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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Cabinet Office and Treasury
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
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, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Byfleet	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 5 May 2020

Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group: Annual Report

[HLWS219]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Today I am pleased to announce the publication of the 2nd annual report of the Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group. The Group provides Ministers with independent advice on matters relating to data ethics and ethical issues in forensic science and biometrics.

I would like to thank the Group for their strategic advice concerning the use and retention of biometric identifiers and for their advice on the development and testing of new biometric technologies.

The group have made four recommendations covering; the testing and use of Live Facial Recognition technologies by police forces; the design and implementation of Data Privacy Impact Assessments with the Home Office; and the use of familial DNA analysis results in assessing the value of genetic genealogy techniques for law enforcement.

In addition, the group continue to recommend a review of biometric retention and deletion schedules, particularly regarding custody images.

The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group annual report can be viewed on the website of the Group at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/biometrics-and-forensics-ethics-group> and a copy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS218]

Baroness Berridge: My right honourable friend the Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) intends to redeploy some employed staff and allocate some contracted inspectors to support government departments, their agencies, local authorities and the education and care sectors (including schools, further education colleges, nurseries and children's homes) during the period in which routine inspection has temporarily paused as a consequence of Covid-19.

The Government supports this approach, and the Secretary of State for Education has assigned an additional function to HM Chief Inspector for this purpose, under section 118(4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. A copy of the Secretary of State's letter to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector confirming this additional function will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Ofsted requires an advance to support the redeployment until the 2020-21 ambit is agreed through the passage of the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2020 in July.

Parliamentary approval for resources of £32,000,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Main Estimate for the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £32,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

As Ofsted is a non-ministerial department, I am making this statement on behalf of its Accounting Officer, to ensure that Parliament is informed of this advance from the Contingencies Fund in the normal way.

Covid-19 Update

[HLWS220]

Lord Bethell: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) has made the following written statement:

Yesterday we launched the NHS Covid-19 app ("the app") for initial rollout on the Isle of Wight over the next two weeks.

This is the first phase in the development and roll out of a national 'test and trace' programme which will bring together the app, expanded web and phone-based contact tracing, and swab testing for those with potential Covid-19 symptoms. This is a vital part of our plans as we move towards the second phase in our battle against Covid-19.

The app has been built by a team including world-leading doctors, scientists and tech experts. If someone installs the app, it will start logging the distance between their phone and other phones nearby that also have the app installed. If a person becomes unwell with symptoms of Covid-19, they can report this through the app, which will then anonymously alert other app users that they have come into significant contact with over the previous few days and provide appropriate advice. The app, which takes full consideration of privacy and security, has already been tested in closed conditions at an RAF base.

This initial rollout will provide valuable insights into how the public respond to and use the app and how we can improve it further. There will be no changes to social distancing measures during this initial rollout phase.

Using the app is voluntary but the more residents who download the app, the more informed our national response will be. The Isle of Wight is leading the way for the UK, for which we thank them.

The more rapidly we can identify people at risk of infection and provide them with advice on what action they should take, the more effectively we can reduce the spread of the virus. The test and trace programme will play an increasingly important part in our wider strategy to save lives and protect the health and care system.

Further details of the national roll out will be available soon.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 5 May 2020

Abortion

Asked by *Baroness Stroud*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their decision to allow at-home administration of mifepristone and misoprostol to induce an abortion following a telephone consultation, what plans they have to review their guidance on abortion that states that “the purpose of the requirement that two doctors certify the ground(s) for termination is to ensure that the law is being observed; this provides protection for the woman and for the doctors providing the termination”. [HL3440]

Lord Bethell: The Government has no plans to amend the legal requirement for two doctors to certify abortion procedures under the Abortion Act 1967. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have put in place two temporary measures in England; one of which is to ease the pressures of health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic by allowing registered medical practitioners to prescribe both pills for the treatment of early medical abortion up to 10 weeks from their own homes.

Abortion: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Stroud*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Secretary of State for Health that “they have no proposals to change any abortion rules as part of the COVID-19 response” on 24 March (HC Deb, col 244) and the remarks by Lord Bethell that “it is not right to rush through this type of change in a sensitive area such as abortion without adequate parliamentary scrutiny” on 25 March (HL Deb, col 1762), what (1) steps they took, and (2) consultation they undertook, before deciding to permit at-home abortion using the administration of mifepristone and misoprostol following a telephone consultation. [HL3439]

Lord Bethell: On 30 March, Ministerial powers under the Abortion Act 1967 were used to temporarily approve women's homes as a class of place where both abortion pills can be taken for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation following a telephone or e-consultation with a clinician. Doctors' homes have also been approved as a place from which abortion medication can be prescribed. Following the debate on 24 March the Department was presented with strong evidence from providers that the situation in relation to abortion provision was rapidly changing, services closing and large numbers of appointments for treatment were being cancelled. It was therefore considered that the balance of risk to allow a temporary modification of the arrangements for treatment for early medical abortion had shifted and the temporary modification should be allowed.

In reaching this decision account was also taken of wider advice regarding the need for some groups to isolate, that access to abortion is an urgent matter: the procedure's risk increases at later gestations and there are legal gestational limits for accessing services. This position is being kept under review and the temporary approvals will end once the risk from the COVID-19 pandemic recedes.

Agriculture: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 on the farming and agricultural sectors. [HL3199]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government is aware that coronavirus represents a very significant challenge, affecting daily life and every part of the economy. We are working closely alongside the agricultural industry to ensure that we understand and manage the impacts on farming and the agricultural sectors.

Defra's Food Chain Emergency Liaison Group (FCELG) is meeting regularly to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the food and farming sectors across the UK, and what actions are needed to support the sectors. This group includes the National Farmers Union (NFU), other industry stakeholders and the devolved administrations.

Since 18 March, the UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group (UKAMMG) has increased the frequency of its meetings to weekly. Its aim is to monitor UK agricultural markets and provide forewarning of any atypical market movements. During the coronavirus outbreak this is allowing Defra and the devolved administrations to share the latest stakeholder information to assess the effects of COVID-19 on the agricultural industry, as well as prepare the evidence base for a possible range of interventions needed in specific markets, or geographical regions.

Officials are having regular meetings with the different agricultural sectors to understand the specific issues affecting each sector. We have also provided all agricultural industry stakeholders with a central point of contact to send details of any emerging impacts as and when they arise.

The Secretary of State remains in regular contact with representatives of the farming and agricultural sectors and will continue to engage with them on the effects of COVID-19. We will continue to monitor the situation and to work closely with the farming sectors to respond to emerging issues as they arise.

Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote the Pick for Britain initiative, which aims to fill vacancies on fruit and vegetable farms. [HL3320]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: We know how important seasonal workers are to our farmers and we are aware of the impact that restrictions on travel from other countries, as a result of Covid-19, is having on the number of seasonal workers coming to work in the UK. We need to mobilise the British workforce to fill that gap and make sure our excellent fruit and vegetables are on people's plates over the summer months.

The Pick for Britain (PFB) website is a recently launched joint Defra and industry initiative to support this effort. The website acts as a central hub to signpost people to the jobs available. It provides guidance and resources so growers, workers and industry can have a single place to go, available at <https://pickforbritain.org.uk/>. The website also provides links to a wide range of recruitment campaigns organised by labour providers. The PFB website includes links to the Government's 'Find A Job' website, giving access to a wide reach of potential applicants. The Find a Job website has more than 1.6 million registered users and is available here: <https://findajob.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Our farmers are doing a fantastic job of feeding the nation during this challenging time. To help our farmers, industry Best Practice Guidance for employers of seasonal agricultural workers to avoid the spread of coronavirus has also now been published, which has been endorsed by Public Health England: <https://ahdb.org.uk/coronavirus/social-distancing-farm-businesses>.

Air Pollution

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the £304 million announced in the 2020 Budget for local authorities to improve air quality will be allocated, and what time period the fund covers. [HL3323]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The 2020 Budget allocated an additional £304 million to support delivery of the NO₂ plan, bringing the total amount of funding committed to tackling NO₂ to £880 million. This further funding covers the years 2020-2022 and will be used to support those local authorities identified in the NO₂ plan to deliver and mitigate the impacts of measures to tackle exceedances of legal limits for NO₂.

Arts: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many creative industries businesses have applied for the (1) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans scheme, (2) the Small Business Grants Fund, and (3) the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund since their introduction. [HL3241]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) opened for applications on 23 March. As of 21 April, over £2.8 billion worth of loans have been issued to over 16,600 businesses. Lenders have received a total of over 36,000 applications.

At this time we cannot provide a breakdown of CBILS funding by sector, as we have given lenders a temporary dispensation from uploading their data to the British Business Bank's system in order to let them focus on issuing new loans. This is a pragmatic step that reflects the urgency of getting loans issued. We are working with the British Business Bank, HM Treasury and the lenders on providing transparent and regular data publication going forward.

Government has also made £12.3 billion available to businesses under the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund. On 1 May, the Business Secretary made up to £617 million available to local authorities to support small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grant funding. Local authorities are contacting businesses directly to deliver these grants. See this link for further (attached) information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/top-up-to-local-business-grant-funds-scheme>

As of 3 May, over 697,000 business premises have received grants across the two schemes, totalling £8.6 billion. We do not receive management information from local authorities broken down by sector. We have, however, published, a full breakdown of grant funding allocated to and distributed by each local authority (attached) here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Business grant funds scheme [200505 Top-up to local business grant funds scheme - GOV.UK - 3241.pdf]

Local authority grant payment [200505-local-authority-grant-payments - HL3241.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3241>

Asthma: Prescriptions

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people in England with asthma who do not currently have prescription prepayment certificates. [HL3545]

Lord Bethell: This information is not held in the format requested.

Medical conditions are not disclosed when a prescription pre-payment certificate is purchased.

Asylum: Finance

Asked by **Lord Judd**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) increase asylum support rates in line with Universal Credit, and (2) provide further support to asylum seekers to assist with essential living requirements, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3263]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are currently reviewing the level of the cash allowances, as we do each year, to ensure that they remain capable of meeting the essential living needs of asylum seekers. There are no plans to increase the level of the cash allowances to Universal Credit levels.

Asylum: Housing

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of (1) homeless people, and (2) asylum-seekers, who are sharing emergency or asylum accommodation and are unable to self-isolate if necessary; and what steps they are taking to address this issue. [T] [HL3329]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: (1) This is a public health crisis more than anything and so requires a health response. To enable this our priority is to bring vulnerable people inside so they can self-isolate and stop the virus spreading. More than 5,400 rough sleepers and people who have been living in accommodation with communal sleeping spaces such as night shelters – over 90% of those known to local authorities at the beginning of the crisis have now been made offers of safe accommodation – ensuring some of the most vulnerable in society are protected from the pandemic. This is a truly remarkable achievement, and one which is the result of the hard work of local government, agencies and charities across the country, who have helped to get people off the street and into safe accommodation, protecting the most vulnerable in society and ultimately saving lives. We announced that councils across England will receive another £1.6 billion in additional funding to enable them to respond to other COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, stepping up support for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people. This takes the total funding to support councils to respond to the pandemic to over £3.2 billion. This is in addition to £3.2 million in targeted funding for councils to support vulnerable rough sleepers.

(2) The Accommodation providers recognise the challenge of managing COVID 19 within our accommodation estate and are working closely with Public Health England (PHE) on how their guidance on social distancing and self-isolation is properly applied, while ensuring that people can continue to access essential services.

In Initial Accommodation facilities, which tends to be hostel based, PHE Guidance recommends that separate rooms and segregation be provided for symptomatic people, or they should be moved to hotels. Our providers have configured their accommodation estate to meet this guidance.

In Dispersed Accommodation, which is houses or homes of multiple occupancy accommodating small numbers, Service Users have been provided guidance to ensure they socially distance or self isolate in line with the advice provided to the general public. Additionally, services providers have enhanced their contact management and wraparound services to ensure access to medical care, food packages and other essential items.

Aviation: Coronavirus

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to domestic air travel service providers; whether they offer support to more than one such provider operating on each route; and if not, how they decide which provider to support. [HL3113]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The aviation sector is important to the UK economy and the Government recognises the challenging times facing the sector as a result of COVID-19.

The aviation sector, including those operating domestic air services, will be able to draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals.

We are continuing to work closely with the sector and are willing to consider the situation of individual providers, so long as all other Government schemes have been explored and all commercial options exhausted, including raising capital from existing investors.

These measures have been designed to ensure that companies of any size receive the help they need to get through this difficult time.

Asked by **Lord Morris of Aberavon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what restrictions have been imposed on airport passengers arriving in UK airports as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and what assessment they have made of how any such restrictions compare with the restrictions on such passengers arriving in other major capital cities in Europe. [T] [HL3514]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The safety of passengers is a priority, and measures are already in place to protect people's health and safety when travelling by air. All airports are asked to follow Public Health England guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Public Health England has also provided specific guidance on

health and safety for flight crews. The advice for travellers is the same as for the rest of the UK population.

The Government's "stay at home" posters are on display at all UK airports and many airports have the messaging on digital screens as well. Airports and airlines have also been provided with Public Health England leaflets to give to passengers outlining the symptoms of COVID-19, current guidance, and general public health advice.

Our approach is being kept under review as the pandemic develops.

This may mean that measures and procedures change as we control the spread of, and understand more about, the virus. Any changes to our approach will be led by advice from SAGE and the Chief Medical Officer. Protecting the health of the UK public will always come first.

The Department is monitoring closely the measures being put in place in many countries, including all European countries. We continue to work closely with international partners to consider what measures are appropriate.

Asked by Lord Cormack

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many passengers have flown into the UK as their final destination since 1 April; and of those, how many were screened or tested at airports for COVID-19. [T] [HL3596]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Transport does not hold official statistics on the number of passengers that have flown into the UK as their final destination since 1 April 2020. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) collects data relating to the movements of commercial flights occurring at UK airports, and this data is received from UK airports up to two months after the end of each month in adherence to statistical regulation (EC) 437/2003 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of passengers, freight and mail by air. This data collection only contains information on the total number of passengers arriving into UK airports, without the capability to determine passengers arriving into the UK as their final destination.

Airlines and airports have already implemented additional measures in response to COVID-19 in line with advice from PHE, SAGE and the Chief Medical Officer. Airports are displaying posters and digital signage relaying Government information about COVID-19. Passengers arriving into UK airports are being given a leaflet with information about the measures in place in the UK, and announcements are made on aircraft an hour before landing.

Whilst there is community transmission within the UK, the role played by imported cases is less significant and so our focus in the current delay phase has not been on screening measures at the border.

Our approach is being kept under review as the pandemic develops. This may mean that measures and procedures change as we control the spread of, and

understand more about, the virus. Any changes to our approach will be led by advice from SAGE and the Chief Medical Officer. Protecting the health of the UK public will always come first.

Balance of Payments: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UK's balance of payments. [HL3313]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Official balance of payments statistics relating to the period of COVID-19 disruption in the UK are not yet available. The Office for National Statistics will publish trade statistics for March 2020 in May, and will publish balance of payments statistics for the first quarter of 2020 towards the end of June.

The Government has announced unprecedented support for public services, business and workers to protect against the current economic emergency. Our economic response is one of the most generous and comprehensive globally and the government is now working urgently to deliver these schemes as quickly as possible.

The Government is monitoring the impact measures are having with regard to supporting public services, businesses, and individuals, and keeps all policies under review.

Birth Registration: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government what alternatives are available for registering a birth where the local registrar has closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and how the 42-day legal deadline will be dealt with in such circumstances. [HL3218]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Information for a birth registration is legally required to be given in person by a qualified informant before a registrar. The General Register Office for England and Wales (GRO) has advised that birth registration appointments should, where possible, be deferred while the current measures to slow the spread of Covid-19 are in place. Where there is an urgent need for a birth to be registered, GRO and Local Authority registrars are considering how this can be achieved on a case-by-case basis within public health guidance and local authority policy.

The requirement for births to be registered within 42-days of the date of birth is not currently being enforced. Longer term planning to ensure all births are registered will be aligned to public health guidance.

