leave to appeal was refused.

Additionally, the Attorney General referred 1 sentence under section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act to the Court of Appeal for review under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme; the appeal was allowed and the sentence increased. And there was 1 prosecution appeal which confirmed the Crown Court ruling and the defendant was acquitted.

Small Businesses: Exports

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the take up to date of finance available to small and medium enterprises and companies through UK Export Finance. [HL7743]

Baroness Fairhead: UK Export Finance (UKEF) publishes details of its support on an annual basis in its Annual Report and Accounts which are presented to Parliament and can be found on its website, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-export-finance-annual-reports-and-accounts>

In 2016-17, 79% of UK companies supported by UKEF were small and medium-sized enterprises.

Small Claims

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Retail Price Index has been used to calculate inflation with regard to increasing the small claims limit for work injury claims to £2,000, instead of the Consumer Price Index. [HL7581]

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what basis an increase to the small claims limit to £5,000 associated with the Civil Liability Bill has been calculated. [HL7582]

Lord Keen of Elie: It is the Government's opinion that minor low value Road Traffic Accident (RTA) related personal injury claims are suitable to be heard in the small claims track. Claims under £5,000 are relatively minor and straightforward and are not so complex as to routinely require a lawyer. Handling these claims in the small claims track will reduce the cost of these claims for all motorists. In addition, in 2013, the then Government consulted on increasing the limit for RTA related claims to £5,000 and committed to keeping the issue under consideration for implementation when appropriate. The Government believes that it is right to return to this proportionate and appropriate measure now and that £5,000 is the right level to set for RTA related claims.

The limit for all other types of claims will though be increased in line with inflation to £2,000, allowing the more complex employers/public liability cases to remain in the fast track. The Retail Price Index is the appropriate measure to increase the small claims track limit because it is the index used to update damage awards in the Judicial College Guidelines.

Spain: Territorial Waters

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 28 March (HL6465), how many times British state vessels made incursions into Spanish territorial waters between 1 March 2017 and 28 February 2018. [HL7645]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Further to my written answer of 28 March 2018 (HL6465), the term 'British State vessel' is broad and could apply to any vessel which is acting on British State business. This includes a range of Government Department vessels, merchant vessels, Royal Navy vessels and other vessels registered under the various shipping registries that the Red Ensign covers, including those of the British Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories. As such, Her Majesty's Government does not hold a central record of the passages of British State vessels into Spanish Territorial Waters.

Students: Loans

Asked by Lord Smith of Clifton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the Adult Learner Loan Budget in England was allocated to 19-24 year olds to pay for (1) Level 4-6 courses, (2) Access to Higher Education courses, and (3) Level 3 courses, in the academic year 2016-17. [HL7653]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Advanced Learner Loan providers are issued with a loans 'facility' by the

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), this is a notional allocation. The Department for Education reports on the proportion that is paid by the Student Loans Company to providers on behalf of 19-23 year old loans learners, split by qualification level/type for the academic year 2016/17:

<i>Level / Type</i>	<i>All Age</i>	<i>Proportion of 19-23 year olds</i>
Access to Higher Education	£55,600,545.98	29.74%
Level 3	£175,909,805.78	19.87%
Level 4-6	£14,109,268.59	17.77%

Data source: Student Loans Company.

Note: The Student Loans Company uses the 19-23 age band to record learner age.

Providers have the freedom to use their facility for any eligible learners aged 19 and over for any approved learning aims at levels 3 to 6. The ESFA does not allocate funding for a particular age group or level of qualification.

Asked by Lord Smith of Clifton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the 2016–17 Adult Learner Budget in England was loaned for maintenance costs to (1) 19–24 year olds, and (2) those aged 25 and over. [HL7654]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: There are no maintenance loans paid from the Adult Education Budget (AEB).

AEB providers have access to Learner Support funding, which can be used to support eligible learners with some costs such as childcare, transport and residential costs. For 2016 to 2017 the total spend on Learner Support within the AEB was £67 million. This information is not available by age.

Syria: Military Intervention

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to call for a UN force to replace the Turkish army and mercenaries in northern Syria. [HL7613]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain in close communication with the Turkish government about their operations in northern Syria. The UK does not plan to call for a UN force in northern Syria.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to respond to the appeal to the Foreign Secretary from northern Syrian political movements and parties on 7 May about the consequence of Turkey's occupation of Afrin province. [HL7614]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We will respond to the appeal to the Foreign Secretary in accordance with the

usual arrangements for handling the Foreign Secretary's correspondence.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they can verify the figure of 137,000 civilians said to have been displaced from Afrin Canton by the Turkish military and the 250 alleged civilian deaths; and whether they will call for UN protection to enable displaced residents to return home. [HL7615]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: According to public estimates, there are reported to have been around 200–400 civilian casualties as part of Operation Olive Branch. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not able at present to independently verify the accuracy or otherwise of these reports. The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has estimated the number of displaced civilians at 137,070 people. We are in communication with the Turkish government about their operations in northern Syria, and continue to call for freedom of movement, in accordance with international humanitarian law. All those displaced by the violence must be allowed to return home peacefully if they wish to do so.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they plan to take following the reports on 28 April of 58 abductions from Afrin province, including 28 Yezidis, by Turkish forces and allied militias. [HL7616]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Reports of human rights violations by Turkish affiliate forces in Afrin are concerning, but must be substantiated. We have not seen credible evidence which verifies this report. We have been consistent in calling for de-escalation, the protection of all civilians, and freedom of movement for those caught up in the violence, in accordance with international humanitarian law. All those displaced by the violence must be allowed to return home peacefully if they wish to do so.

Teachers: Training

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average A-level achievement of those entering Bachelor of Education degree courses. [HL7769]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes statistics on students studying at UK higher education institutions (HEIs).

