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**Tuesday
21 January 2020**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Berridge	Whip
Lord Bethell	Whip
Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
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, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Northern Ireland Office
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for International Development
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Baroness Morgan of Cotes	The Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Sater	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 21 January 2020

Countering Terrorism

[HLWS42]

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

The Government's first priority is to keep families, communities and our country safe. Following the terrorist attack at Fishmongers' Hall in November 2019 we have reviewed our overall approach to counter-terrorism and the package of measures we have announced today represents a major shift in the UK's approach to the sentencing and management of terrorist offenders.

The counter-terrorism strategy – CONTEST – was strengthened in 2018 and remains one of the most comprehensive approaches to countering terrorism in the world. But we know the threats we face will continue to diversify and evolve as it has done in recent years and we must continually assess the effectiveness of our action and remain flexible in adapting our approach.

The package announced today includes a major overhaul of prisons and probation, including tougher monitoring conditions for terrorist offenders and doubling the number of counter-terrorism probation officers. This will also include a full independent review of the multi-agency public protection arrangements. Jonathan Hall QC will lead this review.

A new Counter-Terrorism (Sentencing and Release) Bill, will be introduced in the first 100 days of this Government. The Bill will include measures that will force dangerous terrorist offenders who receive extended determinate sentences to serve the whole time behind bars and will introduce a new statutory minimum sentence of 14 years in prison, which can be applied to those convicted of the most serious terrorist offences.

Funding for CT policing will also grow to £906m in 2020-21, a £90m year-on-year increase. The money will support and maintain the record high numbers of ongoing counter-terrorism policing investigations and ensure a swift and effective response to the threat.

The Government will also review the support available to victims of terrorism, including families and loved ones, and immediately invest £500k to increase the support provided by the Victims of Terrorism Unit, to ensure more victims get the support and advice they need, faster.

This package of measures sets out how we will continue to build on the UK's formidable capabilities, experience and expertise to tackle the growing and changing threat from terrorism in all its forms.

ECOFIN

[HLWS44]

The Earl of Courtown: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sajid Javid) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Council will be held in Brussels on 21 January 2020. The Council will discuss the following:

Early Morning Session

The Eurogroup President will brief the Council on the outcomes of the 20 January meeting of the Eurogroup, and the European Commission will provide an update on the current economic situation in the EU. Following this, ministers will take stock of the process of nominating a European candidate for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Presidency.

Current Financial Services Legislative Proposals

The Croatian Presidency will provide an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

Presidency Work Programme

The Croatian Presidency will present its work programme for January to June 2020.

European Green Deal

The European Commission will present the economic and financial aspects of the European Green Deal.

European Semester 2020

To launch the new European Semester exercise, the European Commission will present the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy, the Alert Mechanism Report, and the Euro area recommendation.

Tax Challenges Arising from Digitalisation

The Council will hold an exchange of views on the state of play of negotiations in the OECD on tax challenges arising from digitalisation.

I would also like to inform the House about the ECOFIN meetings that took place on 5 December 2019 and 8 November 2019

ECOFIN: 5 December 2019

A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Council was held in Brussels on 05 December 2019. The UK was represented by Matthew Taylor, Director Europe, HM Treasury. The Council discussed the following:

Early Morning Session

The Eurogroup President briefed the Council on the outcomes of the 04 December meeting of the Eurogroup, and the European Commission provided an update on the current economic situation in the EU.

Banking Union

The Council noted a report on progress on the Banking Union.

AOB: Directive as regards disclosure of income tax information

Ministers held an exchange of views on the legal basis for country-by-country reporting of income-tax information, as requested by Sweden.

Current Financial Services legislative proposals

The Commission provided an update on current legislative files in the field of financial services.

Energy Taxation

The Council adopted Conclusions in regards to Energy Taxation.

European Financial Architecture for Development

The Council adopted Conclusions on the European Financial Architecture for Development.

Climate Action Workplan

In response to discussions at September informal ECOFIN meeting, the Council approved the proposed work plan on Climate Action.

“Stable-coins”

The Council and Commission adopted a joint statement on “stable-coins”.

Capital Markets Union

The Commission gave an update on the Capital Markets Union, welcoming work on sustainable finance and fintech

Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing

The Council adopted the Conclusions on proposed changes to the future EU framework for anti-money laundering and the financing of counter-terrorism.

Sustainable Finance

The Council held an exchange of views on the sustainable finance.

Non-Performing Loans

The Commission updated on the action plan for non-performing loans in Europe.

Stability and Growth Pact

The Council issued decisions confirming no effective action has been taken by Hungary and Romania in response to Council recommendations of June 2019.

AOB: EU List of Non-Cooperative Tax Jurisdictions

As an AOB, the Danish delegation requested ministers to strengthen ambitions on the EU list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions.

ECOFIN: 8 November 2019

A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) was held in Brussels on 08 November 2019. The UK was represented by Mark Bowman (Director General, International Finance, HM Treasury). The Council discussed the following:

Excise Duties

The Council discussed the: Directive on general arrangements for excise duty (recast); the Regulation on administrative cooperation of the content of electronic registers; and amendments to the Directive on the structures of excise duty on alcohol.

VAT Data from Payment Service Providers

The Council agreed a General Approach on amendments to: the Directive on the common system of VAT with regards to requirements for payment service providers; and the Regulation on administrative cooperation in the field of VAT concerning measures to combat VAT fraud.

VAT Treatment for Small Enterprises

The Council agreed amendments to the Directive on the common system of VAT in regards to the special scheme for small enterprises.

Current Financial Services Legislative Proposals

The Finnish Presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

European Central Bank – Executive Board Member

The Council adopted a recommendation to the European Council on the appointment of a new member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank.

Digital Taxation

The Council were updated on the current state of play of digital taxation and discussed the way forward.

European Fiscal Board Report

The Council were presented with the 2019 Annual report of the European Fiscal Board.

EU Statistical Package

The Council adopted Council Conclusions on the EU statistical package and to review progress achieved.

Climate Finance

The Council adopted Council Conclusions on climate finance for the COP25 climate summit.

Follow-up to International Meetings

The Presidency and Commission informed the Council of the main outcomes of the G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and the IMF and World Bank Annual meetings held in October 2019.

Stable Coins

As an AOB, the Presidency informed the Council about a joint statement on stable coins ahead of December ECOFIN.

**Independent Loan Charge Review:
Implementation**

[HLWS41]

The Earl of Courtown: My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

In September 2019, the Government commissioned Sir Amyas Morse to lead the Independent Loan Charge Review. The Loan Charge is designed to tackle disguised remuneration tax avoidance schemes. These are tax arrangements that seek to avoid Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions by paying scheme users income in the form of loans, usually via an offshore trust, with no expectation that the loans will ever be repaid.

On 20 December 2019, the Government published the Review and the Government's response to the Review. The Government accepted all but one of the Review's recommendations (HCWS14).

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have today published draft legislation to give effect to these changes, alongside explanatory notes and a tax information and impact note. These can be found using the links below.

The draft legislation and explanatory notes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/finance-bill-2019-20>

The tax information and impact note: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tax-information-and-impact-notes-tiins>

HMRC will hold an informal four-week consultation on the draft legislation to invite views from stakeholders. The Government intends to legislate for the changes in the forthcoming Finance Bill, which will be introduced after the Budget.