Brexit

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation has taken place with stakeholders and, in particular, consumers, in relation to UK-wide Common

Frameworks, and what further consultations are planned. [HL3262]

Lord True: The UK Government remains committed to transparency in the UK common frameworks programme. The Cabinet Office has overall responsibility for the frameworks programme and engages regularly with a wide range of stakeholder organisations, including businesses and consumers, as well as providing updates on the development of UK common frameworks through regular publications.

Departments across Whitehall are responsible for developing individual frameworks and therefore undertake consultation with relevant stakeholders. Officials are currently revisiting the format of stakeholder engagement in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Balfre

To ask Her Majesty's Government to list, by airline, how many repatriation flights they have provided since 1 February for British citizens stranded due to COVID-19; and how many such citizens remain abroad waiting for flights. [T] [HL3495]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The welfare of British nationals remains our top priority, and we remain committed to ensuring that British travellers around the globe are able to return home. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work with airlines and foreign governments to keep vital routes open. We have now brought back more than 22,500 people on 108 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 22 different countries and territories. We have worked with the following airlines to provide these flights: British Airways, Biman, Cathay Pacific, EgyptAir, LATAM, PAL, Qatar Airways, Titan, TUI, Virgin Atlantic, Viva, Vueling.

We are aware that there are tens of thousands of British nationals remaining overseas and our effort is focused on supporting their return as quickly and safely as possible. Over the next week we will return thousands more Brits on 10s of charter flights from India, Nigeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Colombia, Guyana, Honduras, Ghana, Pakistan, Nigeria, and New Zealand.

Bus Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce minimum safety standards for the bus industry to improve the protection of drivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3214]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 7 April the Government published Public Health England's guidance regarding social distancing measures in the workplace. On 11 April, the Transport Secretary wrote to all bus

operators asking them to follow this guidance and implement measures recommended in it if they had not already done so. We continue working closely with the transport sector on the measures that are being put in place to protect staff.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) are updating their advice currently.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a scheme to assist companies facing cashflow problems due to large numbers of refund requests triggered by COVID-19 related cancellations. [HL3174]

Lord Callanan: The support announced by the Government is intended to support firms to keep trading throughout this difficult period. Cashflow issues are highly likely to be included in the list of difficulties any of these firms might experience.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) provides support to small businesses which were viable before the Covid-19 outbreak.

The Small Business Grant Fund is designed for eligible small businesses with relatively high fixed costs and experiencing reduced trade as a result of social distancing and closures policies.

Cameroon: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Cameroon about the importance of sending representatives to participate in the talks to be hosted by the Swiss Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue to facilitate an end to the security crisis in Cameroon. [HL3232]

Baroness Sugg: We welcome the ongoing work by the Swiss Government and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue on mediation efforts between parties in Cameroon. We urge the Government of Cameroon to remain engaged in this process and help to bring peace and stability to the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions. The British High Commissioner to Cameroon regularly engages in high-level discussions with the Government of Cameroon on the Anglophone crisis, including the mediation process led by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. The UK stands ready to support all credible peacebuilding initiatives.

Cancer: Surgery

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure there is an adequate supply of medicine, including anaesthetic drugs, to enable urgent

cancer surgery to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3473]

Lord Bethell: As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients continue to access safe and effective medicines. We are aware there is an increase in demand for a number of intensive care drugs including anaesthetic drugs and we are working with the pharmaceutical industry to make additional supplies available. We are also being ably supported by NHS England and NHS Improvement to ensure all supplies available are managed equitably across the United Kingdom.

Carbon Capture and Storage

Asked by *Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost of achieving their net-zero carbon target (1) with, and (2) without, carbon capture, utilisation and storage. [HL3195]

Lord Callanan: The independent Committee on Climate Change has estimated that the annual cost of delivering a net zero target is within the same range as the 80% target was at the time that target was set in 2008 – equivalent to 1-2% of GDP in 2050. Our own assessment of costs falls within this range. The CCC also advised that meeting our net zero emissions target by 2050 without carbon capture and storage (CCS) is likely to be more costly to achieve.[1] We believe CCS is therefore likely to play a vital role in meeting our target to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

As well as reducing emissions, CCS can play a vital role in levelling up the economy – supporting the low carbon economic transformation of our industrial regions, creating new high value jobs, providing new economic opportunities for British companies and supply chains and attracting investment from all around the world. For example, the UK could become a global leader and capture up to £10 billion of an estimated £200 billion per year global CCUS market in 2050, which could support up to 48,000 new jobs[2].

[1] <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CCC-Independent-Assessment-of-UKs-Clean-Growth-Strategy-2018.pdf>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-innovation-needs-assessments>

Carbon Capture and Storage: Infrastructure

Asked by *Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much funding will be required to develop the infrastructure necessary for carbon capture, utilisation and storage in the 2020s in order to meet their net-zero carbon target. [HL3196]

Lord Callanan: We are committed to deploying carbon capture and storage (CCS) this decade as we work towards Net Zero by 2050 and see an opportunity for the UK to become a global leader in CCS.

That's why we announced a new CCS Infrastructure Fund which will enhance long-term competitiveness of UK's industrial regions by providing at least £800 million to establish CCS in at least two UK clusters, one by the mid-2020s and another by 2030, contributing to our net zero targets and levelling up the economy.

In parallel, we are investing over £40 million between 2016 and 2021 in CCUS innovation, which includes £4.2 million funding for Tata Chemicals to construct a carbon capture and utilisation (CCU) plant. When operational in early 2021 the plant will capture and use approximately 40,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year to produce sodium bicarbonate and soda ash that can be used in high-end products such as haemodialysis equipment. Through the £24 million BEIS Call for CCUS Innovation, we are funding HyNet, project Acorn, OGCI Climate Investments and Drax/C-Capture to develop their CCUS deployment projects.

In addition, UKRI announced the allocation of the first phase of funding for the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge earlier this month, which we expect CCUS to play an important role in.

Carbon Capture and Storage: Public Consultation

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to respond to the consultation on Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) Business Models, which opened on 22 July 2019 and closed on 16 September 2019. [HL3304]

Lord Callanan: We are committed to deploying carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) this decade as we work towards net zero by 2050 and see an opportunity for the UK to become a global leader in CCUS.

We are determined to realise the key strategic opportunities of CCUS in a way that is affordable and value for money for the consumer and taxpayer. As part of this we continue to work closely with industry to design business models which provide value to the economy, drive decarbonisation and are compatible with existing market frameworks.

Our intention is to respond to our consultation on CCUS business models in due course.

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of those who have died in care homes whose death certificate mentioned COVID-19 were (1) discharged from hospital to a care home, and (2) admitted to a care home from their residential address. [HL3011]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Baroness Cox,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how many of those who have died in care homes whose death certificate mentioned COVID-19 were (1) discharged from hospital to a care home, and (2) admitted to a care home from their residential address (HL3011).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes mortality data that are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration.

Table 1 below shows the number of deaths that occurred in care homes in England and Wales where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate in 2020 (occurring up to week 16; the week ending 17 April 2020 and registered by 25 April). The data is broken down by place of usual residence, which is either home or care home, and the residency period. The length of residency is therefore used here as an indication of whether the individual had recently moved (within the last 6 months) into the care home, prior to their death. Please note this data is provisional.

Data identifying whether the individual had recently transferred from hospital to the care home, prior to their death, is currently unavailable.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Provisional figures on death occurrences in care homes where coronavirus (COVID-19) was mentioned on the death certificate in England and Wales and place of usual residence was home or care home^{[1][2][3][4]}

Residency length	6 months or over	Under 6 months	Unknown	Total
Total	2,412	1,023	67	3,502
Care home	2,144	438	48	2,630
Home	268	585	19	872

Source: ONS

[1] Deaths of non-residents are included in the England and Wales total.

[2] Figures based on date a death occurred rather than registered. There is sometimes a delay in registering deaths, more information can be found in [our registration delay](#) release.

[3] Care homes include homes from the chronic sick; nursing homes; homes for people with mental health problems and non-NHS multi-function sites.

[4] These figures are calculated using the most up-to-date data we have available to get the most accurate

estimates. Therefore it is based on deaths registered up to 25 April

Asked by Baroness Drake

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure alternative support will be provided if there are insufficient staff available to support residents in a care home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3306](#)]

Lord Bethell: We know that many social care providers are working together and with local government and health services to support each other with workforce shortages. We will further facilitate this mutual aid by shortly publishing guidance about the redeployment of staff and the use of volunteers. We are developing our data collection to provide information on workforce pressures across England, ensuring that resources can be targeted where they are most needed. Additionally, on 23 April we launched a new national recruitment campaign which aims to attract 20,000 people into social care over the next three months. To enable quick recruitment, we are temporarily providing free-of-charge Disclosure and Barring Service applications and fast-track Barred List checks for many of our vital social care roles. We are also working with NHS England to ensure that nurses returning to practice are deployed where they are most needed.

Carers: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Drake

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to provide additional support to kinship carers who are caring for vulnerable children as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3307](#)]

Baroness Berridge: Local authorities have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need living within their areas. This can include support for kinship care families who look after vulnerable children. Councils across England are getting an additional £3.2 billion to help them to deal with the immediate impacts of coronavirus, including to support vulnerable children.

Kinship families whose children left care through special guardianship orders are eligible for therapeutic support through the recently announced Adoption Support Fund COVID-19 scheme. The scheme will pay for different types of therapeutic support for families whose children have experienced trauma or abuse in their early life and as a result be made more anxious during the current coronavirus crisis.

We are working with sector organisations such as the Family Rights Group and Grandparents Plus who represent kinship carers to understand the challenges and identify opportunities to increase the support available to them.

Charitable Donations: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Hollins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to introducing schemes to encourage charitable donations during the COVID-19 pandemic, including giving donors 100 per cent of tax relief rather than splitting that relief through Gift Aid. [HL3193]

Baroness Barran: In recognition of the vital role that the charity sector plays in the UK, the Government has long provided tax reliefs to help charities carry out their charitable aims. This includes the provision of tax reliefs directly to charities to increase the amount they have to spend on charitable activities; and on donations, to incentivise charitable giving. Gift Aid is widely supported and is worth around £1.3billion (2018-19). Giving 100% tax relief to the donor for donations to charities would mean charities losing out on valuable Gift Aid income. However, those who wish to receive 100% tax relief can make their donations through Payroll Giving.

As part of the government's £750million support package for charities, the government announced it would match-fund public donations to the BBC's Big Night In charity appeal on 23 April, starting with a contribution of at least £20 million to the National Emergencies Trust appeal. The event has raised over £33 million in donations from the general public. We encourage the public to continue donating to the National Emergencies Trust appeal, which is coordinating national support for local charities doing vital work during the pandemic.

Charities and Voluntary Work: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support arts charities with community outreach work which have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3243]

Baroness Barran: In order to support the arts sector specifically, including those charitable organisations within the sector, DCMS has worked closely with Arts Council England to provide a tailored package of financial support. In March, Arts Council England announced a £160m emergency response package to complement the financial measures already announced by the Government and support the resilience of this vital sector. This funding package will support organisations and individuals who need the most support to see them through this crisis. More details can be found on the Arts Council's website:

(<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19>).

Many charitable organisations within the Arts are continuing to provide their world class content in innovative and unique formats and continue to engage with their communities. The Globe Theatre, The National Theatre and The Royal Opera House are all providing access to their online catalogues and providing access to culture in digital formats in order to maintain their links

with communities. In addition, Sadler's Wells is presenting a programme of full-length dance performances and workshops online to connect people through dance, and Wiltshire Creative is working with its young ambassadors to plan a Takeover Festival which will run over the summer online and consist of events, performances and activities.

Charities: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the loss of income of charities in the educational sector who rely upon providing training to teachers and lecturers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3166]

Baroness Barran: I am aware of the strain that many charities are under during this time of financial uncertainty and increased demand on their services. On 8 April, the government announced a £750 million funding package for charities delivering frontline services. Unfortunately not all charities will be able to benefit from this, so they should also consider whether they are eligible for other existing government schemes, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self Employment Income Support Scheme, Business Interruption Loans and deferring VAT payments.

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to increase the amount that charities can claim through Gift Aid to 50p for every £1 donated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3217]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises the vital work charities are doing to support the country during the coronavirus pandemic and on 8 April pledged £750 million to ensure they can continue their vital work. Additionally, many charities can also benefit from the other support schemes put in place by the government, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme.

However, there are no plans to increase Gift Aid tax repayments from 25p to 50p for every £1 on donations made to charities. Full tax relief is already available on donations made with Gift Aid, with basic rate relief being claimed by the charity and higher rate relief available to the taxpayer where relevant.

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support charities during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what plans are in place to ensure the future of charities once normal trading conditions are returned to. [HL3336]

Baroness Barran: The £750 million funding package announced on 8 April will support front line charities providing vital services and helping vulnerable people affected by Covid-19.

DCMS is now working with NLCF to design the eligibility, application and assessment criteria for funding and we expect the application system for this fund to be operational shortly.

The government will also be providing match funding for funds raised through the BBC's Big Night In, held on the 23rd April with Comic Relief and Children in Need, of which £20 million will go to the National Emergencies Trust appeal supporting local charities through the UK Community Foundation network.

We are proactively engaging across the sector, to maintain a complete picture of the impact of coronavirus on charities. We have also started to consider potential scenarios for the post COVID-19 recovery phase and how government and civil society can best respond to them.

China: Animals

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they made to the government of China (1) prior to, and (2) subsequent to, the global outbreak of COVID-19 with respect to the regulation or closure of 'wet' markets. [HL3184]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Wet markets exist all around the world. All wet markets should follow best practice on hygiene and safety to avoid health issues, whether in China or elsewhere and that should include safe sourcing of animal and other products.

The UK has always been at the forefront of international efforts to ensure global trade in wild animals is sustainable and well regulated, including through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). We are investing over £36m between 2014 and 2021 and last year pledged a further £30 million over three years to crack down on the abhorrent illegal trade in animals and plants.

On 24 February 2020 China's National People's Congress announced a ban on the trade and consumption of wildlife for food. We welcome this decision and urge China to ensure it is strictly enforced so that all meat for sale is sustainably and legally sourced and poses no threat to human health. We have been in regular contact with the Chinese authorities since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, including a phone conversation between the Foreign Secretary and Foreign Minister Wang-Yi on 20 March.

China: Foreign Relations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Prime Minister, or his representatives, last spoke to the President of China. [HL3409]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister spoke to President Xi about the coronavirus pandemic on 23 March. A summary of this call is available on gov.uk.

Chloroquine: Shortages

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the shortage of the drug Chloroquine. [HL3612]

Lord Bethell: The Department is working closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to help ensure patients can access the medicines they need, including chloroquine, and precautions are in place to reduce the likelihood of future shortages.

Chloroquine is not currently licensed to treat COVID-19 related symptoms or prevent infection. Clinical trials are being established to test chloroquine as an agent in the treatment of COVID-19. Supplies of chloroquine for patients that are using this medicine for its licensed indications can be accessed through usual routes. The company has experienced a significant increase in demand recently, so are working with their wholesalers to manage orders and are working hard to make further stocks available. In addition, there is an export ban in place to protect United Kingdom stocks of chloroquine that are intended for UK patients.

Civil Aviation Authority and European Aviation Safety Agency: Finance

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 23 March (HL2423), what financial contribution UK industry made to the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in each of the last five years; and what assessment they have made of the financial contribution industry (1) has made to the work by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to prepare for leaving the EASA, and (2) will make to the CAA from 1 January 2021. [HL3248]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) activities are funded mainly from charges to industry with the remainder from the European Union and participating states. Financial information is available in EASA's annual activity reports. The latest published figures (2018) show that the industry contribution to EASA made up 67.7 per cent of its total funding of EUR155,449,000. This is a typical percentage compared with previous years. The figures are not broken down by Member State.

The CAA's charging schemes have included funding for Brexit preparations since 2019/20, covering two financial years. This has amounted to £3.2 million. Funding prior to 2019/20 was provided by the Department for Transport. The level of fees paid by industry from 1 January 2021 will depend on the nature of negotiated agreements with the EU and the number of companies and individuals seeking approvals from the

CAA. The CAA will consult on any changes to its existing charging schemes.

Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations: Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Department for International Development attached any public interest conditions to the £250 million granted to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations for the development of a COVID-19 vaccine. [HL3072]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is leading international efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine that is equitable and accessible.