The following table, which is attached, is taken from HESA's publication 'UK Performance Indicators 2016/17: Widening participation'. It shows the distribution of entry qualifications for UK domiciled young entrants to full-time first degrees in education subjects and compares this with the distribution across all subjects.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table_WP2 [HL 7769 - Table WP2.doc]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-05-10/HL7769>

Trade

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the implications of the commitment to free and fair trade with third countries in Article 3(5) of the Treaty on European Union for the UK's negotiating position. [HL7854]

Lord Callanan: The UK and the EU are supporters of free and fair trade, and are cognisant of provisions in the EU treaties towards third countries. Both parties are seeking an ambitious future bilateral relationship that delivers a free and fair trading future for UK-EU trade.

Undocumented Migrants

Asked by Lord Kerlake

To ask Her Majesty's Government what middle- and upper-tier immigration enforcement operations with operational names took place in (1) 2013, and (2) 2014; and what were the operational names for each of them. [HL7685]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office does not name or comment on past or current Immigration Enforcement operations that are not already in the public domain.

USA: Israel

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to discuss the relocation of the United States embassy to Jerusalem with the President of the United States when he visits the UK in July. [HL7663]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We look forward to the working visit by President Trump in July. It will be a timely opportunity for bilateral discussions between the President and the Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister made clear in her statement of 6 December 2017, we disagree with the US' decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem and recognise Jerusalem as the Israeli capital before a final status agreement. We believe it is unhelpful to prospects for peace in the region.

Visas: Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will guarantee that satisfactory visa arrangements will be in

place to enable overseas competitors to attend the Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod. [HL7720]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Artists, entertainers or musicians intending to perform at the Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod are eligible to seek leave to enter as a visitor. Non-visa nationals can do this at the border. Visa nationals need to apply for a standard visitor visa in advance of travel.

Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod is listed on the Permit Free Festival list in Appendix 5 to Appendix V of the Immigration Rules. Artists, entertainers and musicians can exceptionally be paid for their participation in the festival.

Visas: Married People

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the fee for premium service interviews for applicants for spouse extension visas. [HL7833]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office reviews fees for all UK visa and immigration services on an annual basis, with changes to fees usually implemented on the April common commencement date.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government why an applicant for a spouse extension visa may not apply more than 28 days before the expiry of their current visa when the standard processing time for such extensions for someone resident in the UK is eight weeks; and what advice they give to applicants if they need to make international travel after their visa has expired but before their renewal visa has been granted. [HL7834]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The requirement to submit a spouse extension application no earlier than 28 days before the expiry of existing leave is advisory, not mandatory. However, an application submitted earlier may result in a shortfall in the applicant's qualifying period when they later apply for settlement.

The immigration rules allow us to add no more than 28 days to the standard grant of leave to remain to account for the days lost upon submission. Applicants are advised when applying not to make any non-urgent international travel arrangements until their passports or travel documents are returned to them, followed by their Biometric Residence Permit if their application is successful.

Applicants can request the urgent withdrawal of their application for international travel. They would then have to apply for entry clearance from overseas to return to the UK.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....	1	Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Act 2017	12
Clean Air Strategy	1	12
Foreign Affairs Council - 16 April 2018	1	Hearing Impairment: Telecommunications	12
Media Matters.....	2	Hereditary Peers: By-elections	13
Prison Service Pay Review Body	2	Holiday Accommodation.....	13
Suspect Vehicles: Police Pursuits.....	2	Home Office: Internet.....	14
Written Answers.....	4	Homicide: Reoffenders.....	14
Agriculture: Subsidies	4	Horn of Africa: EU Immigration	14
Alvaro Uribe Velez.....	4	Israa Jaabees	14
Asylum	4	Israel: Palestinians	15
Asylum: Vietnam.....	4	Israeli Settlements.....	15
Bahrain: Technical Assistance	4	Local Government: Elections	15
Birds	5	Local Government: Northamptonshire	16
Brexit	5	Marine Conservation Zones.....	16
British Constitution	5	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local	
British Council	6	Government: Internet.....	17
Colombia: Human Rights.....	7	National Security	17
Contraceptives	8	Newspaper Press.....	17
Credit: Interest Rates	8	NHS: Procurement.....	17
Dental Health.....	8	Occupied Territories: USA	17
Discrimination	8	Overseas Students: EU Nationals	17
Electronic Training Aids	9	Overseas Visitors.....	18
EU Grants and Loans.....	9	Personal Injury: Compensation.....	18
European Social Fund.....	9	Police: Finance	19
Exports.....	9	Politics and Government: Sexual Harassment... ..	19
Financial Reporting Council: DAC Beachcroft..	10	Ports: Wales.....	19
Financial Reporting Council: Fieldfisher	10	Prescriptions: Fees and Charges	19
Financial Reporting Council: Herbert Smith		Primary Education: Sports.....	19
Freehills	10	Prisons	20
Fly-tipping	11	Public Appointments: Equality	20
Food: Safety	11	Railways: Devon.....	20
Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Internet.....	11	Railways: EU Grants and Loans.....	20
General Elections.....	11	Sayed Alwadaei	20
Global Britain Board	12	Sign Language	21
Gulf States: Overseas Aid	12	Skilled Workers: Vacancies.....	21
		Slavery	21

Index to Statements and Answers

Slavery: Convictions	21
Small Businesses: Exports.....	22
Small Claims	22
Spain: Territorial Waters	22
Students: Loans	22
Syria: Military Intervention.....	23
Teachers: Training.....	23
Trade.....	24
Undocumented Migrants	24
USA: Israel.....	24
Visas: Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.....	24
Visas: Married People	24