The draft legislation that the Government has published today does not cover the Government's commitment that HMRC will repay settlements where Voluntary Restitution has been paid by individuals and employers for years no longer subject to the Loan Charge because the year is unprotected. Legislation giving effect to this commitment, together with details of the repayment scheme, will be published separately ahead of the Finance Bill. The scheme will be legislated for at the earliest opportunity in the Finance Bill, alongside the other changes to the Loan Charge.

HMRC have also published further guidance for taxpayers on the changes to the Loan Charge following Sir Amyas's Review. This supplements the guidance published on 20 December.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disguised-remuneration-independent-loan-charge-review/guidance>

Media Acquisition: Public Interest Intervention Notice

[HLWS43]

Baroness Morgan of Cotes: On 9 January I instructed my officials to write to the Daily Mail and General Trust plc (DMGT) to inform them that I was 'minded to' issue a Public Interest Intervention Notice (PIIN). I can confirm today that I am issuing the PIIN.

This relates to concerns I have that there may be public interest considerations - as set out in section 58(2B) of Enterprise Act 2002 - that are relevant to the recent acquisition of JPI Media Publications Limited, and thus the i newspaper, by DMGT and that these concerns warrant further investigation.

I invited the Parties to submit representations to me, which they have done. I have noted their representations regarding protections for editorial independence, including commercial incentives for maintaining the editorial position of the i. However, I continue to believe that it may be the case that the public interest consideration of sufficient plurality of viewpoints in newspapers is relevant to this merger. I thus consider it appropriate to intervene in this matter.

At this stage, my decision to issue the PIIN triggers the requirement for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to report to me on jurisdictional and competition matters; and for Ofcom to report me on the media public interest consideration in section 58(2B) of the Enterprise Act 2002 - namely, the need for, to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable, a sufficient plurality of views in newspapers in each market for newspapers in the United Kingdom or a part of the United Kingdom. I have asked both the CMA and Ofcom to report back to me by 13 March 2020.

My role as the Secretary of State in this process is quasi-judicial and procedures are in place to ensure that I act independently and follow a process which is scrupulously fair, transparent and impartial.

DCMS will update Parliament once both reports from the regulators have been received and considered.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 21 January 2020

Affordable Housing: Grants

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what conditions are placed on the disbursement of funds through affordable housing grants from Homes England. [HL215]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government is committed to increasing the supply of social housing and has made £9 billion available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes in a wide range of tenures, including Social Rent.

Funding is allocated by Homes England (and the GLA in London). Registered providers (such as housing associations and local authorities) are able to bid into the Programme for funding to build Rent to Buy and affordable rented homes; funding for Shared Ownership is also open to private providers. Registered providers can also bid for funding to deliver social rent homes in areas of high affordability pressure.

The conditions guidance for the Affordable Homes Programme is published by the Department as part of its Capital Funding Guide.

The funding guide can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/capital-funding-guide>.

Age: Equality

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by United for All Ages Together in the 2020s, published on 7 January; and what action, if any, they plan to take in response. [HL174]

Baroness Barran: The Government has made no formal assessment of this report. I thank the Noble Lord, however, for bringing this to our attention. I agree there is a need for government to work closely with civil society in many areas, including age inequality. These issues are cross-cutting and require input from many parts of government. DCMS is playing its part in this work, as set out in the government's Civil Society Strategy and 'A Connected Society: A strategy for tackling loneliness'.

Armed Forces: Officers

Asked by **Earl Attlee**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many command appointments there are in the Royal Air Force at one star and above, broken down by role. [HL100]

Asked by **Earl Attlee**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many command appointments there are that are not single service, broken down by role. [HL101]

Asked by **Earl Attlee**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many command appointments there are in the Royal Navy at one star and above, broken down by role. [HL98]

Asked by **Earl Attlee**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many command appointments there are in the British army at one star and above, broken down by role. [HL99]

Baroness Goldie: There are 29 command appointments at one-star level and above within the Royal Navy, 42 within the Army, 18 within the Royal Air Force and 26 within Strategic Command. The table below shows a breakdown by role although for security reasons two Strategic Command posts are not included.

While broadly similar, the three services and Strategic Command use slightly different criteria for 'command appointments' because of their structural differences. Senior service officers also hold command appointments in roles outside of their service, for example in NATO. There are also non-command appointments at one-star level and above, both within and external to the single services.

Table 1: Command appointments at one-star level and above for the Army, Navy, Royal Air Force and Strategic Command

4 Star Command Appointments	Service
First Sea Lord	RN
Chief of the General Staff	Army
Chief of the Air Staff	RAF
Commander UK Strategic Command	Strat Com
3 Star Command Appointments	
Second Sea Lord	RN
Fleet Commander	RN
Commander Field Army	Army
Commander Home Command	Army
Deputy Commander Operations/ Air Member Operations	RAF
Chief Joint Operations	Strat Com
Director General Joint Force Development	Strat Com
Director General Defence Medical Services	Strat Com
2 Star Command Appointments	
Commander Operations	RN
Commander UK Strike Force / Rear Admiral Surface Ships	RN
Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Capability)	RN
Flag Officer Sea Training & Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Training)	RN

Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Ships)	RN	Commodore Maritime Reserves	RN
Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland and Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Submarines) / Rear Admiral (Submarines)	RN	Assistant Chief of Staff (Land and Littoral Strike / Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines)	RN
Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Aviation and Carrier Strike) / Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm	RN	Commander Portsmouth Flotilla	RN
Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Personnel), Naval Secretary and Flag Officer Reserves	RN	Commander Devonport Flotilla	RN
Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Policy)	RN	Commander Faslane Flotilla	RN
Commandant General Royal Marines	RN	Captain HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH	RN
General Officer Commanding Regional Command	Army	Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron Commander British Forces Gibraltar	RN
General Officer Commanding London District	Army	Commander 16 Air Assault Brigade	Army
General Officer Commanding 1st United Kingdom Division	Army	Commander 1st Artillery Brigade	Army
General Officer Commanding 3rd United Kingdom Division	Army	Commander 1st Armoured Infantry Brigade	Army
General Officer Commanding 6th United Kingdom Division	Army	Commander 12 Armoured Infantry Brigade	Army
General Officer Commanding Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command	Army	Commander 20 Armoured Infantry Brigade	Army
Commander Joint Helicopter Command	Army	Commander 4th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters North East	Army
Air Officer Commanding 1 Group	RAF	Commander 7th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters East	Army
Air Officer Commanding 2 Group	RAF	Commander 11th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters South East	Army
Air Officer Commanding 11 Group	RAF	Commander 8th Engineer Brigade	Army
Air Officer Commanding 22 (Training) Group & Chief of Staff Training	RAF	Commander 1st Signal Brigade	Army
Air Officer Commanding 38 Group	RAF	Commander 11th Signal Brigade and Headquarters West Midlands	Army
Chief of Staff UK Strategic Command	Strat Com	Commander 101st Logistics Brigade	Army
Commander British Forces Cyprus	Strat Com	Commander 102nd Logistics Brigade	Army
Chief of Staff Operations	Strat Com	Commander 104th Logistics Support Brigade	Army
Chief of Staff Joint Warfare	Strat Com	Commander 77th Brigade	Army
Command Information Surveillance and Reconnaissance	Strat Com	Commander 1st Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Brigade	Army
Surgeon General	Strat Com	Commander 38th Irish Brigade	Army
Director Medical Personnel & Training	Strat Com	Commander 51st Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Scotland	Army
Director Defence Healthcare	Strat Com	Commander 160th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Wales	Army
Commander Standing Joint Forces Headquarters	Strat Com	Commander Specialised Infantry Group	Army
1 Star Command Appointments		Commander 2nd Medical Brigade	Army
Commodore Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton	RN	Commander 1 Military Police Brigade and Provost Marshal (Army)	Army
Naval Base Commander (Clyde)	RN	Deputy Commander Reserves 1st United Kingdom Division	Army
Naval Base Commander (Devonport)	RN	Deputy Commander Reserves 3rd United Kingdom Division	Army
Naval Base Commander (Portsmouth)	RN	Deputy Commander Reserves 6th United Kingdom Division	Army
Commander 3 Commando Brigade	RN	Commander Initial Training Group	Army
Commander Littoral Strike Group	RN	Commander Collective Training Group	Army
Commander UK Carrier Strike Group	RN	Commandant Royal School of Military Engineering	Army
Commander UK Maritime Component and Senior Royal Navy Officer (Gulf)	RN	Commandant Defence College of Logistics Policing	Army
Commodore Royal Fleet Auxiliary	RN		