Following a virtual summit of G20 leaders on the 26 March, the UK Prime Minister called on governments to work together to develop a vaccine as quickly as possible and make it available to anyone who needs it. As subsequently agreed by the G20, we support a global approach to the rapid development and scaled up manufacture of vaccines that are equitable and accessible. We are working with technical partners and WHO to support an approach to Research & Development, regulation and funding that will deliver that.

Our £250 million funding to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) is the biggest donation of any country to date. CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil society organisations, to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics. CEPI is leading the international coordination of vaccine research, making sure that the best experts from around the world get the investments they need to make rapid progress on a vaccine for this COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the UK is also the largest funder to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Gavi will play a key role in working with CEPI to make a new coronavirus vaccine available and affordable.

Companies: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the suitability of current COVID-19 support schemes for single person companies where the worker draws dividends in lieu of a salary from the company. [HL3173]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages, and is not eligible for support. Under current reporting mechanisms it is not possible for HM Revenue and Customs to distinguish between dividends derived from an individual's own company and dividends from other sources, and between dividends in lieu of employment income and as returns from other corporate activity. Expanding the scope would require HMRC to collect and verify new information. This would take longer to deliver

and put at risk the other schemes which the Government is committed to delivering as quickly as possible.

Individuals who are not eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme may be able to access other support Government is providing, including the Bounce Back Loans Scheme for small businesses, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the deferral of tax payments. More information about the full range of business support measures is available on GOV.UK.

Constitutions

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to implement UK-wide constitutional reform; and what steps they intend to take ensure that any such plans are inclusive of all devolved nations and regions within the UK. [HL3186]

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to establishing a UK-wide constitutional convention to address issues of democratic accountability and devolution. [HL3187]

Lord True: The Government has announced its intention to develop proposals to restore trust in our institutions and in how our democracy operates. Further announcements on this will be made in due course. We will of course consult across the UK, including with the devolved administrations, on any issues that would affect devolved competence or where devolved nations will have a significant interest.

The Government has no plans to establish a UK wide constitutional convention.

Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to monitor, together with the charitable sector and wider civil society, the adverse short- and long-term consequences of the (1) COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) Coronavirus Act 2020. [HL3138]

Lord Bethell: We are doing everything we can to tackle the pandemic and mitigate its impact. We are mobilising every element of Government to defend our people and our country.

On Wednesday 25 March, the Coronavirus Bill 2020 was given Royal Assent. An impact assessment and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) assessment were conducted in relation to the provisions contained in the Coronavirus Act. The PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities, including those with protected characteristics. We will continue to consider the impacts on people with

protected characteristics when considering how to use powers contained in the Act.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is proactively engaging across the charity sector to maintain a complete picture of the impact of COVID-19 and is working to identify the additional support charities require through this time of financial instability. On 8 April 2020 the Government pledged £750 million to ensure charities can continue their vital work supporting the country during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans are being processed quickly and efficiently; and how long, on average, they estimate it will take for a business to receive such a loan. [HL3271]

Lord Callanan: The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) opened for applications on 23 March. Since that date, we have made changes to widen the scheme's eligibility so that more small businesses across the UK can benefit from the scheme, by extending loans to all viable small businesses affected by the Coronavirus, not just those unable to secure regular commercial financing. We have worked with the lenders to implement some technical changes to the British Business Bank's processes that ensure that applications will be processed faster. As of 21 April, over £2.8bn worth of loans have been issued under CBILS, to over 16,000 businesses.

Lenders, such as banks, are responsible for providing loans supported by the guarantee. The exact terms of each loan and length of application will vary from lender to lender. Lenders are fully aware of the current urgency, so we would expect them to respond appropriately to their customers' needs.

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the interest rates will be for businesses who have been supported via a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan, following the end of the 12-month zero-interest rate period of that scheme; and what plans they have to ensure that such rates stay below 6 per cent. [HL3272]

Lord Callanan: Interest rates charged under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) are set at the discretion of each lender. The UK Government expects that the benefit of the guarantee under the CBILS Scheme is reflected in the interest that is charged on the CBILS Facility. This expectation is re-enforced by the State Aid rules that also require this.

The Government held discussions with the banking industry prior to the launch of CBILS and the Business Secretary continues to hold regular calls with each of the biggest CBILS lenders to address feedback on how the

scheme has been working and closely monitor its implementation to ensure that companies feel the full benefits of this support.

CBILS lenders have agreed that no early repayment charges will be levied should a borrower choose to repay their CBILS facility earlier than planned.

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the average interest rate that will be charged to businesses who have been supported via a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan following the end of the 12-month zero-interest rate period of that scheme. [HL3335]

Lord Callanan: Interest rates charged under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) are set at the discretion of each lender. The UK Government expects that the benefit of the guarantee under the CBILS is reflected in the interest that is charged on the CBILS Facility. This expectation is re-enforced by the State aid rules that also require this.

The Government held discussions with the banking industry prior to the launch of the CBILS and the Business Secretary continues to hold regular calls with each of the biggest CBILS lenders to address feedback on how the scheme has been working and closely monitor its implementation to ensure that companies feel the full benefits of this support.

CBILS lenders have agreed that no early repayment charges will be levied should a borrower choose to repay their CBILS facility earlier than planned.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme: Arts

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many businesses in the (1) creative, and (2) music, sector had received support under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme by 14 April. [HL3172]

Lord Callanan: As of 1 May, in total over £4.7 billion worth of loans have been issued under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to 29,496 businesses. We are working with the British Business Bank, HM Treasury and the lenders on providing transparent and regular data publication going forward.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether employees on Maternity Allowance can categorise that Allowance as earnings for the purpose of calculating furlough payments. [HL3270]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is designed to help employers whose operations have been severely affected by

coronavirus (COVID-19) to keep their employees and protect the UK economy.

Under the CJRS, an employer will be entitled to claim for a grant that covers 80% of their furloughed employee's usual monthly wage costs, up to £2,500 a month. They can also claim for the associated Employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions, up to the level of the minimum automatic enrolment employer pension contribution, on that subsidised furlough pay.

For employees on fixed pay, claims for full or part time employees furloughed on return from family-related statutory leave should be calculated against their salary, before tax, not the pay they received while on family-related statutory leave. The same principles apply where the employee is returning from a period of unpaid statutory family-related leave.

Claims for those on variable pay, returning from statutory leave should be calculated using the highest of either:

- 80% of the same month's wages from the previous year (up to a maximum of £2,500 a month)
- 80% of the average monthly wages for the 2019 to 2020 tax year (up to a maximum of £2,500 a month)

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that people who are part-employed and part self-employed can access support through both the COVID-19 Job Retention and Self-employment Income Support Schemes. [HL3122]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: It is possible for individuals to benefit from both the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) if they meet the individual criteria for both schemes. For the CJRS, this will depend on furloughing decisions by the employer. For the SEISS, it will depend on whether an individual has at least 50% of their total income from trading profits in either 2018/19, or an average of the (up to) three years between 2016/17 and 2018/19. Further details can be found on GOV.UK.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Arts

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Equity members who are currently contracted in TV and theatre under a weekly payroll and have other characteristics of employees but have self-employed tax and National Insurance status because of their pattern of work are eligible under the COVID-19 Job Retention Scheme. [HL3125]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is only open to individuals who were employed on 19 March 2020 and on their employer's PAYE payroll on or before 19 March 2020. Individuals who are not eligible for the CJRS may be able to access the other support the Government is providing.

The new Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will allow eligible individuals to claim a grant worth 80% of their average monthly trading profits, paid in a single instalment covering 3 months, and capped at £7,500 altogether. Self-employed individuals, including members of partnerships, are eligible if they have submitted their Income Tax Self Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018-19, continued to trade and have been adversely affected by COVID-19. Full details can be found on GOV.UK.

Individuals who are not eligible for the CJRS or the SEISS may be able to access other support the Government is providing to support individuals through the outbreak, including an increase to the Universal Credit (UC) standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a relaxation of the UC minimum income floor for all self-employed UC claimants affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people in England and Wales aged (1) under 65, and (2) under 40 years old have died from COVID-19 since 23 March. [HL3276]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lord Pearson,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how many people in England and Wales aged under 65 years, and aged under 40 years have died from coronavirus (COVID-19) since 23 March (HL3276).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces a weekly report on provisional deaths registered in England and Wales[1], including deaths involving COVID-19. The week runs from Saturday to Friday. I have therefore provided data from 21 March up to the most recent week available, ending 17 April. ONS mortality statistics are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration.

Table 1 below shows the number of deaths that occurred where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate between week 13 (ending 27 March 2020) and week 16 (17 April 2020). We have included these figures as they are presented in our weekly report.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Weekly provisional figures on death occurrence where coronavirus (COVID-19) was mentioned on the death certificate in England and Wales[2][3][4][5][6]

Week number	13	14	15	16
Week ended	27-Mar-20	03-Apr-20	10-Apr-20	17-Apr-20
All ages	1,806	4,989	7,833	7,288
Under 40	26	39	50	40
Under 65	259	688	1001	799

Source: ONS

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/latest>

[2] Counts of deaths involving Covid-19 will include neonatals.

[3] For deaths registered from 1st January 2020, cause of death is coded to the ICD-10 classification using MUSE 5.5 software. Previous years were coded to IRIS 4.2.3, further information about the change in software is available.

[4] Does not include deaths where age is either missing or not yet fully coded

[5] An 'underlying cause of death' refers to the main cause of death, whereas a cause being 'mentioned on the death certificate' means that it might be the main reason or a contributory reason to the cause of death

⁵ These figures include deaths of non-residents.

[6] These figures represent death occurrences, there can be a delay between the date a death occurred and the date a death was registered. More information can be found in our [impact of registration delays release](#).

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many deaths attributed to COVID-19 have been recorded in (1) care homes, (2) hospitals, (3) individuals' homes, and (4) other locations. [HL3277]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lord Pearson,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am replying to your Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths attributed to COVID-19 have been recorded in (1) care homes, (2) hospitals, (3) individuals' homes, and (4) other locations (HL3277).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces a weekly report on provisional deaths registered in England and Wales[1], including deaths involving COVID-19. The week runs from Saturday to Friday, and data has therefore been provided for all deaths attributed to COVID-19 up to

the most recent week available, ending 17 April. ONS mortality statistics are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration.

Table 1 below shows the number of deaths that occurred where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate up to and including 17 April 2020. We have included these figures as they are presented in our weekly report.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Provisional figures on total death registrations where coronavirus (COVID-19) was mentioned on the death certificate in England and Wales up to 17 April 2020 by place of occurrence[2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10]

	Total deaths (COVID-19)
Care Home	3,096
Hospital (acute or community, not psychiatric)	14,796
Home	883
Other	337
Total	19,112

Source: ONS

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/latest>

[2] Coding of deaths by cause for the latest week is not yet complete and counts could be subject of change.

[3] For deaths registered from 1st January 2020, cause of death is coded to the ICD-10 classification using MUSE 5.5 software. Previous years were coded to IRIS 4.2.3, further information about the change in software is available.

[4] These figures represent death registrations, there can be a delay between the date a death occurred and the date a death was registered. More information can be found in our [impact of registration delays release](#).

[5] An 'underlying cause of death' refers to the main cause of death, whereas a cause being 'mentioned on the death certificate' means that it might be the main reason or a contributory reason to the cause of death

[6]Deaths at home are those at the usual residence of the deceased (according to the informant), where this is not a communal establishment.

[7]Care homes includes homes for the chronic sick; nursing homes; homes for people with mental health problems and non-NHS multi-function sites.

[8]Other includes:

Hospices: including Sue Ryder Homes; Marie Curie Centres; oncology centres; voluntary hospice units; and palliative care centres.

Other Communal Establishments: including schools for people with learning disabilities; holiday homes and hotels; common lodging houses; aged persons' accommodation; assessment centres; schools; convents and monasteries; nurses' homes;

Elsewhere: including all places not covered above such as deaths on a motorway; at the beach; climbing a mountain; walking down the street; at the cinema; at a football match; while out shopping; or in someone else's home.

This category also includes people who are pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

[9] These figures are calculated using the most up-to-date data we have available to get the most accurate estimates.

[10] Non-residents are included in the England and Wales total but not England and Wales separately. For this reason, counts for "England" and "Wales" may not sum to "England and Wales".

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions, if any, the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies have had with economists on the economic impacts of the lockdown; and if no discussions have taken place, what the reasons are for not holding such discussions. [HL3045]

Lord Callanan: The Government makes decisions based on the best scientific evidence, along with consideration of the economic, operational, social and policy implications of any interventions that might be introduced. The remit of SAGE is to provide science advice to the Government, but this is just one part of the picture. Scientific advice from SAGE is often considered alongside advice from other specialisms such as economics. As new scientific questions emerge, the participants at SAGE will change to provide the best available scientific evidence at that time.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by the World Health Organisation that there is no evidence of COVID-19 immunity amongst those who have recovered from the virus. [HL3345]

Lord Bethell: The World Health Organization's statement is correct based on current knowledge.

SARS-COV-2 emerged four months ago and most cases outside China have occurred over the last two months.

Immunity refers to the protection against re-infection with the same virus or strain of virus because the host has mounted an immune response, usually by way of producing antibodies. Whether these antibodies are just a host response to infection or whether the antibodies are protective against re-infection is yet to be established as

there are no published studies that assess the protective capability of the antibodies.

It is too early to know how long the protective immune response, if one exists even for the short term, against SARS-CoV-2 will last, as this will require longitudinal serological studies that follow patients' immunity over an extended period of time.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to evaluate different contact-tracing technologies and the possible timeframes for their implementation. [HL3405]

Lord Bethell: We are working with leading tech firms and experts in clinical safety and digital ethics in developing our contact-tracing app, drawing on a wide range of commercial, academic and international best practice. The technology is based on research evidence developed by epidemiologists, mathematical modellers and ethicists.

We are actively considering when the best time would be to roll-out the app. Scaled-up contact tracing is likely to have greatest value when we have achieved reductions in the incidence of the virus to ensure low levels of transmission are maintained.

Coronavirus: Mental Health Services

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional resources they are committing to mental health services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3365]

Lord Bethell: The Government has recently announced an additional £5 million grant to Mind and the Mental Health Consortia to administer a COVID-19 mental health response fund to mental health voluntary and community sector organisations across England. The aim is to promote mental health and wellbeing support, which complements National Health Service services, to those struggling with their mental health and will include peer support, telephone and online support.

We are also working to protect vital mental health services and support people with mental health issues particularly those shielding or self-isolating. We have published official guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing and for parents and carers about supporting their children's mental health and wellbeing and are promoting this through trusted online channels like GOV.UK and Every Mind Matters.

Coronavirus: Mental Illness

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they have put in place to provide additional (1) monitoring, and (2) reporting, of anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide, and other mental illnesses, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3029]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England has instigated processes with the aim of providing near to real time information about changes to the population's mental health and wellbeing during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. These processes will identify, gather and analyse available sources of real time (or near to real time) data about population mental health and wellbeing and will bring together, in one place, information on anxiety, depression, loneliness, stress, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

There is currently no national real-time suspected suicide surveillance system - although some local areas have developed such systems. Public Health England is considering how variation in the number and nature of deaths by suspected suicide in the population might be assessed during and beyond the COVID-19 outbreak.

Coronavirus: Older People

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to concentrate their international response to COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries on those who are 60 years old and above. [HL3159]

Baroness Sugg: We recognise that that older people, people with disabilities, people with pre-existing conditions, and those with complex needs are disproportionately impacted and at more serious risk of severe complications and fatality due to COVID-19. We are working hard to ensure that our help reaches those most in need, including older people, through close collaboration with our partners.

Our funding is supporting a range of initiatives and partners to ensure that it can reach those in need and strengthening fragile health services in the world's poorest countries where there is a high chance of the disease spreading rapidly.

This includes supporting the United Nation's Global Humanitarian Response Plan to tackle COVID-19 and help to the most vulnerable across the globe. The plan explicitly identifies older people given their susceptibility to the virus and their broader vulnerability. Our latest UK aid announcement on 12 April of £200 million, is supporting humanitarian organisations to help reduce mass infections in developing countries that often lack the healthcare systems to track and halt the virus. This includes £130 million to UN agencies in response to their COVID-19 humanitarian appeals.