and Administration	
Commandant Defence College of Technical Training	Army
Deputy Commander Joint Helicopter Command	Army
Commander Sandhurst Group	Army
Air Officer Commanding 83 Expeditionary Air Group & UK Air Component Commander	RAF
Commandant RAF College	RAF
Joint Force Air Component Commander*	RAF
Air Officer Lightning & Lightning Force Commander *	RAF
Air Officer Typhoon & Typhoon Force Commander*	RAF
Air Officer ISTAR and ISTAR Force Commander*	RAF
Air Officer A4 & A4 Force Commander*	RAF
Air Officer Force Protection, Force Protection Force Commander & Commandant General RAF Regiment*	RAF
Air Officer Battlespace Management & Battlespace Management Force Commander*	RAF
Air Officer Air Mobility & Air Mobility Force Commander*	RAF
Air Officer A6 & A6 Force Commander*	RAF
Commanding Officer Northwood Headquarters	Strat Com
Deputy Commander British Forces Cyprus	Strat Com
Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands	Strat Com
Commander Combined/Joint Forces Headquarters	Strat Com
Commander Joint Forces Logistic Component	Strat Com
Commander Joint Forces Intelligence Group	Strat Com
Station Commander Wyton	Strat Com
Commander Joint Cyber Electro Magnetic Activity Group	Strat Com
Commander Joint Force Cyber Group	Strat Com
Commander British Forces Gibraltar	Strat Com
Commander Joint Hospital Group	Strat Com

Table notes:

- 1) British Army officers currently fill three exchange command appointments: two in the USA and one in France. There are two command appointments within the British Army structure that are filled by a US Army officer and a French Army officer. For simplicity, these five one-star level posts have not been included in this table.
- 2) There are two posts within Strategic Command which have been redacted for security purposes.
- 3) An * marks Command Appointments within the RAF which lack Disciplinary Authority

Australasia: Aircraft Carriers

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to send an aircraft carrier on detachment to Australia and New Zealand. [[HL334](#)]

Baroness Goldie: The Ministry of Defence does not comment on operational deployments.

Buildings: Insulation

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 7 January (HL15), whether their 30 November 2019 figure for the 53 student accommodation buildings with Aluminium Composite Material cladding identified as unlikely to meet building regulation requirements is final. [[HL289](#)]

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 7 January (HL15), why there are more buildings with Aluminium Composite Material cladding systems which are unlikely to meet building regulation requirements identified in their figures for 30 November 2019 compared to those for 31 October 2019. [[HL290](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: We have set up a comprehensive programme to oversee Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) remediation. We have pushed building owners and local authorities hard to identify and remediate unsafe buildings. When we are notified about additional buildings these are reflected in the published data.

We have also worked closely with local authorities and Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that interim measures are in place in all buildings until the cladding is replaced. Working with the Home Office, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council government has established a protection board to provide greater assurance to central government of Fire and Rescue Service protection activity. This work includes ensuring that the interim measures in place in ACM-clad high-rise residential buildings are well-maintained and providing assurance that fire safety risks are being managed effectively.

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they anticipate the 446 buildings identified as not meeting building regulation requirements in relation to Aluminium Composite Material cladding will all meet such requirements. [[HL291](#)]

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are proposing to take in relation to the 30 hotels identified as needing action in relation to Aluminium Composite Material cladding, as per the figures published on 30 November 2019. [[HL292](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government's priority is to ensure that unsafe Aluminium Composite

Material cladding (ACM) is removed and replaced swiftly. The time to complete works varies considerably depending on factors such as structure, extent of cladding and existing fire safety systems. While we accept that for many buildings, this is a complex job involving major construction work we have taken steps to support building owners undertake the work and are continuing to monitor progress. We have made £600 million of public money available for remediation. We are working closely with a named contact for each building to ensure progress is being made. We have written to all building owners in December 2019 emphasising the need for pace. Where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress, those responsible should expect further action to be taken – including naming and shaming and enforcement.

Brexit

Asked by **Lord Judd**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide legal enforcement for the Conservative Party's manifesto commitment "to ensure high standards of workers' rights, environmental protection and consumer rights" post-Brexit; and whether any such steps will include upholding and enhancing all such existing rights and protections. [HL328]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: In the Queen's Speech the Government announced a new Employment Rights Bill which will include enhancing workers' rights, encouraging flexible working, introducing an entitlement to leave for unpaid carers, and ensuring workers keep their hard earned tips.

The Government will also shortly be introducing the Environment Bill – which will strengthen environmental protections. The Bill will enshrine environmental principles in law. The Bill will also include measures to improve air and water quality, tackle plastic pollution and restore habitats. It will create legally-binding environmental improvement targets and establish a new independent Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). This will collectively ensure that environmental ambition is at the heart of Government once we leave the EU.

Civil Servants: Recruitment

Asked by **Lord Patten**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people (1) applied, and (2) were accepted on to, the Civil Service Fast Stream, in each of the last three years; and how many of the successful applicants had science and engineering graduate-equivalent qualifications. [HL527]

Earl Howe: The information requested is in the table below.

Fast Stream Recruitment Summary, External Applicants Only

	2016	2017	2018
Applications	32,450	40,570	40,457
of which: applicants with a Science & Engineering degree background	5,519	7,302	7,620
Science & Engineering degree background applicants, % of known total	17.1%	18.5%	19.4%
Appointments	1,245	1,233	1,411
of which: appointments of candidates with a Science & Engineering degree background	168	211	272
Science & Engineering degree background appointments, % of known total	13.5%	17.4%	19.7%

Compassionate Leave

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the entitlement to one week's leave for unpaid carers included in the Queen's Speech December 2019: background briefing notes, published on 19 December 2019, refers to paid or unpaid leave. [HL401]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: This Government is determined to make Britain the best place in the world to work. That is why we are bringing forward an Employment Bill which will represent the largest upgrade to workers' rights in a generation.

The Government's proposal is to introduce a week of unpaid Carer's Leave. This will be complementary to other employment rights, such as the right to request flexible working, annual leave and the right to time off for family and dependants which help employees balance work with caring responsibilities.

Consumer Goods: Electrical Safety

Asked by **Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what, if any, recent advice has been given to local authorities on regulating the sale of second hand electrical goods. [HL311]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: Local Authorities are responsible for enforcing a wide range of legislation and ensuring their staff are suitably trained and competent to enforce it. The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) funds the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) to provide learning and development activities to front line officers. The current planned programme of training for 2020 includes regulation of the sale of second hand electrical goods.

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government what legislation, if any, prevents the (1) selling, and (2) re-selling, of recalled electrical goods. [HL312]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The law is clear: only safe products may be placed on the market.