In order to reduce transmission, the UK government is also working with Unilever to fund a £100 million global hygiene programme. This campaign will be tailored to communities to ensure messages are inclusive and effective. It will reach up to a billion people worldwide, raising awareness and changing behaviour, to make sure that people are washing their hands with soap regularly and disinfecting surfaces. The programme will also provide over 20 million hygiene products in the developing world, including in areas where there is little or no sanitation.

In addition, we are redirecting existing support and programmes to be more responsive to COVID-19.

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that older people in low- and middle-income countries have access to the information they need to minimise the risk of COVID-19. [HL3160]

Baroness Sugg: We recognise that that older people are disproportionately impacted and at more risk of severe complications and death due to COVID-19. As well as the immediate risk of catching COVID-19, marginalised groups also experience secondary impacts of the virus. This includes reduced access to healthcare services and information, which is further compounded by existing accessibility barriers.

For example, healthcare information is not routinely distributed in accessible formats. Older people with visual impairments will need access to large print documentation, or may need other alternative communication methods that fit best with their needs. We are working hard to ensure that our help reaches those most in need, including older people, through close collaboration with our partners.

Our funding is supporting a range of initiatives and partners to ensure that it can reach those in need and strengthen fragile health services in the world's poorest countries where there is a high risk of the disease spreading rapidly. This includes supporting the United Nation's Global Humanitarian Response Plan to tackle COVID-19 and help to the most vulnerable across the globe. The plan explicitly identifies older people given their susceptibility to the virus and their broader vulnerability. Our latest UK aid announcement on 12 April of £200 million, is supporting humanitarian organisations to help reduce mass infections in developing countries that often lack the healthcare systems to track and halt the virus. This includes £130 million to UN agencies in response to their COVID-19 humanitarian appeals.

To help reduce transmission and inform the public, the UK government is also working with Unilever to fund a £100 million global hygiene programme. This campaign will be tailored to communities to ensure messages are inclusive and effective. It will reach up to a billion people worldwide, raising awareness and changing behaviour, to make sure that people are washing their hands with soap regularly and disinfecting surfaces. The programme will also provide over 20 million hygiene products in the developing world, including in areas where there is little or no sanitation.

In addition, we are redirecting existing support and programmes ensure responses to COVID-19 are fully inclusive, including supporting the needs of older people.

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that their international response to

COVID-19 explicitly supports the health needs of older people in low- and middle-income countries. [[HL3233](#)]

Baroness Sugg: We recognise that that older people are disproportionately impacted and at more risk of severe complications and death due to COVID-19.

As well as the primary impacts of COVID-19, marginalised groups also experience secondary impacts of virus. This includes reduced access to healthcare, food and medications, due to increased pressure on healthcare systems, markets and supply chains, made worse by pre-existing accessibility challenges and barriers. We also understand that older people live in a variety of settings where social distancing advice may be challenging to enact, such as humanitarian settings or where older people are living in residential care. We are working hard to ensure that our help reaches those most in need, including older people, through close collaboration with our partners.

Our funding is supporting a range of initiatives and partners to ensure that it can reach those in need and strengthen fragile health services in the world's poorest countries where there is a high risk of the disease spreading rapidly. This includes supporting the United Nation's Global Humanitarian Response Plan to tackle COVID-19 and help to the most vulnerable across the globe. The plan explicitly identifies older people given their susceptibility to the virus and their broader vulnerability. Our latest UK aid announcement on 12 April of £200 million, is supporting humanitarian organisations to help reduce mass infections in developing countries that often lack the healthcare systems to track and halt the virus. This includes £130 million to UN agencies in response to their COVID-19 humanitarian appeals.

In addition, we are redirecting existing support and programmes ensure responses to COVID-19 are fully inclusive, including supporting the needs of older people.

Coronavirus: Pharmacy

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of pharmacies in England have received the basic equipment needed to handle safely the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL2817](#)]

Lord Bethell: As stated by the Prime Minister, every community pharmacy in England has now received a personal protection equipment delivery.

The full weight of the Government is behind this effort to provide health workers the equipment they need, and we are working closely with industry, the National Health Service, social care providers and the army to ensure the right equipment is delivered to the right people.

Coronavirus: Prisons

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made with the testing for COVID-19 of (1) prison staff, and (2) prisoners. [[HL3394](#)]

Lord Bethell: COVID-19 testing has been extended to cover prison staff, probation staff and those working in approved premises. Hundreds of staff have now been tested and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service is working with the Department testing teams to roll-out a COVID-19 testing plan for prison staff.

Coronavirus: Research

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to support the creation of an international pooling mechanism for COVID-19 research set up by the World Health Organization. [[HL3073](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK has long supported affordable and equitable access to essential medicines, vaccines and other health commodities, here in the UK and globally.

Measures to ensure access to products that may emerge from research include voluntary patent sharing and licensing, whereby patent holders allow others to manufacture, import, and/ or distribute their patented products to accelerate entry of generic medicines to market, pooled procurement and sharing and information exchange.

We are committed to collaborating with public and private partners in the UK and internationally, including exploring voluntary arrangements, such as existing mechanisms, to accelerate development and equitable access in all countries to affordable health technologies for responding to COVID-19. The shape of any agreements are being explored.

DFID is supporting global co-ordinating efforts through our support to the WHO R&D Blueprint. The Blueprint aims to accelerate research and innovation to contain the spread of the pandemic and ensure that those affected receive optimal care. This includes support to the 'Solidarity' trials which is testing four existing anti-viral agents or combinations which exist already that could be effective against COVID-19.

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they imposed any public interest conditions to the £14 million granted to the 21 new coronavirus research projects that were announced on 17 April. [[HL3074](#)]

Lord Callanan: These projects were funded through a joint UKRI-DHSC rapid response call that was launched

in February 2020 and has since announced a total of £24.6m worth of funding for 27 projects. Of the 21 projects announced on 17 April, 20 projects will receive their grants through UKRI terms and conditions which can be found on the UKRI website.

In addition to this, as researchers undertaking work relevant to public health emergencies they are required to set in place mechanisms to share quality-assured interim and final data as rapidly and widely as possible, including with public health and research communities and the World Health Organization in accordance with the [Joint statement on sharing research data and findings relevant to the novel coronavirus outbreak](#). This can be viewed on the Wellcome website.

The project contracted by DHSC was under standard policy research programme terms available from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) website. This contract has a range of terms that allow DHSC to ensure that public interest is delivered by the research.

Coronavirus: Sepsis

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 related deaths in the UK resulted from a secondary bacterial infection leading to sepsis. [HL3127]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lord Empey,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how many COVID-19 related deaths in the UK resulted from a secondary bacterial infection leading to sepsis (HL3127).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing weekly numbers of deaths registered in England and Wales. The most recent figures published are for deaths registered in 2018[1], however, we do publish provisional weekly deaths registrations which are currently published for deaths registered up to 10 April 2020[2]. National Records Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are responsible for publishing the number of deaths registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Cause of death is defined using the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th edition (ICD-10). Deaths involving COVID-19 are identified by the ICD-10 codes U07.1 and U07.2 and deaths involving sepsis are identified by the ICD-10 codes A40 and A41. Sepsis is likely to be caused by a bacterial infection, therefore we have assumed that all deaths involving sepsis would involve a bacterial infection and have therefore not searched for this separately.

Table 1 below shows the number of deaths occurring in March 2020 and registered by 10 April 2020 where the

death involved both COVID-19 and sepsis, where COVID-19 caused the sepsis. The data covers deaths registered in Great Britain, as data for Northern Ireland is not yet fully coded.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Table 1: Number of deaths occurring in March 2020 involving COVID-19 and sepsis, where COVID-19 caused the sepsis, Great Britain[3][4]

Geography	Number of deaths
Great Britain	26

Source: *Office for National Statistics, National Records Scotland*

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsregisteredinenglandandwalesseriesdrreferencetables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/weekending10apri l2020>

[3] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes U07.1, U07.2, A40 and A41.

[4] Figures are based on deaths occurring in March 2020, registered up until 10 April 2020

Coronavirus: Social Services

Asked by **Baroness Hollins**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what personal protective equipment they plan to provide to personal assistants and carers working with disabled adults, including those who are in receipt of continuing health care funding; and when any such equipment will be provided. [HL2690]

Lord Bethell: Care home and home care providers are being issued with personal and protective equipment. We are also engaging with key health and social care stakeholders to understand what more we can do to help the ensure continuity of supply.

Additionally, we are working with wholesalers to help ensure a longer-term supply of all personal protective equipment, including gloves, aprons, facemasks and hand sanitiser, to all care sectors.

Asked by **Baroness Masham of Ilton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address any potential shortages in care staff as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL2700]

Lord Bethell: On 25 March a new coronavirus Bill was given Royal Assent and is now an Act of Parliament. The Coronavirus Act 2020 aims to protect public health, increase National Health Service's capacity, strengthen

social care and support the public to take the right action at the right time.

On 27 March the Care Quality Commission published interim guidance on Disclosure and Barring Service and other recruitment checks, for providers recruiting staff and volunteers to health and social care services in response to COVID-19.

This guidance represents an interim change in expectations to support the health and social care system. It will only apply for the period the Coronavirus Act 2020 remains in force and will be kept under review during this time. These regulations are effective from 27 March 2020.

On 15 April the Action Plan for Adult Social Care was published. The Government's number one priority for adult social care is for everyone who relies on care to get the care they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people rely on this care and support every day. As the pandemic progresses, these vital services must remain resilient and the challenges of COVID-19 go far beyond anything we have previously experienced. The Government's approach in the action plan is made of four pillars:

- Controlling the spread of infection;
- Supporting the workforce;
- Supporting independence, supporting people at the end of their lives, and responding to individual needs; and
- Supporting local authorities and the providers of care.

This action plan sets out all settings and contexts in which people receive adult social care. This includes people's own homes, residential care homes and nursing homes, and other community settings – it applies to people with direct payments and personal budgets, and those who fund their own care. It supports the response services for the people who rely on technology-enabled care and monitoring services. The action plan will support care providers, the care workforce, unpaid carers, local authorities and the NHS in their ongoing hard work to maintain services and continue to provide high quality and safe social care to people throughout the pandemic. While this action plan applies to England only (as adult social care is a devolved matter) the Government of course continues to collaborate across the United Kingdom, to share learning and ensure all nations can benefit from new initiatives where possible.

Coronavirus: South Korea

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the approach taken by the government of South Korea to the COVID-19 pandemic and, specifically, their focus on testing, tracing and isolating; what plans they have, if any, to introduce a similar policy in the UK; and what contingency plans, if any, they have developed to enable implementation of such a policy. [HL3528]

Lord Bethell: We are working closely with other countries through international forums such as the G7, G20 and the World Health Organization, as well as on a bilateral basis on a range of issues relating to COVID-19.

We are developing a test and trace programme to support the next phase of our COVID-19 response. This will include a new app which will complement existing web and phone-based contact tracing approaches as well as swab testing. This programme will play an important role in helping to minimise the spread of the virus in the future.

Culture: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to use current cultural funding streams to support the cultural sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3244]

Baroness Barran: The Government has worked with various Arms Length Bodies to create tailored funding packages, made up of existing funding, to support the cultural sector at this time.

Arts Council England has announced a £160m emergency response package to complement the financial measures already announced by the Government and support the resilience of this vital sector. This funding package will support organisations and individuals who need the most support to see them through this crisis. More details can be found on the Arts Council's website (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19>).

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is also making £50 million available through the Heritage Emergency Fund which will address immediate pressures over the next 3-6 months for those most in need alongside increased investment in essential digital skills across the sector, providing expertise in critical areas such as digital fundraising, use of social media and communications, running online events and activities.

Historic England has also launched a £2 million Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund to provide grants to small heritage organisations. This funding will help organisations, voluntary groups and self-employed contractors survive the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic, and to prepare for recovery.

Dairy Products: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to assist farmers and processors to find alternative outlets for milk and other dairy products that would otherwise go to waste due to disrupted supply chains as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3297]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra is working very closely with both farmer and processor representatives through this period of disruption to manage the impact on

the dairy supply chain of Covid-19. Farmers supplying milk to processors that sell into the food service sector have seen a significant reduction in demand and we have taken several steps to support those affected.

This includes by temporarily setting aside some elements of competition law to enable farmers and the wider dairy sector to work together to minimise milk being wasted and to ensure it is processed into longer life dairy products. This approach will allow the market for milk to adjust to the change in demand for milk while allowing production to be restored when shops, restaurants and pubs are able to open again.

The Government's Covid-19 Business Interruption Loans scheme is available to the dairy industry to support them in this difficult period. I urge those farm businesses for whom it is appropriate to consider accessing these loans. Defra has held urgent discussions with the major banks to ensure they understand that farmers, milk buyers and milk processors are eligible for this scheme and we are working to increase awareness across the dairy industry. HMT have also now announced the new Bounce Back Loan scheme which will apply to businesses operating in agriculture. This will ensure that the smallest businesses can access up to £50,000 loans. The government will provide lenders with a 100% guarantee on each loan, to give lenders the confidence they need to support the smallest businesses in the country. We will also cover the first 12 months of interest payments and fees charged to the business by the lender.

The Government also took a number of early emergency steps to support dairy farmers and the wider sector. These included designating employees in the food sector as key workers and temporarily relaxing the normal rules on drivers' hours, enabling the sector to keep supply chains running, including deliveries from farm gate to processors.

Death

Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many deaths have been recorded in each of the last three months; and what assessment they have made of how many deaths would have occurred in each of the last three months if there had been no cases of COVID 19. [HL3274]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lord Pearson,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am replying to your Parliamentary Question asking for the number of deaths that have been registered in the last three months and predictions about how many deaths there would have been without COVID-19 (HL3274).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces a weekly report on provisional deaths registered in England and Wales[1]. The most recent figures available are for the week ending 17 April 2020. ONS mortality statistics are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration.

Table 1 shows the number of weekly deaths registered between week 1 (ending 3 January 2020) and week 16 (ending 17 April 2020), the five-year average per week and the number of deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate. The average is based on the number of death registrations that were recorded for each corresponding week over the previous five years. We have included these figures as they are presented in our weekly report. A copy of the table has been placed in the House of Lords Library. The table shows that the increase in number of excess deaths in the last two months, in relation to the five-year average per week, is greater than the number of deaths due to Covid19, suggesting that there are potentially other factors contributing to the increased death rate.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistere dweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/latest>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UKSA Response [PQHL3274.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3274>

Death: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress have they made in including in the figure of deaths due to COVID-19 announced each day those who have passed away in (1) all types care homes, (2) sheltered housing, and (3) private family homes. [HL3328]

Lord Bethell: The Government is committed to providing a full and transparent picture of COVID-19-related deaths, while avoiding double counting or publishing statistically misleading information. We publish daily figures on confirmed COVID-19 deaths in hospital, which provide the most up-to-date data on a consistent basis as the vast majority of serious cases and fatalities of the virus will occur in hospital settings.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is also publishing data on deaths registered each week, which includes deaths outside hospital settings. From 28 April 2020, the ONS will publish counts of deaths involving COVID-19 in care homes, based on reporting from care home operators to the Care Quality Commission.

Dental Services: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Colwyn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the evidence base was for excluding dental practices from the business rate relief support being offered during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what plans they have, if any, to extend that support to include such practices. [HL3253]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has provided enhanced support to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors through business rates relief given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as medical service providers, has also been made available.

The Government will consider any further financial assistance necessary to help businesses get through this period.

Department for International Development: Aviation

Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the recent Department for International Development Cargo and Passenger Air Charter Services Tender was not subject to a public procurement process, as was used when this tender was last issued in 2016. [HL3035]

Baroness Sugg: Traditionally, as part of Humanitarian Emergency Response Operations (HEROs,) DFID had a framework contract in place for the charter air component of its humanitarian response, this expired in April 2020. DFID appraised a number of options for the replacement service taking into consideration value for money and the most efficient service provision. Absorbing the air charter component into the HEROs contract was assessed as the preferred option.