Under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 any distributor, including those selling second-hand goods online, must act with due care to ensure that electrical products are safe. Where a product is found not to be in conformity with essential safety requirements, they have a duty to take corrective action. This may include withdrawing the electrical equipment or issuing a recall.

The General Product Safety Regulations 2005 (GPSR) also place a requirement on distributors not to supply products for sale that they know, or should know, are dangerous.

The Government is clear that anyone involved in the supply of goods should take the necessary action to ensure public safety. If a product is recalled because it is unsafe it should not be supplied second hand or made available for resale. Information on current recalls is available online on the Government's product recall campaign website.

Consumer Goods: Safety

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the departure of the UK from the EU, they will remain a part of the Rapid Alert System for Non-Food Products (RAPEX); and, in this context, whether they intend to continue to exchange relevant information with the EU Commission and EU member states. [HL309]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: Whether the UK will remain a part of RAPEX is dependent on the outcome of the negotiations on the future economic partnership between the UK and the EU. It is the Government's intention to seek deep regulatory cooperation with the EU as part of a new free trade agreement.

In November, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) launched the Product Safety Database to enable national and local regulators in the UK to share information on product safety notices.

Defence Equipment

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish the next Defence Equipment Plan. [HL267]

Baroness Goldie: We intend to publish our 2019 financial summary of the Equipment Plan alongside the NAO's updated assessment in due course.

Domestic Appliances: Registration

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government what, if any, consideration is being given to registration of white electrical goods at the point of sale. [HL310]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is conducting extensive research with 4,000 consumers to understand their attitudes to product registration and trial different approaches. Officials are developing proposals to increase registration, including assessing the merits of mandatory registration for electrical products as part of this work.

EU Defence Policy

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the agreement on the EU Concept for Military Command and Control, agreed by the EU Military Committee on 23 April 2019, has any application to the UK. [HL367]

Baroness Goldie: The EU Concept for Military Command and Control applies to all forces under the operational control of the EU operation and mission commanders including those provided by EU Member States and third country partners. However, UK personnel remain under UK sovereign command at all times.

If the UK continues to contribute to EU military operations and missions as a third country partner, the Concept would continue to apply to the UK as it does to all other third country participating nations.

Extinction Rebellion: Demonstrations

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many arrests were made at the Extinction Rebellion demonstrations in London in October 2019, how many of those arrested were (1) held overnight; (2) subsequently charged; and (3) released after being given a caution; and of those charged, how many (a) have had the charges dropped, (b) have been cleared, (c) have been found guilty of an offence, and (d) still await a court hearing. [HL123]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The information requested is not held centrally.

First Time Buyers

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the essential differences between the existing legislation for Starter Homes and the new First Homes Initiative announced in the Queen's Speech; and whether they have a timetable for the proposed consultation on the initiative. [HL178]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government is committed to increasing the number of homes available for local people to buy at a discount. These new 'First Homes' will be made available at a discount of at least 30% and will be funded through developer contributions, reducing the cost to both local and national government. Unlike Starter Homes, First Homes will offer a larger discount to buyers that is retained in perpetuity, so that future generations can also benefit from the discount. Local Authorities will be able to prioritise these homes for local residents and key workers, such as nurses, teachers or police officers.

Fly-tipping

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prevalence of fly-tipping in England; whether it has increased over the last five years; and whether local authorities have sufficient powers to prevent fly-tipping. [HL164]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra publishes annual fly-tipping statistics for England, with the most recent publication detailing the number of fly-tipping incidents reported by local authorities in 2018/19 published on 7 November 2019. The statistics show that incidents of fly-tipping have shown gradual increases over the last five years, albeit with a decrease reported between 2016/17 and 2017/18. The 2018/19 figures reported an increase of 8% from 2017/18. This most recent increase in recorded incidents does not, however, necessarily mean the number of fly-tipping incidents has increased. Local authorities have reported that as they make it easier for citizens to report fly-tipping, for example through mobile apps, they see an increase in the number of incidents recorded.

Local authorities have a range of powers available to tackle fly-tipping. These include the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of up to £400 for fly-tipping offences, including to those caught fly-tipping and householders who pass their waste to a fly-tipper. Local authorities also have enhanced powers to search and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers. Powers to issue FPNs provide local authorities with an efficient mechanism to hold fly-tipping perpetrators to account without having to go to court, which can be a time-consuming, resource-intensive and expensive process. Additionally, the ability

to issue FPNs can deter potential fly-tippers from fly-tipping in the first place.

Local authorities also have the ability to take those accused of fly-tipping to court. If a fly-tipper is convicted, the offence is punishable by up to £50,000 or 12 months imprisonment if convicted in a Magistrates' Court. The offence can attract an unlimited fine and up to five years imprisonment if convicted in a Crown Court. Defra has already worked with the Sentencing Council to amend sentencing guidance for magistrates to ensure that they are aware of local fixed penalty levels for these offences. The Resources and Waste Strategy published in December 2018 includes a number of commitments to improve this, including working with the Sentencing Council to increase magistrates' awareness of the prevalence and importance of waste crime, helping local authorities improve the quality of cases, and ensuring the Environmental Offences Definitive guideline is kept up to date and magistrates are effectively trained on it.

Recent figures showed that there were 76,000 fixed penalty notices issued by Local Authorities in 2018/19, up by 11% from 2017/18. Prosecution outcome figures from 2018/19 also showed that the value of total fines increased by 29% to £1,090,000.

Food Supply

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they promote and develop (1) food security, and (2) self-sufficiency, in the production of UK food. [HL459]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Our landmark Agriculture Bill sets out a clear path for future policy to support farming and the environment which includes commitments to regularly review our food security.

As part of the Bill, we are including a new requirement for the UK Government to regularly report on food security to Parliament, demonstrating the importance we place on this subject. The report will contain information on the role of strong domestic production alongside diverse sources of supply. It will encompass a range of current issues relevant to food security including global food availability; supply of food sources; the resilience of the supply chain for food; household expenditure on food; food safety and consumer confidence in food.

The UK has a high degree of food security, built on access to a range of different sources including strong domestic production and imports from other countries, demonstrated by the UK's current production to supply ratio of 75% for indigenous-type foods and 60% for all foods

The National Food Strategy will cover the entire food chain from field to fork, building on work already underway in Defra.

It will address the challenges of supporting people to eat healthy diets, producing food sustainably and protecting national food security, whilst also looking at related issues such as food price and trade.

Frigates

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to increase the number of frigates in the Royal Navy; and if so, when they intend to start expanding that fleet. [HL364]

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the number of Royal Navy frigates in commission will rise above the present total of 13; and whether that number will drop below 13 at any stage in the next ten years. [HL365]

Baroness Goldie: The Government remains committed to a surface fleet of at least 19 Frigates and Destroyers, and the Royal Navy will have the ships required to fulfil their Defence and Policy commitments. The intent remains to grow the Destroyer and Frigate force by the 2030s, and the Type 31 Frigates will provide the opportunity to do this. It is not uncommon to have planned, temporary, small fluctuations in overall numbers during the transition from any class of ship or submarine to another.

Gaza

Asked by **Baroness Tonge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their current assessment of the findings of the report Gaza in 2020: a liveable place?, published by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in 2012. [HL182]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza and the report in question's prediction that Gaza could become uninhabitable by 2020. UK aid has supported economic development, provision of basic services, and enabled reconstruction through support to the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. The Minister of State for the Middle East visited Gaza on 28 May 2019 and saw the extent of this first hand.