This solution would result in better alignment between all elements of the response as well as minimising the requirement for DFID to run a parallel procurement process. The HEROs contract supplier would in turn run a robust and transparent procurement process, with an element of oversight from DFID, ensuring that a value for money service provision was maintained. The service provision would be delivered within the existing scope of services and no funding increases to the existing agreement would be required.

Developing Countries: Commodity Markets

Asked by Lord Price

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on commodity producers in developing

countries; and what support they plan to provide such producers. [HL3281]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government is working to assess and respond to the economic impact of COVID-19 on commodity producers. It is estimated that 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy – nearly half of the global workforce – stand in immediate danger of having their livelihoods destroyed. When assessing the employment landscape of the areas my Department works in, most people are employed along food and agriculture supply chains, including production. Whilst the impact varies greatly across sectors, in the flower and tea sectors we are seeing an immediate lost to salaries as a result of unemployment.

That is why we are repurposing key bilateral and multilateral programmes to pivot to help commodity producers impacted. Our Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme has already repurposed its latest awards and is looking for do more with expected new funding. For example, 55 Farmers' Organizations supported by the programme in Bangladesh have already developed 57 virtual call centres to market perishable products through using social medias and mobile apps. This helps protect incomes while avoiding a spike in food insecurity. Our Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness programme is supporting smallholder producers in Malawi, Uganda and Nepal, to keep supply chains going through the crisis through support to transport and market access and increased use of digital technologies.

We are urgently examining what funding is needed and how we can have the biggest impact, working in partnership with business and addressing these issues in the most vulnerable countries. I look forward to being able to provide more information on this in due course.

Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) current, and (2) future, impact of COVID-19 on developing countries; and what steps they plan to take in response. [HL3134]

Baroness Sugg: We are using UK aid to its full effect to counter the health, humanitarian, and economic risks and impact of this pandemic in the developing world. The UK has, so far, pledged £744 million of UK aid to help end this pandemic as quickly as possible.

Our latest UK aid funding of £200 million, announced on 12 April, will enable humanitarian organisations to help reduce mass infections in developing countries which often lack the healthcare systems to track and halt the virus. This funding includes £130 million to UN agencies in response to their COVID-19 humanitarian appeals.

The UK is also providing up to £150 million of UK aid funding which will go the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust to help developing

countries meet their debt repayments so that they can focus their available resources on tackling COVID-19. The UK has also worked closely with other G20 creditors and the Paris Club to provide a temporary suspension of debt repayments from the poorest and most vulnerable countries that request relief, further boosting countries' capacity to respond to the crisis.

Alongside our comprehensive COVID-19 response, which includes programmes in health, humanitarian support, financial aid and economic support, vaccines, and preparations for the recovery phase, we are redirecting existing support and programmes to be more responsive to COVID-19 and work on other DFID priorities will continue to help support the recovery phase and preparedness for future threats.

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to granting an immediate, condition free moratorium on debt interest payments for developing countries in order to release resources for such countries to deal with COVID-19. [HL3136]

Baroness Sugg: We are supporting the poorest countries, which represent a quarter of the world's population, to avoid economic collapse. Economic disruption hits the world's poor hardest and would deepen a global recession, making it harder for all of us to bounce back and prosper. The UK is providing up to £150 million of UK aid funding which will go the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust to help developing countries meet their debt repayments. This will allow them to focus their available resources on tackling COVID-19. The UK has also worked closely with other G20 creditors and the Paris Club to provide a temporary suspension of debt repayments from the poorest and most vulnerable countries that request relief, further boosting countries' capacity to respond to the crisis.

Disinformation: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to counter the effects of fake news about the causes of COVID-19. [HL3120]

Baroness Barran: DCMS stood up the Cross-Whitehall Counter Disinformation Unit on 5 March 2020, bringing together cross-government monitoring and analysis capabilities. Its primary function is to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent, scope and impact of disinformation and misinformation on the response to Covid-19. Where misinformation and disinformation is identified, the Unit works with partners to ensure appropriate action is taken on this, including direct rebuttal on social media. We are working closely with social media platforms to help them identify and remove incorrect claims about the virus, in line with their terms and conditions, as well as promote authoritative sources of information. The Secretary of State for Digital,

Culture, Media and Sport held a roundtable with major platforms earlier this month to explore how they can further limit the spread of misinformation.

Government is also running a counter disinformation campaign, "Don't feed the Beast" which aims to increase audience resilience by educating and empowering those who see, inadvertently share and are affected by false and misleading information. The campaign promotes the SHARE checklist, providing the public with five easy steps to identify false content, encouraging users to stop and think before they share content online.

Doctors and Nurses: Migrant Workers

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) nurses, and (2) doctors, whose countries of origin are outside the UK, are working in the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3064]

Lord Bethell: NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care or in general practitioner surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The latest data shows that, on a headcount basis, as at December 2019 there were:

- 35,204 non-United Kingdom national doctors, that is 29% of all doctors (excluding unknowns); and
- 56,805 non-UK national nurses and health visitors, that is 18% of all nurses and health visitors (excluding unknowns).

Doctors: Registration

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to expedite the registration of those doctors who are awaiting final registration by the General Medical Council so that they may assist with the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3062]

Lord Bethell: The Government is working closely with the General Medical Council (GMC), which is responsible for registering medical practitioners in the United Kingdom.

Requirements for registration are at a high standard to ensure that anyone joining the medical register has the necessary medical knowledge and skills to practise safely in the UK.

The GMC has prioritised applications from people who are able to provide the required evidence, which can be assessed more quickly.

The GMC has also written to all final year medical students across the UK to invite them to apply for provisional registration. The GMC will follow its usual policies and procedures to ensure that students joining the medical register are fit to practise.

Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take to ensure that victims of domestic abuse can access support and protection during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what plans they have to provide publicly funded services to migrant victims without recourse to public funds in line with the commitment of the Welsh Government. [[HL3266](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation, no matter what the stresses. We are working closely with the sector, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the police to understand the impact of COVID-19 on domestic abuse.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chancellor has announced a funding package of £750 million to support charities including those providing domestic abuse services. The Home Office has announced an additional £2 million in funding to support technological capability such as specialist helplines and websites.

We have also launched a new campaign to signpost victims to the support services available. The campaign, under the hashtag #YouAreNotAlone, aims to reassure those affected by domestic abuse that support services remain available during this difficult time.

Non-British victims of domestic abuse who are residing in the UK and who are not already eligible for the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession are able to apply for support from local authorities regardless of their immigration status. A £3.2 billion package of funding has been allocated to local authorities to help them respond to pressures across all the services they deliver and support individuals on the basis of need.

Drug Resistance: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on (1) the prevalence of antibiotic resistant bacteria in those patients who contract bacterial pneumonia, and (2) the spread of such bacteria in hospitals. [[HL3403](#)]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England (PHE) regularly reports on healthcare-associated infections and resistance to key antibiotics, which can be viewed online on the antimicrobial resistance Fingertips webpage. PHE will track the impact of COVID-19 on these infections using these established surveillance data systems.

Analysis looking at bacterial species which commonly cause pneumonia following flu showed a reduction in overall bacterial reports with antibiotic resistance remaining relatively stable, as the COVID-19 incident developed. PHE will continue to monitor the situation closely.

East Africa: Locusts

Asked by *Lord Boateng*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional assistance they intend to provide to those countries in East Africa affected by COVID-19 to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and the increase in locusts currently swarming in that region. [[HL3009](#)]

Baroness Sugg: We are deeply concerned about the combined impacts of COVID-19 and the locust outbreak in East Africa. Millions of people already face food insecurity in the region caused by humanitarian disasters and conflict. These outbreaks will exacerbate these challenges.

We are using UK aid to mitigate new health, humanitarian and economic risks across Africa and have pledged £744 million of UK aid globally to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UK is also supporting the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Regional Emergency Appeal for the locust outbreak and has contributed £7 million for the spraying of pesticides on the ground and by air. We will continue taking proactive action, including adapting our existing programmes to meet urgent needs.

Economic Situation: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Price*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on different age groups. [[HL3282](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: There is currently insufficient data to enable us to assess the precise economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual groups.

We recognise the challenges the current crisis is having on all groups in society, including the most vulnerable.

The Government has announced an unprecedented package of support – including boosts to Universal Credit, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), the Bounce Back Loan scheme, and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme – which will help protect incomes, jobs, and support those most at need.

Employment: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UK's working population, broken down by gender. [[HL3269](#)]

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Baroness Lister,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what plans have been made to publish data on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the UK's working population, broken down by gender (HL3269).

Labour market statistics are produced every month and include analysis of the working population by sex. The main source for these statistics is the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS's latest estimates[1] were published on 21 April 2020 and cover the period prior to the implementation of the coronavirus (COVID-19) social distancing measure (December 2019 to February 2020). The next publication is scheduled for 19 May 2020 and will cover the period from January to March 2020.

In addition to scheduled publications, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has a dedicated page[2] on the COVID-19 pandemic and any additional analysis is published there. We have also included some specific questions relating to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the LFS from April 2020 and launched an online Labour Market Survey from April, as announced in a statement[3] from the ONS. Both these sources will provide information by sex. We aim to publish as much as possible, as data becomes available, to aid understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the working population.

Our Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) asks firms a number of questions about employment, including whether they had laid off staff, their employment expectations, and take-up of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Latest survey estimates are available here[4]. Although the data does not enable a breakdown by sex, the sectoral information does show the variation across female-dominated versus male-dominated industries. We have recently published an article on furloughed workers, based on BICS data[5]:

In addition, the weekly Opinions and Lifestyle Survey publishes survey responses by sex[6].

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/pleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/april2020>.

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases>

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/statementsandletters/ensuringthebestpossibleinformationduringcovid19throughsafedatcollection>

[4]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/businessservices/bulletins/coronavirusandtheeconomicimpactsontheuk/23april2020>

[5]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/pleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/furloughingofworkersacrossukbusinesses/23march2020to5april2020>

[6]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata>

Employment: Disability

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to review the Voluntary Reporting Framework on Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing, published in November 2018; and how many (1) employers have reported data, and (2) employees have had their data reported, via that Framework. [HL3219]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: There is no requirement for employers to notify the Government if they are using the Voluntary Reporting Framework on Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing. As such, no data is held on the total number of businesses and related employees that are currently reporting on this. From November 2019 however those employers signing up to or renewing Disability Confident Level 3 Leader status have been required to use the Voluntary Reporting Framework, and other Disability Confident employers are being encouraged to use it.

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of UK employers are currently signed up to Disability Confident; and what percentage of employers they estimate will be signed up by the end of 2020. [HL3220]

Asked by Lord Shinkwin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of UK (1) private, and (2) public, sector employers are currently signed up to Disability Confident; and what percentage of (a) private, and (b) public, sector employers they estimate will be signed up by the end of 2020. [HL3221]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: As at 31 March 2020, 17,869 employers had signed up to Disability Confident (DC). This represents 1 per cent of UK employers in 2019, of which there are estimated to be 1.329 million (Business population estimates 2019).

The information requested on private and public sector employers is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

In the current climate it is not possible to estimate the number of DC employers at the end of 2020.

Employment: Pregnancy

Asked by *Baroness Burt of Solihull*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that pregnant employees do not suffer detriment at work, including dismissal or less favourable treatment, as a result of following public health guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3252]

Lord Callanan: Government is determined to ensure that pregnant women do not suffer detriment at work in any circumstances, including where they have followed public health guidance.

The Coronavirus outbreak has not changed the law on pregnancy and maternity discrimination. There is no place for it under any circumstances. If a pregnant woman is dismissed or made redundant on the grounds of her pregnancy, this is automatically unfair dismissal.

Under Health and Safety legislation, it remains the employer's responsibility to put in place arrangements to control health and safety risks. There are already specific requirements in place for pregnant workers and guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) sets out the expectations around risk assessments, finding alternative work and medical suspension, where necessary.

In terms of new specific coronavirus interventions, HSE will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks where it is clear an employer is not following Public Health England guidance properly (eg not taking appropriate action on social distancing or ensuring workers in the shielded category can follow advice to self-isolate). Government guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme also makes it clear that pregnant women can be furloughed if they and their employer agree, and provided they meet the normal eligibility requirements.

Energy Intensive Industries: Carbon Emissions

Asked by *Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the funding set out in the Conservative Manifesto to support energy intensive industries to use to low carbon technologies is new and additional funding for industrial decarbonisation. [HL3197]

Lord Callanan: The Government has committed an overall package of over £2 billion to help industry on the path to Net Zero. Within this, the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund was announced in November 2018 as a £315 million scheme to provide industry, including energy intensive industries, with support for energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects. This scheme is on track to launch in Spring 2020.

The 2020 Budget announced measures that reflect Conservative Manifesto commitments and build on existing policies. For example, it included a new £800m

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Infrastructure Fund to establish CCS in at least two sites, one in the 2020s and another by 2030. Other manifesto commitments to support industrial decarbonisation will be considered in the upcoming Spending Review.

Equal Pay

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they are taking to (1) measure, (2) monitor, and (3) reduce, the (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) disability, and (d) LGBTQ+, pay gap. [HL3222]

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure transparent and consistent workforce data reporting to support (1) women, (2) BAME, (3) disabled, and (4) LGBTQ+, graduates to realise their potential and, on merit, reach the top of their professions. [HL3223]

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to incentivise and reward those businesses that report on the (1) gender, (2) ethnicity, (3) disability, and (4) LGBTQ+, pay gap. [HL3224]

Baroness Berridge: Pay gaps are caused by a range of factors. To address them, we must ensure that everybody has equal access to opportunities.

In 2017, we introduced mandatory gender pay gap reporting for large employers, providing an unprecedented level of transparency. The gender pay gap is currently at a record low of 17.3%. However, the gap for full-time employees increased slightly to 8.9%. To address the drivers of the gap, we've set out a package of commitments aiming to empower women from school right through to retirement.

The Government ran a consultation from October 2018 to January 2019 on Ethnicity Pay Reporting and received over 300 detailed responses. The Government met with businesses and representative organisations to understand the barriers towards reporting and what information could be published to allow for meaningful action to be taken. We have also run voluntary methodology testing with a broad range of businesses to better understand the complexities outlined in the consultation using real payroll data and will share next steps in due course.

Calculation and monitoring of disability and LGBT pay gaps raises significant issues of self-reporting and data accuracy and this data is not widely collected by employers. Although we have no plans for data collection of pay for these characteristics, we want to achieve practical changes for disabled people, which remove barriers and increase opportunity. The Government will publish an ambitious 'National Strategy for Disabled People'. We will ensure that the lived experience of disabled people is at the heart of the new National

Strategy and focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most.

The 108,000 respondents to the National LGBT Survey told us that their priority in the workplace is to tackle discrimination. So the Government Equalities Office is exploring the creation of a package of measures to tackle LGBT workplace discrimination. LGBT people should be able to be themselves in the workplace, so that they can do their best work and achieve their full potential.

Diverse workforces make good business sense. For example, organisations in the top 25% for gender diversity on their executive teams are 21% more likely to have profits above their industry average, and organisations where over 20% of managers are women have been associated with higher performance than organisations with less than 15% representation of women.

Exercise: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Valentine

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to ensure that families and co-habitees can exercise outside together unhindered; and in particular, what discussions, if any, they have had with the Lawn Tennis Association about opening tennis courts for such purposes. [HL3161]

Baroness Barran: I am aware of the strain that many charities are under during this time of financial uncertainty and increased demand on their services. On 8 April, the government announced a £750 million funding package for charities delivering frontline services. Unfortunately not all charities will be able to benefit from this, so they should also consider whether they are eligible for other existing government schemes, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and deferring VAT payments.

Fisheries: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Soley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to provide financial support to the UK fishing industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and when they intend to implement any such plans. [HL3284]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government announced a £10 million funding package for England's fishing and aquaculture sectors on 16 April. The fund will help businesses within the sector meet the fixed costs they face, including insurance, equipment hire and port costs, and will help secure the long-term future of the English fishing industry.

This includes a £1 million Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme, which will fund projects to help seafood businesses in England increase the supply of local seafood to domestic markets.