However, as the report makes clear, aid alone cannot solve the problems in Gaza. Improvements in infrastructure, employment, energy and water are essential to improve living conditions. The Government will continue to urge all the parties to take the necessary practical steps to improve conditions. We will continue to press for a sustainable political solution for Gaza and to address the underlying cause of humanitarian strife in Gaza by more than doubling the amount of UK aid spent on economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to around £38 million over the next five years (2018-2023). This will include support to addressing the water and electricity crisis and seek to address movement and access restrictions.

Greek Islands: Immigrants

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they are providing to Greece to speed up the movement of refugees and migrants from camps on the Aegean islands to the mainland. [HL136]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK has a strong bilateral relationship with Greece and continues to offer support and exchange expertise on effective migration management to alleviate the pressures on the islands. As part of this, the Home Office continues to provide interpreters to support the essential work of the Greek Reception and Identification Service alongside taking steps to strengthen joint efforts to tackle organised immigration crime.

Border Force also continues to deploy a Cutter in the Aegean to support vital search and rescue operations; since May 2015 Border Force Cutters deployed to the Aegean have rescued over 16,600 migrants attempting the dangerous journey to reach the islands.

Housing and Planning

Asked by **Baroness Thornhill**

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what aspects of housing and planning reform announced in the recent Queen's speech they plan to introduce legislation; and whether they have a timetable for the introduction of those housing and planning related initiatives. [HL179]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Queen's Speech set out a range of measures for housing and planning, including the Renters' Reform Bill, Fire Safety Bill and Building Safety Bill, First Homes, and the Planning White Paper. The Government will release further details on all of these measures over the next few weeks and months, with legislative timetables set as parliamentary time allows. We will also publish a Planning White Paper later this year.

Housing: Construction

Asked by **Baroness Thornhill**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to encourage local authorities to deliver the required number of new homes; whether the Housing Delivery Test will continue; and if so, what are the penalties for under-performing authorities. [HL180]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: We introduced the Housing Delivery Test in order to encourage local authorities to play a more active role in delivering the homes this country needs. This will continue, and the next results will be published in due course. The consequences where under-delivery occurs are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and range from the need to

prepare an action plan to the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which will allow housing to come forward in areas where it is needed.

Immigration Controls

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the overall number of migrants coming to the UK following the end of free movement. [HL124]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government's election manifesto set out plans for a new immigration system that will give us full control over who is coming in and going out and will lead to an overall reduction in numbers.

Internet: Advertising

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the interim report by the Competition and Markets Authority Online platforms and digital advertising, published on 18 December, in particular the consideration that online platforms should allow users to turn off personalised advertisements. [HL173]

Baroness Barran: Digital services are an important part of everyday life. It is vital that we ensure they work for everyone and can harness the incredible benefits of digital technologies, protect consumers while encouraging trust, and foster innovation across the economy. The government is currently considering how to boost competition and innovation in digital markets, including those funded through online advertising. Last year the government announced its intention to review how online advertising is regulated in the UK, which will assess the extent to which the current regulatory regime is equipped to tackle the challenges posed by rapid technological developments seen in online advertising.

The government is grateful to the CMA for their work to date on the interim report from their market study into Online Platforms and Digital Advertising. The CMA's final market study report will set out findings and may make recommendations to the government. We look forward to these recommendations.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the Human Rights Watch report Born without civil rights: Israel's use of draconian military orders to repress Palestinians in the West Bank, published in December 2019. [HL183]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made an assessment on the report in question, we have been clear that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority must

demonstrate through their policies a genuine commitment to the two-state solution. They should do all they can to reverse the negative trends – including systematic settlement expansion and demolitions in the West Bank. We want to see a contiguous West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as part of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders.

Landscape Design

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all local authority planning departments are required to employ or use landscape architects when assessing new housing or commercial developments that are proposed; and if not, whether they intend to require such architects to be used. [HL153]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: There is no requirement, or intention to require local planning authorities to employ or use landscape architects when assessing new development. It is for local planning authorities to decide whether this resource is required.

However, the National Planning Policy Framework does require local planning authorities to ensure they have appropriate tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development, including access to the right skills.

We will be publishing a Planning White Paper in due course which will include measures to support resourcing and skills deficits.

Libya and Niger: Immigrants

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conditions under which migrants detained in Libya and Niger are held; and in particular, what steps they intend to take to ensure that those on boats who are stopped by the EU-funded Libyan coastguard are not subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment. [HL134]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain concerned by the appalling conditions faced by migrants in detention centres, particularly in Libya. We continue to urge the Libyan authorities to pursue alternatives to detention and implement a better functioning migration system that respects human rights.

The EU does not directly fund the Libyan coastguard. The training support to the Libyan Coastguard and Navy (LCGN), which is provided through the EU naval Operation Sophia to which the UK currently contributes common funding, aims to increase Libyans' ability to secure their own maritime borders and to manage search and rescue activities properly in a human rights compliant way. We expect all vessels to operate in accordance with international maritime law, including the exercise of restraint in the use of force, and adherence to established

human rights norms. All Libyan trainees are screened to ensure that we are not training anyone previously found to have been involved in human rights violations. The EU training package (which includes International Humanitarian Law and human rights components) aims to equip the Libyan Coastguard with the skills required to manage search and rescue activities properly, in a human rights compliant manner. As part of Her Majesty's Government's human rights policy, we keep this training programme under continual review.

The UK, through bilateral and EU programming, is protecting and supporting migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route, including in Niger. This includes provision of humanitarian assistance and information on risks along the route, as well as facilitating Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and refugee resettlement. These return and resettlement activities have led to thousands being moved from Libya to safe countries.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Asked by Lord Hutton of Furness

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost savings resulting from the use of pooled investment funds in the Local Government Pension Scheme. [HL132]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In November 2015, the Government published criteria and guidance for the creation of pooled investment funds in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales, to be operational by April 2018. Eight LGPS asset pools have been established to manage the investments of the scheme. Estimates provided by the LGPS pools indicate that across the scheme, total savings of around £155 million have been achieved over the period from 2015 up to March 2019. The pools have estimated total savings by 2033 at between £1 billion and £2 billion, with annual savings of up to £200 million.

Asked by Lord Hutton of Furness

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost savings resulting from the 2014 reforms to the Local Government Pension Scheme. [HL133]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In 2014 and 2015, significant reforms were made to public service pension schemes to address increases in the costs of providing pension benefits to public workers, and to place schemes on a more sustainable and affordable long-term footing. In the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), reforms were implemented from 1st April 2014 and included moving the scheme from a final salary benefit structure to a career average benefit structure.

In May 2012, the Government published documents (attached) on the planned reforms to the LGPS including a costings analysis from the Government Actuary's Department:

(<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2012-1614/Buildupofcostsandcostreconciliationtables-Final.pdf>). This analysis outlined that the existing final salary scheme design was estimated to cost in total 21.73% of pay (p2) and the planned career average scheme was estimated to cost in total 19.51% of pay (p3), suggesting an overall saving of just over 2.2% of pay.