Further information and guidance is available on MMO's website.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the timetable for distributing the £10 million of financial support for fishing businesses in England affected by COVID-19; and what additional resources will be made available to the Marine Management Organisation to ensure applications for the grants to fishers whose business has suffered market disruption are processed in a speedy manner. [T] [HL3507]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Fisheries Response Fund (FRF) is the first part of a £10 million funding package for the English fishing and aquaculture industries which was launched into operation by Marine Management Organisation (MMO) within two hours of receiving approval on 20 April 2020. In the first nine days 1200 fishing businesses have been contacted, 750 have responded and so far 550 payments have been made direct into business' bank accounts. To date a total of £2.3 million has been paid out under the fund with more payments continuing to be made each day.

The second part of the fund is a grants scheme, the Direct Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS), for projects that will support the sale of locally caught seafood in domestic markets as well as supporting the consumption of locally caught seafood. This scheme was launched on 29 April 2020 and will close on 11 May 2020. A panel of industry representatives will meet to review applications and MMO will announce the grants to be made from 15 May 2020.

MMO used its current resources to design and develop the processes for both funds within days of their announcement. MMO has trebled the size of its grants team (redeploying colleagues from other MMO teams) and extended its opening hours to include evenings and Saturdays to support applicants for both schemes and ensure payments are issued as quickly as possible.

Floods: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Triesman

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made to assist people whose houses were damaged by recent flooding and are now required to remain in those houses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and what further steps they intend to take to mitigate any future difficulties experienced by such people. [HL3225]

Lord Greenhalgh: To assist households impacted by the February severe weather incidents, the Government activated the Flood Recovery Framework, a comprehensive package of support measures to support local recovery.

This package includes the Community Recovery Grant, a one-off £500 hardship grant, available to eligible flooded households. Those households are also able to

receive a 100% Council Tax rebate (for a minimum of three months); rebates will apply to the flooded property and any temporary accommodation those households are required to move into. In addition, the DEFRA sponsored Property Flood Resilience scheme makes available grants of up to £5,000 to eligible flooded households to improve the resilience of those properties against future flooding incidents.

Fly-tipping: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of municipal waste site closures on the prevalence of fly tipping; and what advice they provide to local councils about reducing the incidence of fly tipping. [HL3200]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Fly-tipping is unacceptable and the Government is committed to tackling this crime.

We are aware of reports of an increase in fly-tipping and that, anecdotally, this may be a result of the decisions taken by local authorities to close household waste recycling centres. However, this does not appear to be consistent across the country. We have requested fly-tipping incident data through the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG), chaired by Defra, which includes local authorities and other key stakeholders, to help us to monitor the situation.

We have published guidance to help local authorities prioritise waste services. This recommends keeping household waste recycling centres open if it is safe to do so and that the clearance of fly-tipped material should be given a high priority. The Government has been working with local authorities to explore ways in which household waste recycling centres that have been closed might be re-opened, whilst observing social distancing and other requirements. The Government published guidance on this on 5 May 2020.

Through the NFTPG, we have also disseminated messaging aimed at householders promoting the secure storage of waste, use of registered waste carriers and reiterating that waste must not be fly-tipped.

Food: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide access to land to individuals and communities seeking to establish individual or community food growing schemes during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3298]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government values green spaces such as allotments and considers them to be an important community asset, particularly during the COVID-19 outbreak. Allotments play an important role in helping people to live a healthy and active lifestyle and in providing food.

Local councils have a statutory duty under Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 to provide a sufficient number of allotments based on local demand in an area and to let them to people residing in that area who want them. The provision of allotment spaces is the responsibility of local councils as they are best placed to determine the demand in their area.

In 2012, the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#) published a best practice guide for community groups wanting to find land to grow fruit and vegetables. This is available on the GOV.UK website at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/space-for-food-growing-a-guide.

The Local Government Association also provides guidance on allotments and community food growing schemes in its "Growing in the community" guidance, which is available online at: www.local.gov.uk/growing-community-second-edition.

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support and guidance they have provided to local authorities, volunteer groups and supermarkets to ensure efforts to provide food to vulnerable people are coordinated. [HL3321]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: We are working closely with other Government departments and Local Government representatives to provide a coordinating and supporting function to support local authorities, supermarkets and the voluntary and community sector to provide access to food to vulnerable people.

To date we have arranged for considerably more than 500,000 food parcels to be delivered to the most vulnerable and at risk. We are working with major retailers to prioritise delivery and click & collect slots for those who are most vulnerable and at risk. We have shared with supermarkets the details of those who have registered as extremely clinically vulnerable and needing to shield, and who need help accessing food. Supermarkets have matched these names against their own customer databases and offered people the option of priority access to online delivery. Most supermarkets are also offering prioritised delivery or click and collect slots to those they have identified as vulnerable from their own customer database.

We are working closely with local authorities, retailers, food companies and charities to enable those vulnerable people outside the most vulnerable and at risk to access food through a variety of ways, including: volunteers shopping for them, deliveries from local retailers and food companies, as well as accessing supermarkets for a priority delivery or click and collect slot.

The NHS Volunteer Responders programme is available to help support people who are struggling to access food. In addition to health and care professionals, a number of approved Voluntary and Community Services organisations are now able to refer vulnerable individuals into the system to receive support from the volunteers.

And we have been supporting the NHS with working with retailers on payment solutions for paying volunteers.

Foreign Companies: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made loan guarantees available to companies operating in the UK but who are registered offshore during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3257]

Lord Callanan: SMEs which are registered abroad are eligible to apply for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), provided the SME is trading in the UK, not just selling into the UK, has the core of its business operations in the UK, and the CBILS Facility is deployed to support business activity in the UK.

The turnover threshold applies to global turnover of the SME or the consolidated group where that applies, but the CBILS scheme can only be used to support UK-based activity.

Foreign Exchange

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Earl of Courtown on 3 February (HL543), whether the Banking: Conduct of Business sourcebook rule 2.3.7CG(3), published in the Financial Conduct Authority Handbook, that "the cost of a currency transfer service includes the margin between the exchange rate that would be offered to a majority of persons of the class at whom the promotion is directed and a currently applicable interbank exchange rate, calculated using an independently published interbank spot rate", will be applied to providers calculating the currency conversion charge for consumers under the Cross Border Payments Regulation to ensure that providers show the full cost payable by a consumer. [HL3114]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Second Cross Border Payments Regulation (CBPR2) updates rules on the transparency of currency conversion charges within the European Union. The UK has left the EU, and during the transition period EU laws that currently apply, or will start to apply during the transition period, will apply to the UK. Under the terms of section 8 of the EU Withdrawal Act 2018 (and as further amended by the EU Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020) the Government has the power to fix deficiencies in EU legislation retained following the transition period.

The Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) Principles for Businesses and Handbook Banking: Conduct of Business sourcebook (BCOBS) also apply to UK providers of currency transfers services. BCOBS 2.3.7CG(3) is guidance (not a rule) so is an example of one way to comply with the relevant FCA rule (at BCOBS 2.3.7BR).

As stated in its Policy Statement PS19/3 making BCOBS 2.3.7CG(3) ('General standards and communication rules for the payment services and e-money sectors'), the FCA acknowledged that CBPR2 would impact cost disclosure requirements, particularly in relation to credit transfers. The FCA has since convened a group of industry representatives to discuss and agree on a common presentation format of the information required by CBPR2. The FCA has stated that it will continue to monitor the progress and if it does not see improvements in cost disclosure to customers, it will consider consulting on additional rules and guidance.

Free School Meals: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to extend the range of supermarkets and convenience stores able to accept school meal vouchers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3325]

Baroness Berridge: Free school meal vouchers can currently be spent in a variety of supermarkets. Initially, the scheme includes supermarkets that already have e-gift card arrangements in place with Edenred, including Asda, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Morrisons, M&S and Waitrose. On 21 April we confirmed that Aldi will be added to the list of supermarkets from week commencing 27 April. We continue to work with a wide range of supermarkets to encourage them to join. This involves them having the right infrastructure to deliver e-gift cards in a uniform way across their network of stores.

Gambling Act 2005

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 1 April (HL2887), what is the nature of the scoping work being undertaken; who is involved in that work; and when they anticipate concluding such work. [HL3158]

Baroness Barran: The Government committed in its manifesto to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age. This commitment remains a priority, but as with other areas of Government business the impact of Covid-19 has placed unforeseen pressures on the Department. We are continuing to work closely with the Gambling Commission, including on ensuring that vulnerable people are protected in this time of potentially heightened risk.

Much of our continuing work, such as monitoring the impact of regulatory interventions in this and other jurisdictions, will be relevant to the review, as will the recommendations of the National Audit Office, which we are considering carefully. A timeline for the review and its scope will be announced in due course.

Asked by Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to return responsibility for gambling in the UK to the Home Office as part of their review of the Gambling Act 2005. [HL3264]

Baroness Barran: Gambling policy is a cross-government issue involving ministers and officials from DCMS, Home Office, DHSC, HMT and other departments. Our departments work together closely and the Health Secretary has announced a cross-government addiction strategy that will include gambling.

We have no plans to return primary responsibility for gambling regulation to the Home Office as part of the Gambling Act Review.

Garden Bridge Trust: Finance*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have compiled a report on the finances of the Garden Bridge Trust; if so, whether, and when, they intend to publish that report; and if not, why not. [HL3145]

Baroness Barran: The Charity Commission, the registrar and regulator of charities in England and Wales, assessed the governance and management of the Garden Bridge Trust. They published a concluding report on the Garden Bridge project in April 2019 which you can find [here](#).

In February 2019, Transport for London published a detailed breakdown of the cost of the project: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/temple-footbridge>. The government has no plans to conduct any further reports.

Gaza: Agriculture*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli aircraft have sprayed toxic herbicides on to crops near the border fence in the east of Gaza City and damaged farmlands; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL3289]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made an assessment of these reports, we are troubled by reports of assaults on farmers and vandalism of agricultural land. We continue to raise with Israeli counterparts our concerns about Israeli action.

Gibraltar: Coronavirus*Asked by Baroness Harris of Richmond*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Gibraltar receives sufficient (1) testing, and (2) personal protection, equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3259]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government is working with Crown Agents to procure and deliver essential medical supplies to Gibraltar and the other Overseas Territories, working in partnership with the Overseas Territories' Chief Medical Officers to prioritise requirements. Initial shipments of medical supplies have arrived in Gibraltar.

British Forces Gibraltar have also been able to provide logistics support and assistance in the establishment of a temporary hospital (Europa Point Nightingale Facility) to provide the Gibraltar Health Authority with additional capacity. We stand ready to consider any further requests from Government of Gibraltar for support of this nature.

The Prime Minister wrote to the Chief Minister on 28 March, assuring him of the UK's commitment to support Gibraltar.

Greece: Asylum*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Greece has detained and mistreated migrants at secret extrajudicial sites before deporting those migrants to Turkey; and what representations they have made to the government of Greece about refoulement. [HL3132]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government is aware of reports of the detention and mistreatment of migrants in Greece and remain in close contact with the Greek Government. We recognise that the Greek authorities are under considerable pressure and we remain committed to supporting Greece's efforts to manage migration effectively. The Minister for Immigration at the Home Office, and Greek Alternate Minister for Migration Mr George Koumoutsakos, signed the UK-Greece bilateral action plan on 22 April to this end. While the UK fully supports the right of States to control their borders, we also expect States to fulfil their international obligations and protect and promote the human rights of migrants. This includes with regard to the principle of non-refoulement. As part of the EU-Turkey Deal of 2016 Turkey is considered a safe country to which to return migrants who have entered Greece illegally.

Health Professions: Coronavirus*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many final year nurses, midwives and associated health professionals who finished their courses early to take up roles in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are now working in the (1) NHS, and (2) social care sector; and what special provision is being made to support those workers. [HL3295]

Lord Bethell: Final year nursing, midwifery and many allied health profession students are beginning to be deployed into the National Health Service and social care sector. Information on the overall numbers deployed is

being collected by Health Education England and will be made available from early May 2020.

We have guaranteed that all nursing, midwifery and allied health students who do opt in to paid clinical placements to support the COVID-19 response will be rewarded fairly for their hard work. Students who opt in will be getting a salary and automatic NHS pension entitlement at the appropriate band. They will also still receive their student maintenance loan and Learning Support Fund payments too.

Universities will also continue to provide pastoral support to students throughout this time too.

Higher Education: Foreign Students

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide financial assistance to international Higher Education students in England to assist with any increase in the cost of returning to their home countries at the end of the 2019–20 academic year. [HL3175]

Baroness Berridge: The government has been working closely with the sector to ensure that international higher education students who have remained in the UK have continued accommodation and access to essential services for the duration of their stay. In addition to continuing to provide accommodation for those who cannot travel home or have no alternative residence, providers are also offering a range of other services to international higher education students, including support for catering and cleaning, and support for mental health. International higher education students are encouraged to speak to their provider if they have any specific concerns about financial hardship.

Before an international student considers returning to their home country, they should seek advice from their home country's embassy or consulate in the UK. Students planning to travel should adhere to Public Health England advice while in the UK to ensure they are travelling safely. Students should not travel if they, or anyone else in their household, has symptoms of COVID-19.

HMS Dasher

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Secretary of State for Defence on 9 May 1996 (HC Deb, vol 277, cols 225–6W), how many bodies were recovered after the sinking of HMS Dasher on 27 March 1943; how many of those lie in marked graves, whether as a sailor known unto God, or named; and where those gravestones are. [HL3162]

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Secretary of State for Defence on 9 May 1996 (HC Deb, vol 277, cols 225–6W), how families can claim the bodies of those that died as a

result of the sinking of HMS Dasher on 27 March 1943; what steps they have taken to support families that could not claim their relatives bodies as a result of war time security measures; and what further information they have provided to those families about the whereabouts of their relatives' bodies. [HL3163]

Baroness Goldie: HMS DASHER tragically sank in March 1943 following an explosion onboard where no enemy action was involved. Records show that 23 servicemen are buried in marked graves at the following locations, Ardrossan Cemetery (13), Greenock Cemetery (7), Frizington Roman Catholic Cemetery (1), Mearns Cemetery (1) and at Paisley (Hawkhead) Cemetery (1).

It is Government policy that, where a wreck of a ship is the final resting place for our Service men and women, they should be allowed to lie undisturbed. As DASHER is the last known resting place for 356 servicemen, the wreck is designated as a controlled site under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986; this means the site can only be accessed under a licence granted by the Secretary of State for Defence. The lives of those lost are commemorated on war memorials around the country.

Holiday Leave: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Royall of Blaisdon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of employees (1) taking, and (2) being required to take, annual leave whilst on furlough. [HL3157]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is a vital element of the Government's efforts to protect the economy during COVID-19. Employees continue to accrue holiday while on furlough, as per their employment contract, unless the employer and employee agree to vary this as part of the furlough agreement. It remains the case in employment law that an employer may ask employees to take holiday in the period of furlough. This would be a negotiation between employer and employee, and Working Time Regulations require holiday pay to be paid at an employee's normal rate of pay. In order to provide extra flexibility, where it is not reasonably practical for an employee to take some, or all, of the holiday to which they are entitled due to Covid-19, holiday can now be carried over into the next two leave years.

During this unprecedented time, the Government is keeping the policy on holiday pay under review.

Homelessness: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration, if any, they have given to using the former RAF Sealand station to accommodate homeless people and others in need of temporary housing during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3060]

Lord Greenhalgh: We do not currently have any specific plans to use RAF Sealand to accommodate homeless people during the Covid-19 pandemic but we are exploring all options, working closely with colleagues across Government, including the Ministry of Defence.

Over 90% of those on the streets and in communal night shelters known to local authorities at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis have now been made offers of safe accommodation – ensuring some of the most vulnerable in society are protected from the pandemic.

Councils across England will receive another £1.6 billion in additional funding as they continue to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic. With this funding councils can provide support to those who need it most. This takes the total funding to support councils to respond to the pandemic to over £3.2 billion. This is in addition to £3.2 million in targeted funding to ensure that we minimise the risk to those currently unable to self-isolate.

In addition, we have been working with the Greater London Authority and a number of hotel chains across the country to secure accommodation for rough sleepers and we have now introduced a centrally coordinated process across Government for block booking hotels.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional funding to charities that provide care for the homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3154]

Baroness Barran: The £750 million funding package announced on 8 April will support front line charities providing vital services and helping vulnerable people affected by Covid-19.

DCMS has been supporting the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government alongside the hotel sector, to provide an offer of accommodation for rough sleepers that will allow them to socially distance. A centrally-coordinated process across government has been set up for block booking hotels.

More than 5,400 rough sleepers – over 90% of those on the streets at the beginning of the crisis known to local authorities have now been made offers of safe accommodation – ensuring some of the most vulnerable in society are protected from the pandemic.

We will continue to work with external partners to support the homeless during the pandemic. For example we have established a connection between Unilever and NHS England, through which Unilever have already offered 30,000 units of toothpaste and deodorant for homeless people being sheltered.

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support homeless people and ensure that they have permanent accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3207]

Lord Greenhalgh: Over 90% of those on the streets and in communal night shelters known to local authorities at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have now been made offers of safe accommodation – ensuring some of the most vulnerable in society are protected from the pandemic.

This response is backed by £3.2 billion of additional funding for local authorities to enable them to respond to COVID-19 pressures across the services they deliver, including stepping up support for the adult social care workforce and for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people. This is in addition to £3.2 million in targeted funding to ensure that we minimise the risk to those currently unable to self-isolate.

We have also introduced a package of measures to protect renters affected by coronavirus. With these in force, landlords must give all renters 3 months' notice if they intend to seek possession.

The Chancellor has also announced that for 2020/21, we will increase the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants so that they are set at the 30th percentile of market rents. This will mean that many people renting in the Private Rented Sector will see an increase in their housing support from April 2020, providing extra security during these uncertain times.

The Government has made clear that no one should be without a roof over their head, and this work further demonstrates our commitment to assist the most vulnerable in society.

Hong Kong: Demonstrations

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the Hong Kong protests issued on 18 April, what plans they have to meet with China's Ambassador to the UK; whether the UK Ambassador to China will meet with officials in Beijing; and what further steps they are taking in response to those protests as a signatory to the Sino-British Joint Declaration 1984. [HL3294]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned about the arrests of a number of political figures in Hong Kong, and are following these cases closely. We expect any arrests and judicial processes to be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to Hong Kong's way of life and as such is protected in both the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. It is essential that any protests are conducted peacefully, and that the authorities avoid actions that inflame tensions. The authorities should focus on rebuilding trust through a process of meaningful political dialogue.

The UK remains committed to upholding the rights and freedoms underpinned by the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and enshrined in Hong Kong's Bill of Rights, and we expect the Chinese authorities to respect and preserve

Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. We have made this position clear to the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing and the Chinese Embassy in London, and will continue to do so, publicly and privately.

Hong Kong: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China about the arrest of 15 pro-democracy politicians in Hong Kong, including the founder of the Democratic Party. [HL3000]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned about the arrests of a number of political figures in Hong Kong, and are following these cases closely. We expect any arrests and judicial processes to be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to Hong Kong's way of life and as such is protected in both the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. It is essential that any protests are conducted peacefully, and that the authorities avoid actions that inflame tensions. The authorities should focus on rebuilding trust through a process of meaningful political dialogue.

The UK remains committed to upholding the rights and freedoms underpinned by the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and enshrined in Hong Kong's Bill of Rights, and we expect the Chinese authorities to respect and preserve Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. We have made this position clear to the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities and will continue to do so, publicly and privately.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the arrest of 15 pro-democracy politicians in Hong Kong; and what steps they are taking, as a co-signatory to the Sino-British Joint Declaration 1984, to (1) defend the freedom to protest; (2) protect the autonomy of the Legislative Council; and (3) ensure that Article 22 of Hong Kong's Basic Law is upheld and respected, in Hong Kong. [HL3001]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned about the arrests of a number of political figures in Hong Kong, and are following these cases closely. We expect any arrests and judicial processes to be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to Hong Kong's way of life and as such is protected in both the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. It is essential that any protests are conducted peacefully, and that the authorities avoid actions that inflame tensions. The authorities should focus on rebuilding trust through a process of meaningful political dialogue.

The UK remains committed to upholding the rights and freedoms underpinned by the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and enshrined in Hong Kong's Bill of Rights, and we expect the Chinese authorities to respect and preserve Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. We have made this position clear to the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities and will continue to do so, publicly and privately.

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of China about the assault and arrests of pro-democracy leaders and lawmakers, including Martin Lee and Jimmy Lai; and what assessment they have made of the freedom of expression in Hong Kong. [HL3427]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned about the arrests of a number of political figures in Hong Kong, and are following these cases closely. We expect any arrests and judicial processes to be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to Hong Kong's way of life and as such is protected in both the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. It is essential that any protests are conducted peacefully, and that the authorities avoid actions that inflame tensions. The authorities should focus on rebuilding trust through a process of meaningful political dialogue.

The UK remains committed to upholding the rights and freedoms underpinned by the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and enshrined in Hong Kong's Bill of Rights, and we expect the Chinese authorities to respect and preserve Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. We have made this position clear to the Chinese authorities and will continue to do so, publicly and privately.

Horticulture: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to respond to the letter from the Master of the Company of Gardeners to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, dated 9 April, about the difficulties experienced by the horticultural industry as a result of the COVID-19 regulations; and what consultation they have conducted into the case for reopening garden centres under conditions which could maintain social distancing. [HL3204]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government are aware of the challenging position facing the horticulture industry during this period and are grateful for the letter from the Master of the Company of the Gardeners highlighting some of the issues faced by the sector. A response can be expected from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs imminently.

The Government continues to assess the decision on garden centres, but concluded at the last review that it was too early to ease any restrictions on such retail environments. Social distancing requirements will continue to be considered in accordance with this review.

Stores can operate Click and Collect services as long as orders are taken online, by telephone or via post and customers remain outside of the store to collect their goods.

In this situation, as generally, businesses are advised to operate with strict adherence to the social distancing guidelines.

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow garden centres and plant nurseries to open during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3245]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is aware of the challenging position facing garden centres and plant nurseries during this period.

Nurseries growing plants for sale to other retail outlets or online to the public are 'open' and accessible by staff for plant care and maintenance purposes. They are, however, like garden centres, closed to the public to aid the prevention of spread of COVID-19.

The Government is keeping the situation on Garden Centres under review, but concluded last week that it was too early to ease any restrictions on such retail environments. We will continue to work closely with representatives from the horticulture supply chain to understand what short-term and long-term support the sector as a whole needs. We are ready to respond to emerging issues quickly and effectively. Public health must be at the heart of the difficult decisions the Government is having to take at this time.

Hospital Beds

Asked by Baroness Quin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) the British Medical Association and (2) other health sector representatives about the availability of hospital beds for patients needing urgent treatment for something other than COVID-19. [HL3283]

Lord Bethell: The Department regularly engages with the British Medical Association and other health sector representatives such as National Health Service trade unions, including through the Social Partnership Forum (SPF). SPF meetings are now exclusively focused on COVID-19 workforce issues.

House of Lords: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans the House of Lords Commission has to enable eligibility

for members who are working from home to receive their daily allowance during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3087]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The House of Lords Commission has agreed to temporarily suspend the usual system of financial support for members and replace it with one which allows members to claim the allowance at the half-rate of £162 for participation in; a sitting of this House or a Committee of the House; a virtual proceeding of this House or a virtual meeting of a Committee of this House; participation in such other Parliamentary business as may be determined by the House of Lords Commission.

The Commission has also agreed that this new, temporary arrangement should be applied retrospectively from 21 April. It is expected that a resolution to this effect will be put to the House for agreement this week.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether all staff employed by the House of Lords will be supported financially during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3156]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: All permanent and part-time staff employed by the House of Lords Administration continue to be paid. Staff employed on variable hours contracts and who are not currently being offered shifts are being paid based on their average earnings for the last four sitting weeks in which they worked.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what adjustments they will make, if any, to (1) the target of delivering one million homes in the forthcoming five years, and (2) the Housing Delivery Test methodology, following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3093]

Lord Greenhalgh: Building the homes the country needs is vitally important, and we are committed to working with partners to find a safe way of continuing work across the country during this difficult time. Over the last few days we are beginning to see more developers reopening sites following careful consideration of public health guidance. And together, we will continue to work towards our goal to get Britain building again. We note the concerns some authorities are raising on the housing delivery test and we will continue to monitor the situation.

Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the sale of building materials that are required to maintain the standards of residential properties are being restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3205]

Lord Callanan: The Government has set out that construction and associated activities can continue during

the Covid-19 outbreak. No restrictions have been placed upon the sale of building materials. The Government is working with the construction industry to ensure the continued operation of the supply chain, including developing Site and Branch Operating Procedures for firms and merchants.

Immigrants: Detainees

Asked by Baroness Doocey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals at immigration detention centres and other accommodation for asylum seekers have reported COVID-19 symptoms; how severe the symptoms have been in these cases; and what medical treatment has been provided. [HL3373]

Lord Bethell: There are currently no individuals within the immigration detention centre estate showing symptomatic signs of COVID-19. There have been three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the immigration detention centres since the outbreak began, none of whom were hospitalised. Information about the severity of these cases or what medical treatment has been provided is not centrally collected and neither is information on individuals in other accommodation for asylum seekers.

Immigration Controls: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Brady

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce COVID-19 health checks and quarantine measures at the borders and entry points for people travelling to the UK; and if not, why not. [T] [HL3301]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Our approach to tackling coronavirus is driven by the latest scientific and medical advice. In line with that advice to date, no changes have been required at the UK border.

Any decision to implement additional restrictions on international travel to the UK or on arrival at ports/airports will be made based on the consideration and advice of SAGE/Public Health England.

We will continuously review the most appropriate response at the UK border to the changing situation in relation to CV-19, both in the UK and across the international community

To date medical and scientific advice is that screening at the border, particularly given the current low passenger volumes and CV-19 levels within the UK, would make no material impact. There are also significant challenges with thermal screening including:

- Low likelihood of identifying individuals with COVID-19 given the incubation period can be anywhere between 2 and 14 days;
- High probability of identifying false positives or those with other conditions who will need clinical assessments to ascertain they have Covid-19; and

- Easy to circumvent: by taking fever-suppressing drugs.
- There are similar concerns with clinical screening.

Asked by Baroness Shackleton of Belgravia

To ask Her Majesty's Government what health screening, if any, occurs at UK borders to identify people with COVID-19 entering the country. [HL3344]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Border Force's remit does not extend to medical screening of passengers at ports. Medical assessments of arriving passengers is for Public Health Officials.

Anyone arriving at the border identified by Border Force officers as potentially symptomatic will be directed to follow the latest public health advice.

Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 confers a power on immigration officers to direct or remove a person who they reasonably suspect may be infectious with coronavirus to a suitable place for screening and assessment by a public health officer. These powers may be exercised following prior consultation with a public health officer, where practicable, and with regard to the relevant guidance.

We are currently working with the relevant public health authorities to develop guidance for the use of these powers.

Imports

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish a unit to deal with import substitution before the end of the transition period agreed with the EU. [HL3314]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Department for International Trade has no current plans to establish an Import Substitution Unit.

Industry: White Papers

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in (1) improving further education, (2) meeting future skills needs, and (3) supporting economic and social recovery, since the publication of their Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future White Paper in June 2018. [HL3164]

Baroness Berridge: We have supported further education (FE) colleges through the Restructuring Facility, investing £405 million and enabling significant restructurings to take place across a range of FE colleges to help achieve long-term sustainability and delivery of high quality, sustainable provision.

We have also invested in FE teaching (to date, spending £24 million to help providers prepare for the introduction of T levels) and announced an additional £20 million in FE workforce development to help increase teacher

recruitment and retention. We have also committed to invest £1.5 billion in England over the next Parliament to upgrade the college estate.

Through the Industrial Strategy, we have committed an investment of £406 million in education and skills. Since its launch, we have invested over £1 billion in total to support learners throughout their education. We have also announced extra investment of £400 million in 16-19 education in 2020-21, which is an increase of 7% in overall 16-19 funding and the biggest injection of new money in a single year since 2010.

We are also delivering a long-term programme to reform the post-16 skills system to address national and local productivity challenges, ensuring that businesses and individuals have the skills they need to meet the needs of the new economy. These reforms include involving employers in the design of new apprenticeship standards to ensure they are more responsive to their needs. We are also introducing T levels from 2020, with longer teaching hours and substantive industry placements to provide a high quality technical alternative to academic learning. Additionally, the Adult Education Budget will fully fund or co-fund skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3 (including traineeships) to help them gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning. In addition, we are developing a new £3 billion National Skills Fund to upskill workers and prepare for the economy of the future.

These measures will support the 2017 Industrial Strategy, which focuses on strengthening productivity by encouraging innovation, developing high quality jobs, supporting UK businesses and fostering growth throughout the UK to create an economy that works for everyone.

Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many vaccine manufacturing facilities in the UK are currently operational. [HL3071]

Lord Bethell: Based on information held by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency about manufacturing sites that are licensed to produce biological medicines for human use, there are nine facilities which have the capability to produce vaccines in the United Kingdom.

These are as follows:

FujiFilm Diosynth, Billingham;

National Health Service Blood and Transplant, University of Bristol;

Lonza, Slough;

BioReliance, Glasgow;

Valneva Scotland Ltd, Livingston;

Medimmune, Liverpool;

Porton BioPharma Ltd, Salisbury;

Seqiris Vaccines, Liverpool; and

Ipsen Biopharm Ltd, Wrexham.

A tenth facility, Cancer Research UK's Clare Hall Laboratories, Potters Bar, is currently closed for refurbishment work.

Intelligence and Security Committee

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will announce the membership of the Intelligence and Security Committee. [HL3315]

Lord True: Members are appointed by the Houses of Parliament (having been nominated by the Prime Minister in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition). The Committee is being formed in the normal way and as quickly as current circumstances allow.

International Day for Street Children

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took to mark the International Day for Street Children on 12 April and its campaign for Safe Spaces for Children in order to raise awareness about the problems faced by street-connected children. [HL3234]

Baroness Sugg: DFID is committed to protecting the most vulnerable children around the world including children who live and work on the streets. We provide significant support to protect children from violence in conflict and humanitarian crises and to reduce their risks of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

DFID's Education support focuses on the needs of the most marginalised children. In August 2019 at the G7 Summit, the UK Prime Minister announced £90 million of new UK support for education in emergencies and crises across the world, this will support 600,000 children living in conflict areas and areas of protracted crises. This investment is key to the PM's plan to ensure more girls benefit from 12 years of education. This funding will provide safe spaces and psycho-social support to some of the most vulnerable children in the world.

Iran: USA

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the maritime incident involving Iranian vessels and United States naval forces on 15 April in the Arabian Gulf; and what discussions they have had with the governments of Iran and the United States, in particular with regard to each of those governments' differing versions of events. [HL3412]

Baroness Goldie: We are aware of an interaction between US and Iranian vessels in the international waters of the northern Gulf on 15 April. Reports of IRGC harassment are concerning. It is important that all

mariners uphold the highest standards of conduct at sea, and that states are able to safely undertake legitimate naval activity in International Waters. We are regularly in contact with US and some Iranian counterparts to discuss bilateral issues and to urge de-escalation on all sides.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli settlers are breaking quarantine measures to spit at and attack Palestinians and their property; and what steps they intend to take to protect Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank in response. [HL3286]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by reports that settler violence is continuing at this time. We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians and we have stressed the importance of the Israel Defense Forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reports that Israeli settlers have built new outposts in the West Bank during the COVID-19 lockdown; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL3288]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made an assessment of these reports, we are clear that Israeli outposts in the West Bank, which are illegal under international law and Israeli law, should be removed.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all or any of the 180 Palestinian children reportedly detained by the Israeli Authorities have been released since 5 April; and if not, what steps they intend to take. [HL3317]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has serious concerns about the continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in the country. We welcomed progress made with recent Israeli policy amendments. We continue to fund projects providing legal aid to minors and capacity building to local lawyers. Specifically, we advocate for the Israeli authorities to inform more consistently detainees of their legal rights. We continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities on this issue. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv did so most recently on 16 December 2019.

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the repeated arrests of the Palestinian Authority Governor of East Jerusalem and reports of

beatings and maltreatment of another Palestinian Authority official. [HL3318]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made representations on the arrests of the Palestinian Authority (PA) Governor of East Jerusalem, the British Consul General in Jerusalem, alongside a number of other representatives, met the PA Minister for Jerusalem Affairs by videoconference on 7 April. They expressed concern at the 3 April raid by Israeli police on his home, his detention and questioning about his work to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in East Jerusalem. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees.