To ensure consistency with other public service pension schemes, the final design of the reformed LGPS was changed so that scheme members received revaluation of their in-year accrued pension immediately. This increased the costs of the career average scheme by an estimated 0.4% (see table 7.1 at ([attached](http://lgpslibrary.org/assets/othergov/2013VRRep.pdf)) <http://lgpslibrary.org/assets/othergov/2013VRRep.pdf>

The Government is currently considering the changes to public service pension schemes which will be necessary to comply with the findings of the Courts in the McCloud and Sargeant cases:

(<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-07-15/HCWS1725/>) and these will have cost implications for the reformed scheme.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Local Government Pension [200114 LG Pension Scheme - HL133.pdf]

Reform to the LGPS [200121 Buildupofcostsandcostreconciliationtables-Final - HL133.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL133>

London North Eastern Railway: Tickets

Asked by Lord Beecham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they were consulted by London North Eastern Railway in relation to changes in the system of off-peak return tickets which have increased fares on the East Coast line. [HL102]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: As announced in August 2019, DfT is supporting LNER's trials from January 2020 of a new fare system designed to make travelling on trains simpler and clearer. All return tickets will be removed on trial routes from London to Leeds, Newcastle and Edinburgh, and in their place passengers will be able to purchase anytime, advance and cheaper super off-peak single fares. People making return journeys can now better mix and match tickets to suit their needs.

Maritime Patrol Aircraft

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many full crews are available for P-8 Poseidon aircraft being procured for the Royal Air Force. [HL331]

Baroness Goldie: The Royal Air Force has sufficient trained crews to meet its current task on the P-8 Poseidon aircraft. Covering a variety of fully qualified instructors and those undergoing training, our P-8 cadre are split between the UK and the USA.

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the number of full crews available to operate P-8 Poseidon aircraft when they are introduced. [HL332]

Baroness Goldie: There are several measures in place to increase the number of crews for the P-8A Poseidon which include:

As part of the Poseidon programme RAF personnel are undertaking training in the USA with the US Navy. Initial Poseidon training will transfer to RAF Lossiemouth and be instructed by RAF personnel in mid 2021.

A programme of recruiting and training across all RAF flying specialisations is already underway; in addition, ex-RAF aircrew with suitable experience and qualifications are being encouraged to re-join the Service.

A small number of specialists from the Royal Navy will undergo P-8A training and serve on exchange to bolster the RAF's maritime experience.

The RAF is expanding its Exchange Officer Programme, to include reciprocal agreements with a number of allied nations for personnel to be placed in flying posts associated with the P-8A.

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their timetable for introducing P-8 Poseidon aircraft to front line service. [HL333]

Baroness Goldie: Initial operating capability will be achieved in spring 2020.

Mayors: Devolution

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to devolve powers to (1) the Mayor of London, and (2) elected mayors in England and Wales. [HL220]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government has committed to publishing an English Devolution White Paper as a strategy to unleash the potential of all our regions – covering plans for full devolution across England and levelling up powers of existing mayors.

Military Aircraft

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve the availability of Royal Air Force combat aircraft. [HL329]

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the budget for ensuring the availability of Royal Air Force combat aircraft has been in each of the last three years. [HL330]

Baroness Goldie: The RAF has continued to invest in the capability and availability of our Next Generation Lightning and Typhoon Combat Aircraft to meet operational tasking.

The UK has invested in the support of the Lightning fleet with a National Support Solution contract and additionally has invested approximately £142 million in the development of state of the art infrastructure to support the Lightning Force throughout its service life. This is in addition to the upgrade of other operating facilities to accommodate the new Lightning Force. These new facilities and the National Support Solution are now fully operational and supporting the growth of the UK Lightning Force.

The Typhoon Total Availability eNterprise (TyTAN), a ten-year £2.1 billion support agreement for Typhoon between the MOD and BAE Systems established in 2016, is driving real efficiency improvements by focusing all parties on flying hour output. To date the TyTAN agreement has already allowed for over £500 million of Typhoon Support savings to be re-invested into capability upgrades for the aircraft and help to sustain high value jobs across the industry.

NHS: Amazon

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what benefits are anticipated to be accrued by the NHS as a result of the contract with Amazon to provide health data from the NHS. [HL127]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: Increased access for patients to information on the National Health Service website will help people become better informed, receiving NHS accredited information on the symptoms of different healthcare issues. This will enable people to take better control of their own healthcare needs, thereby potentially helping with prevention and early diagnosis.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the artificial intelligence system used in relation to the contract with Amazon to provide health data from the NHS; and how that system compares with alternatives on the market. [HL128]

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: National Health Service website content is available for all organisations if they have agreed with NHS terms of use. This agreement is not exclusive and open to any vendor who complies with the terms of the license agreement. NHS Digital assesses and evaluates companies' compliance with the terms of use. It does not compare this system with alternatives on the market.

Non-domestic Rates: Appeals

*Asked by **The Earl of Lytton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 30 October 2019 (HL178), whether (1) their interim review, and (2) the Valuation Office Agency's customer evaluation, of the Check, Challenge, Appeal system has concluded; and when they intend to publish the results of each. [HL458]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government intends to communicate the outcomes of the interim review of the Check, Challenge, Appeal system shortly. The Valuation Office Agency is currently conducting the customer evaluation of the delivery of the new system and intends to publish this in autumn 2020.

Occupied Territories: War Crimes

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to give evidence to the International Criminal Court's proposed investigation into war crimes allegedly committed in the occupied Palestinian territories. [HL181]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a strong supporter of international criminal justice and accountability. We are aware of the statement of 20 December by the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the conclusion of the Preliminary Examination into the situation in Palestine, and her request for a jurisdictional decision from the Court prior to opening an investigation. We respect the independence of the ICC Prosecutor in these matters. We have not received any request for co-operation from the Court.

Offences against Children

*Asked by **Lord Pearson of Rannoch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of women and girls raped by Muslim men involved in grooming gangs since 1997. [HL158]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has estimated that there were approximately 6,850 victims of organised child sexual exploitation in the UK in 2015. This estimate includes all forms of child sexual exploitation and does not distinguish between rape and other sexual offences. It includes organised child sexual exploitation committed by groups and gangs within a range of contexts.

In early 2020 the Government will publish a national strategy, the first of its kind, to tackle all forms of child sexual abuse.

Our new strategy will set out our whole system response to tackling child sexual abuse and how we will

work across government, law enforcement, safeguarding partners and industry to root out offending, protect victims and help victims and survivors rebuild their lives. There will be no no-go areas.

*Asked by **Lord Pearson of Rannoch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had, and with whom, about the investigation of whether any police officers, social workers and council officials failed to fulfil their statutory duty to protect victims of grooming gangs; and whether (1) there have been any, or (2) there are planned to be, prosecutions of any such officers and officials. [HL159]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The extent to which statutory authorities have failed to protect children from sexual exploitation is being investigated by bodies that are rightly independent of Government.

The Government established the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse to consider the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have failed in their duty to protect children from sexual abuse. As part of its work, the Inquiry is investigating institutional responses to child sexual exploitation by organised networks. While independent of Government we welcome the Inquiry's work in this area and, as always, the Government will cooperate fully and will give careful consideration to its findings in due course.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) investigates the most serious and sensitive incidents and allegations involving the police. The IOPC is independent of Government and the police and is responsible for the investigations it carries out.

Government does not hold information on prosecutions specifically relating to different types of misconduct in a public office.

Public Bodies: Travellers

*Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve participation in public bodies by members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. [HL109]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In June 2019, the Government announced that MHCLG would lead development of a cross-government strategy to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. In developing the strategy, the Government will consider how best to encourage participation in civic and public institutions by members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Qassem Soleimani

*Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the government of the United States of America first

informed them of their military operation on 3 January which killed General Qasem Soleimani. [HL142]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We became aware of the operation as it happened. We do not comment on our allies' operational decisions.

Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the pledges by EU member states to re-settle 30,000 refugees in 2020, what steps they intend to take to encourage non-EU member states to make similar pledges. [HL135]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK is strongly committed to supporting refugees, including through humanitarian assistance abroad and refugee resettlement to the UK. Nearly 23,000 refugees have been resettled under our schemes since the expansion of our efforts in September 2015.

The UK actively works to support other states, including non-EU member states, to participate in refugee resettlement through multilateral fora and by directly sharing technical expertise.

For instance, the UK chaired last year's Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement where UNHCR's 3-year strategy to increase resettlement and complementary pathways was launched; a key tool in encouraging more countries to increase the quantity and quality of resettlement. The UK also supports both EU and Non-EU states in developing community sponsorship schemes, including through co-chairing the community sponsorship 'States Network' launched at the Global Refugee Forum in December.

Religion: Freedom of Expression

Asked by Lord Vinson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that criticism of any religion is not regarded as a hate crime. [HL187]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. It is important that all have the right to speak freely, and make legitimate criticisms, and that a strong legal framework provides the appropriate space to do so. Equally, hatred or prejudice against an individual because of their religion will not be tolerated.

The Crown Prosecution Service uses definitions agreed with the National Police Chiefs' Council to identify religiously motivated incidents/crimes: "Any incident/crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's religion or perceived religion." This allows space for legitimate criticism.

Under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006, which covers the offences of stirring up religious hatred, there is

a freedom of expression defence contained in Section 29J, which confirms that nothing in the Act "... prohibits or restricts discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult, or abuse of particular religions, or the beliefs or practices of its adherents."

The Government will continue to protect people's legitimate rights and freedoms whilst also remaining committed to tackling hate crime.

Royal Family: Travel

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government which members of the Royal family receive free travel in connection with (1) their royal duties, and (2) for private purposes; what was the source of the funding for any such travel; and what was the cost in 2018/19 for such travel for (a) royal duties, and (b) private purposes. [HL287]

The Earl of Courtown: The Sovereign Grant meets the cost of official journeys undertaken by or in support of The Queen and other members of the Royal Family. As set out in the Sovereign Grant and Sovereign Grant Reserve: Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19, available on the Monarchy website[1] the cost of travel funded by the Sovereign Grant for the financial year ending 31 March 2019 was £4.6 million.

A list of journeys undertaken by members of the Royal Family and their staff during 2018-19 which had travel costs of £15,000 or more, met from the Sovereign Grant, is also available on the Monarchy website [2]. The travel costs for the tours also include the costs associated with staff undertaking visits in advance in order to plan the tour programmes.

No public money is provided to fund travel of members of the Royal Family for private purposes.

[1]

https://www.royal.uk/sites/default/files/media/final_sovereign_grant_for_website.pdf

[2]

https://www.royal.uk/sites/default/files/media/royal_travel_journeys_costing_ps15000_or_more_final.pdf

Sleeping Rough: Greater London

Asked by Lord Trefgarne

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of homeless people sleeping rough in the Greater London area during the recent Christmas period; and of those, how many they estimate to be ex-service personnel. [HL242]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government does not collect this information centrally. The annual rough sleeping snapshot for 2019 will be released on 27 February 2020. In addition, the Greater London Authority will release their CHAIN data on 31 January 2020, which will provide details on people seen sleeping rough in Greater London in September - December 2019, including details on ex-service personnel.

The Government has allocated over £1.2 billion through to 2020 to tackle all forms of homelessness. In London this includes:

- Over £24.5 million of Rough Sleeping Initiative funding (over £6 million of which went direct to the GLA) for local authorities to tackle rough sleeping in their areas and have an immediate impact on the levels of rough sleeping. This has provided over 1000 bed spaces and around 200 staff in the capital.
- The £50 million London portion of the Move-on Fund which was allocated to the GLA. This will contribute towards the capital costs of developing move-on accommodation for people leaving homelessness hostels and refuges for survivors of domestic abuse.
- £9.5 million of Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding (over £2.3 million of which went direct to the GLA). This approach includes funding for Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs, specialist Navigators, the establishment of Local Lettings Agencies and funding for Supported Lettings initiatives.
- £9.2 million from the Private Rented Sector Access scheme to fund a range of approaches including innovative transitional insurance policy to providing incentives to landlords to offer longer term tenancies.
- £1 million since Oct 2017 towards the Rough Sleeping Social Impact Bond. This is a payment-by-results programme funded by MHCLG, targeting the most entrenched rough sleepers with multiple complex needs in 7 regional projects. As of June, 200 people have entered accommodation in London. The GLA have put £1m of their own funding into this project.

Solar Power: Planning Permission

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of permitted development rights for the deployment of ground mounted solar arrays which rotate to track the movement of the sun. [HL139]

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to update permitted development rights to facilitate deployment of ground mounted solar arrays which rotate to track the movement of the sun. [HL140]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: To facilitate the take up of renewable energy there is a range of permitted development rights for micro-generation from renewable energy sources. These include stand-alone solar equipment up to 4 metres in height. The rights apply both within the curtilage of residential and non-residential premises and are set out in Part 14 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended. There are no current plans to alter the permitted development rights for microgeneration renewable energy.

Stronger Towns Fund

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria were used to choose the towns which may receive funding of up to £25 million each under the Stronger Towns Fund; whether there was a long list of towns from which they were chosen; and if so, which towns were on that long list but not chosen; whether a ranking system was used in the choice of those towns selected to receive funding; and which bodies and persons were consulted on the final choice. [HL118]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: As part of the process of identifying the initial 100 places, officials have defined a town based on built up areas with a population of between 5,000 – 225,000. This is the definition of a town from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

The 100 towns have been chosen on the basis of a robust selection methodology. This took into account various qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Technology: New Businesses

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support technology start-ups. [HL177]

Baroness Barran: As outlined in our Digital Strategy, the Government's ambition is to ensure the UK is the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business.

To support access to finance, the Government has introduced a new £2.5 billion British Patient Capital programme, which is expected to attract a further £5 billion in private investment. This will support UK companies with high growth potential to access the long-term investment they need to grow and internationalise.

To continue to attract international talent, the Government has: doubled the number of Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visas to 2,000; taken doctors and nurses out of the Tier 2 visa cap, increasing the number of skilled worker visas available to other sectors, including tech; and launched the new Start-Up and Innovator visa routes for entrepreneurs. In addition, the Government has committed to introducing a new 2 year visa route for individuals who graduate from UK higher education providers.

The Government continues to fund Tech Nation, supporting their work to accelerate the growth of the digital tech sector across the country. Tech Nation deliver growth programmes for the sector aimed at stages across the business lifecycle, with programme alumni including Monzo, Deliveroo and Funding Circle. In the past year, Tech Nation have started sector-specific growth programmes in AI and Cyber, in addition to their FinTech programme. In 2019, Tech Nation's growth programmes supported 649 tech companies. Tech Nation have a regional network of 11 Entrepreneur Engagement Managers (EEMs) working across the UK to support

entrepreneurs, startups and scaleups to access their programmes and networks.

Finally, at London Tech Week 2019, the PM launched a study into the competitiveness of the UK Tech Sector. Reporting later this year, the study will identify key opportunities and support mechanisms to further accelerate business growth in the digital tech sector.

Temporary Accommodation

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of (1) temporary, and (2) emergency, accommodation in England and Wales. [HL218]

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what communications they have had with local authorities in England and Wales about (1) the availability, and (2) the funding, of (a) temporary, and (b) emergency, accommodation. [HL219]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide accommodation for households that are homeless and defined as being in priority need, unintentionally homeless and eligible for assistance. They are obliged to secure temporary accommodation for the household in the first instance until suitable long-term accommodation can be secured.

Local authorities provide updates on how many households are living in temporary accommodation to Government via H-CLIC, the new quarterly data return on local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation. According to that data, in England, the current total number of households in temporary accommodation is 86,130. Of these households, 7,110 were in bed and breakfast accommodation and 22,360 were in nightly paid, privately managed accommodation.

In December 2019 we announced the allocation of £263 million in funding for 2020/21 to local authorities designed to support them to deliver services to tackle homelessness. This is an uplift of £23 million on the previous year. The purpose of this funding is to give local authorities more control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who at risk of homelessness, including providing them with temporary accommodation.

As housing is a devolved issue, we would advise you to contact the Welsh Government for information about temporary accommodation in Wales.

Transport: Royal Family

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration is given to the level of carbon emissions to the mode of transport made available from public funds to any member of the Royal Family. [HL288]

The Earl of Courtown: The Royal Household recognises that its operations and activities have an impact on the environment (including travel). When deciding on the most appropriate means of travel – the following factors are taken into account: safety, security, dignity, the need to minimise disruption for others, the effective use of time, environmental impact, and cost.

The programme of overseas visits which is funded by the Sovereign Grant is determined by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and approved by the Royal Visits Committee according to agreed priorities.

Tree Planting

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many trees have been planted in (1) England, (2) Scotland, and (3) Wales, in each of the last three years; and what were the respective acreages of (a) replanting of existing woodlands, and (b) new afforestation. [HL321]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Forestry Commission produces statistics on woodland planting and restocking by area, but not by tree numbers, in the UK. These are Official Statistics produced to meet the standards of the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Woodland area statistics can be found on the Forest Research website together with background information at: <https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/>

The area of new planting (woodland creation) and publicly funded restocking for each country in each of the last three years, taken from the published statistics, which report in hectares, is shown below.

Woodland Area (thousands of hectares)

<i>Year (ending 31/3)</i>	<i>New planting</i>	<i>Restocking</i>
England		
2016-17	1.15	3
2017-18	1.5	2.04
2018-19	1.42	1.65
Wales		
2016-17	0.4	1.67
2017-18	0.24	1.71
2018-19	0.52	1.44
Scotland		
2016-17	4.76	11.07
2017-18	7.14	9.66
2018-19	11.21	11.19

Note: Publicly funded restocking is defined in the statistics as restocking of Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales Forest Service Woodlands and grant aided restocking of private sector woodland. This means that the level of restocking is under-reported in these statistics.

Trident Submarines: Procurement

Asked by *Lord Trefgarne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the first of the new Dreadnought-class submarines to go to sea; and when they expect it to go into service. [HL361]

Baroness Goldie: The first Dreadnought Class ballistic missile submarine will enter service in the early 2030s, as set out most recently in the eighth Annual Update to Parliament on the United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent, published on 20 December 2019.

Tunisia: Foreign Relations

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the present state of relations between the UK and Tunisia. [HL155]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK and Tunisia have a strong relationship. The signing of the UK-Tunisia Association Agreement on 4 October, and the UK-Tunisia Investment Forum on 22 October 2019 are recent highlights of our growing bilateral co-operation. We are committed to supporting Tunisia's political and economic reform, including through a programme of assistance worth over £12 million in 2019-2020. We look forward to working with the new Tunisian Government when it is formed and welcome Tunisia's participation in the UK-Africa Investment Summit in London on 20 January.

Tunisia: Overseas Aid

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) economic, and (2) security, assistance they intend to make available to Tunisia in 2020. [HL156]

Baroness Sugg: UK-Tunisia relations are close, and the UK is committed to our strong bilateral relationship with Tunisia. We share similar views on many regional and strategic issues and have good security and trade relations. We are increasing our support to help the country develop its economy and address long term challenges like youth unemployment and tackling corruption while maintaining support to help build Tunisia's capacity to deal with the terrorist threat. In 2019/20, the UK Government's support is higher than ever providing support to economic development, economic reform and good governance. In the past UK funding has helped support second chance school centres across Tunisia for disadvantaged youth at risk of dropping out of education; train more than 2000 teachers in English Language and core skills development; provide financial support to over 100 entrepreneurs; and train civil servants in delivering key reforms and strategic communications.

Type 26 Frigates: Procurement

Asked by *Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the remaining five Type 26 frigates of the planned purchase of eight will be ordered. [HL366]

Baroness Goldie: The procurement of the Batch 2 Type 26 Frigates will be subject to a separate approval and contract which is expected to be awarded in the early 2020s.

Undocumented Migrants

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the numbers of illegal immigrants living in (1) England, (2) Northern Ireland, (3) Scotland, and (4) Wales. [HL152]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: By its very nature, it is not possible to know the exact size of the illegal population and so we do not seek to make any official estimates.

The Government is focused on making it harder for people to enter and live in the UK illegally, whilst ensuring those who have the right to reside in the UK can do so. Exit checks introduced in April 2015 will, over time provide more detailed insights into the behaviour of migrants and how they comply with the restrictions placed upon their length of stay in the UK, but the data obtained does not provide the total number of illegal migrants currently in the UK. In June 2019, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a note on measuring illegal migration.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/measuringillegalmigrationourcurrentview/2019-06-21>

Unmanned Air Vehicles

Asked by *Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of lethal drones and their commitment to the rule of law internationally. [HL326]

Baroness Goldie: The Government's policy is to defend the UK and its citizens against threats to their security. In implementing that policy the Government may draw on a wide range of tools, including, *in extremis*, the use of military force to remove such threats when there is no other effective option. If the Government does resort to the use of military force then it will act in accordance with the requirements of applicable international law and we expect others to do likewise. This applies equally to Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems

or 'drones' as it does to any other military asset or weapon. All UK weapon systems are reviewed to ensure their compliance with international law.

Video Recordings: Disinformation

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to introduce legislation to ban deepfake videos which promote misinformation. [HL176]

Baroness Barran: The Government recognises the potential challenges artificial intelligence and digitally manipulated content such as deepfakes may pose and we are considering these issues carefully as part of work to tackle online manipulation and disinformation.

The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. Ahead of the implementation of the new regulatory framework, we continue to work closely with companies to encourage them to take early action to address disinformation and online manipulation on their platforms. Platforms continue to make progress in this area and we welcome these efforts.

Wind Power

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the deployment of (1) offshore, and (2) onshore, wind energy. [HL286]

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The UK is the world's largest offshore wind market with 9.8GW installed, which is expected to rise to 14GW by 2023 and 19.5GW by 2026. On 23 July 2018, the Government announced the timetable for future Contracts for Difference auctions, which is the main mechanism for deploying new renewable technologies. The auctions have the potential to deliver up to 2GW of new offshore wind every year in the 2020s, which has given long term vision and clarity to the offshore wind sector.

The Offshore Wind Sector Deal, published on 7 March 2019, will build on the UK's global leadership in offshore wind bringing a strategic approach to deliver increased capacity of offshore wind, while boosting the UK economy, enhancing growth in the regions while continuing to reduce costs.

Onshore wind has also deployed successfully to date in the UK, recently exceeding 14GW of installed operational capacity. Onshore wind continues to fall in cost and has resulted in several merchant onshore wind sites being deployed to date.

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