Israeli Settlements

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the announcement by the government of Israel of its intention to commence discussions from 1 July on applying Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements and other territory in the occupied West Bank. [T] [HL3515]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As we made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April, we are deeply concerned by reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which paves the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law.

Jerusalem: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to discuss with the government of Israel the health needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic of the Silwan neighborhood in East Jerusalem. [HL3319]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned about the impact of a COVID-19 outbreak in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem are in regular contact with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities respectively. Both report good cooperation in response to COVID-19 though we continue to call on both parties to avoid any provocative action which might undermine the cooperation that is so critical. UN agencies, the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government are working together to ensure that essential medical supplies and staff reach the OPTs. The UK's \$1 million funding contribution will enable the

World Health Organisation and UNICEF to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline public health personnel and scale up laboratory testing capacity.

Large Goods Vehicles

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the (1) enforcement measures, and (2) penalties, used to prevent HGVs using unsuitable roads. [HL3178]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: London has the necessary powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions and the penalties are a matter for the Mayor. Outside London, apart from bus lane contraventions, moving traffic offences remain a matter for the police. Local authorities may wish to work with the local police services where targeted enforcement could address a specific problem.

Local Government: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Pinnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to amend the requirement in the Local Government Act 1972 for a member of a local authority to attend at least one meeting of that authority every six months, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3280]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has no plans to amend the attendance requirements.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 enable all local authority meetings to be held remotely. Remote attendance by members of a local authority counts for the purposes of the six-month rule on attendance.

As the country responds to the Covid-19 emergency, it is vital that local authorities can continue to function effectively, dealing with essential business in line with democratic principles whilst protecting the health and safety of their members, officers and the public.

Medical Equipment: Procurement

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to ensure medical supply lines are not compromised. [HL3539]

Lord Bethell: As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients and health and social care workers continue to access the appropriate medicines and medical supplies.

The Department is working closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to help ensure patients and health and social care workers

can access the medical supplies they need, and precautions are in place to reduce the likelihood of future shortages.

The Department shares regular information about impending supply issues and management plans with the NHS and industry and will liaise with relevant patient groups about issues affecting specific medicines and other medical supplies.

Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any impact in the reduction of vehicles running on diesel and petrol on tax revenue. [HL3177]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Any fall in demand for road fuels impacts fuel duty revenue. Fuel duty is an important source of revenue, and the government keeps receipts under review. HMRC publish fuel duty statistics as part of the Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin.

This contains data up to February 2020 and data up to May 2020 will be published here in June. The work of the last ten years in bringing borrowing and debt back under control has ensured that the public finances are well placed to deal with the challenges posed by COVID-19.

New Zealand: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Humphreys

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the current arrangements for UK citizens awaiting repatriation from New Zealand. [HL3194]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The second of five UK charter flights from New Zealand landed at London Heathrow on 27 April. We have so far chartered two flights back from New Zealand, one from Auckland on 28 April and one from Christchurch on 30 April, with one further flight from Auckland on 2 May. In response to demand, a second group of flights has now been opened for booking, departing Auckland on 11, 15 May and Christchurch on 13 May, also to London Heathrow via Hong Kong.

We have prioritised the most vulnerable and our NHS workers. We subsequently extended these flights to all British travellers remaining in New Zealand. We have advised those who would like to return to the UK to register with our travel partner Corporate Travel Management (CTM) through their online portal, which can be found in our 'Return to the UK' page of our New Zealand travel advice.

NHS: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise National Health Service workers who served on the medical front-line during the COVID-19

pandemic; and whether any such plans include minting a medal for such workers. [HL3185]

Lord True: The Government is carefully considering the appropriate way to remember, reward and recognise those involved in the COVID-19 response. We will ensure that any recognition takes into account frontline workers and volunteers across all critical sectors, above all the NHS and social care. The profound gratitude the nation feels towards everyone on the frontline, and to those working in health and social care in particular, means it is beholden on the Government to ensure recognition is both timely and appropriate. Further details will be announced in the usual way.

NHS: Disclosure of Information

Asked by Lord Wills

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to remind NHS trusts of their responsibilities to whistle-blowers. [HL3449]

Lord Bethell: Speaking up is vital for ensuring patient safety and improving the quality of services and should be a routine part of business in the National Health Service. The NHS should support and welcome all staff to raise concerns wherever they spot them.

The Government has proactively encouraged NHS staff to raise concerns over recent years and provided support by establishing an independent National Guardian to help drive positive cultural change across the NHS so that speaking up becomes business as usual.

On 23 April the Care Quality Commission and the National Guardian issued a joint statement to providers of health and social care reminding them of the importance of speaking up. This followed a letter that the National Guardian sent to NHS trust chairs in March, which also highlighted the importance of staff having the freedom to speak up and the need to support Local Freedom to Speak Up Guardians at this time.

We will continue to encourage and support the rights of staff to raise concerns.

NHS: Food

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to provide NHS staff with free food after they finish their shifts. [HL3350]

Lord Bethell: The Department has asked NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop a comprehensive package of emotional, psychological and physical support for National Health Service staff during the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of this they have been working with a number of commercial partners, including major supermarkets and food chains, to ensure staff have access to food.

NHS organisations are ultimately best placed to decide how best to support their staff during the COVID-19

pandemic, including the provision of free meals, and we are aware of several local initiatives to do so.

NHS: Pay and Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in providing all NHS staff with adequate personal protection equipment; and what plans they have to raise the salaries of NHS workers in order to provide financial support to families of such staff. [HL3208]

Lord Bethell: We are incredibly proud of all our National Health Service staff. We are working hard to ensure that staff feel supported and safe to continue the fight against COVID-19.

The Government is working around the clock with industry and the army to give the NHS the equipment and support they need to tackle this outbreak. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, we have delivered over 1 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE) across the United Kingdom. The guidance on PPE is consistent with World Health Organization guidance for protecting health and social care workers from COVID-19.

The Government recognises the extraordinary commitment of NHS staff, working day and night putting our care and safety at the centre of everything they do. Annual pay awards for NHS staff are determined by an independent transparent pay review body process. We want to ensure that the NHS employment offer continues to attract, retain and reward staff and this offer continues to be kept under review.

NHS: Protective Clothing

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether there is a sufficient amount of protective clothing and equipment for front line staff at (1) GP surgeries, and (2) hospitals. [HL2758]

Lord Bethell: There continues to be adequate supply in line with Public Health England recommended use and the European Union exit and pandemic influenza stockpiles have been released. We have now moved to providing substantial extra deliveries and support will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services across the National Health Service are urgently being sent stocks of personal protective equipment to help them manage cases and potential cases of COVID-19 and keep staff safe.

Nigeria: Humanitarian Situation

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) reported killing of 60 Christians in villages in Plateau State in Nigeria by

Fulani militia, and (2) the humanitarian situation in Nigeria; and what discussions they have had with the government of Nigeria about protecting those at risk and bringing perpetrators of human rights and freedom of religion or belief abuses to justice. [HL3291]

Baroness Sugg: We condemn all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria. We have been unable to verify reports of over 60 recent deaths in multiple incidents in Plateau State. Given religion forms a fundamental part of the identity of most Nigerians, our assessment is that religion inevitably plays a part in many clashes, including some which involve Fulani herdsmen. The British High Commissioner visited Plateau State in December 2019 and met the Governor, Christian and Muslim faith leaders, as well as Fulani communities. All highlighted the complex root cause of violence, including politicisation, ethnic tensions, and disputes over land resources. The FCO and Wilton Park conference on 'Fostering Social Cohesion in Nigeria' in February highlighted the importance of countering inaccurate media narratives misrepresenting disparate incidents as a homogenous religious conflict, and also of inflammatory terminology such as 'militia' to describe diverse ethnic groups. Urgent action is needed by the Nigerian Government to protect those at risk, bring perpetrators to justice and implement long-term solutions that address the root causes.

Humanitarian need in Nigeria is greatest in the North East where the decade long conflict with Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa has left 7.9 million people in need of assistance. The UK is the second largest donor to the North East and will be providing lifesaving assistance for up to 1.6 million vulnerable people this year as part of a five year UKAid commitment of up to £400 million. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities, at the highest levels, the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all Nigerians.

Nigeria: Internally Displaced People

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 9 March (HL1991), why they do not provide humanitarian assistance in the middle belt states; and what plans they have, if any, to provide such assistance in future. [HL3012]

Baroness Sugg: UK humanitarian assistance in Nigeria supports vulnerable people with the most acute lifesaving needs and is aligned with the United Nations Humanitarian Response Plan which is focused on North East Nigeria. The UK is a leading donor to the humanitarian crisis in North East Nigeria where 7.9 million people are in need of lifesaving assistance this year. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the international community is reviewing whether humanitarian assistance is needed in additional areas of Nigeria beyond the North East region. In the future the

UK may decide to provide humanitarian assistance to other areas of Nigeria, based on lifesaving needs.

Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the 100 per cent business rates holiday for the next 12 months to "all leisure business in England", announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 17 March, will cover the offices of such businesses, including theatre production offices and places used for content production such as studios; and what guidance they have provided to local authorities about that business rates holiday. [HL3239]

Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to support creative industries businesses whose premises have a rateable value higher than £51,000. [HL3242]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has provided enhanced support to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors through business rates relief given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government published updated guidance on 25 March.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as creative industry businesses, has also been made available. For example, the Government has launched the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help firms continue to keep people in employment and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank, backed by an 80% Government guarantee, and is deferring VAT payments for this quarter.

The Government will consider any further financial assistance necessary to help businesses get through this period.

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to extend the business rate relief scheme to other sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3351]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has provided enhanced support to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors through business rates relief given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, has also been made available. For example, the Government has launched the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help firms continue to keep people in employment and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs

through the British Business Bank backed by an 80% Government guarantee, and has deferred VAT payments for this quarter.

Asked by Baroness Thornhill

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Local Government Association about (1) the administration of and (2) the effectiveness of the COVID-19 business rate relief scheme. [HL3353]

Lord Greenhalgh: Businesses are expected to receive almost £10 billion in business rate relief as part of the Government's comprehensive package of support for the economy during the coronavirus pandemic

In line with usual practice, the Government has worked with the Local Government Association and local government practitioners to support the administration and implementation of this relief.

North Korea: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 in North Korea, in particular in prisons and prison camps in that country; what representations they are making to the government of North Korea about COVID-19; what humanitarian assistance they are providing to that country; and what assessment they have made of the extent to which international humanitarian assistance is reaching those in need in that country unconditionally. [HL3231]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The North Korean government insist that there have been no cases of COVID-19 in the country. North Korea's border lockdown in response to the virus has prevented aid shipments from entering the country since January and restrictions on internal movement, including for UN agencies and NGOs, has severely impacted the distribution of aid and support. We assess that the country's humanitarian need is likely increasing as a result, especially in the countryside and other vulnerable communities. The UN estimates that just over ten million people are in urgent need of food assistance.

The Department for International Development is providing multilateral funds to the UN and other international organisations providing humanitarian assistance in North Korea, including the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) in response to COVID-19. As a country of concern in the GHRP, North Korea is receiving funds from this global appeal. We continue to make clear to the North Korean government that international support is available, and urge them to restore international access and monitoring for humanitarian assistance.

North Korea: Nuclear Power

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of North Korea has continued nuclear activities in violation of its commitments to abandon all nuclear programs; and what representations they have made to that government about such reports. [HL3229]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British government is very concerned at the continued development of North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The recent UN Panel of Experts' report highlighted that there had been 13 sets of ballistic missile launches in 2019, and there have been a further 4 sets of ballistic missile launches this year. These launches are a breach of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. We have raised our concerns with the government of North Korea, as well as with international partners through the United Nations Security Council. We encourage North Korea to return to meaningful negotiations with the United States.

North Korea: Oil

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of North Korea's imports of refined petroleum products exceeded the annual limit imposed by the United Nations by up to eight times in the first ten months of 2019. [HL3230]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British government is committed to upholding international sanctions on North Korea and is working with partners to curtail North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The UK is concerned about North Korea's evasion of UN sanctions, including ship-to-ship transfers of unrefined petroleum and the illicit maritime export of commodities. Our assessment is that it is highly likely that North Korea has breached the cap in oil imports permitted under UN Security Council resolutions, and we have raised our concerns with UN Security Council members.

North Korea: Sanctions

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that the government of North Korea's traded oil and coal products in 2019, what assessment they have made of the compliance of that government with international sanctions. [HL3227]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British government is committed to upholding sanctions on North Korea and

is working with international partners to curtail North Korea's nuclear and missile capability. The UK is concerned about North Korea's evasion of UN sanctions, including via ship-to-ship transfers of unrefined petroleum and the illicit maritime export of commodities, including coal. The British government agrees with the UN Panel of Experts' assessment that the government of North Korea is in clear breach of international law and has raised its concerns with UN Security Council members. We are of the view that international sanctions must remain in place until North Korea denuclearises.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of North Korea is in violation of UN sanctions prohibiting the export of coal and restricting the import of refined petroleum; what representations they have made to that government about such reports; and what discussions they have had with the government of China about reports that it assisted North Korea in its trade of such products. [HL3228]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British government has been very clear that international law must be upheld, and that UN sanctions put in place to combat North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes must be fully enforced. We judge that North Korea continues the illicit maritime export of commodities such as coal, and that it is highly likely North Korea has breached the oil imports cap permitted under UN Security Council resolutions. We have raised our concerns with UN Security Council members, including China. The UK calls for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of North Korea.

Northern Cyprus: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made, while the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 apply, to enable UK citizens coming back from Northern Cyprus, or travelling to Northern Cyprus if currently a resident there, to fly directly to avoid an additional period of isolation if they are required to stop en route and disembark at a Turkish airport. [HL3201]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office worked with the Government of Cyprus to secure the necessary arrangements for 154 British Nationals in the north of Cyprus to transit to the Republic of Cyprus, to then depart on direct flights back to the UK operated by EasyJet and Aegean. This meant no repatriation flights travelled via Turkey.

Nurses: Re-employment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to request those nursing professionals

whose registration has lapsed in the last five years to return to work in NHS Nightingale Hospitals. [HL3442]

Lord Bethell: The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the independent regulator of nurses and midwives in the United Kingdom, and nursing associates in England, introduced a temporary registration process on 27 March. The NMC has written to all professionals who have left the register in the past five years, inviting them to join the temporary register.

NHS Professionals launched the COVID-19 Rapid Response service to enable healthcare workers, including registered nurses who are not currently working in the National Health Service, to move quickly and safely to the frontline to help to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak. Staff are deployed to clinical settings on the basis of their geographical location, skills and availability.

Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to contribute to the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan to tackle COVID-19. [HL3135]

Baroness Sugg: The UK strongly supports the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan to tackle COVID-19. Our latest UK aid funding of £200 million, announced on 12 April, will enable humanitarian organisations to help reduce mass infections in developing countries which often lack the healthcare systems to track and halt the virus. This funding includes £130 million to UN agencies in response to their COVID-19 humanitarian appeals and £50 million to the Red Cross to help its efforts in difficult to reach areas, such as those affected by armed conflict. We continue to urge other countries to step up to support international appeals.

Additionally, the UK has pledged £50 million to match £50 million from Unilever for a joint global hygiene project targeting up to a billion people with awareness and behavioural change campaigns to promote handwashing and providing 20 million hygiene items like soap and bleach to help the most vulnerable communities protect themselves.

This humanitarian funding brings the total amount of UK aid committed to fight COVID-19 to £744 million. This includes support to develop new vaccines, tests and treatments; humanitarian aid and support for the International Monetary Fund to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the world's most vulnerable countries.

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that Department for International Development funded non-government organisations and international non-governmental organisation include street-connected children and homeless youth in emergency funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3235]

Baroness Sugg: DFID is committed to protecting the most vulnerable children in the world. We are working with international partners to ensure that child protection is integrated into a comprehensive response to COVID-19 that supports those groups who will be hit the hardest and are often with limited or no state protection. We are also working to ensure that existing UK programming is responsive to the challenge of supporting those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parental Pay: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether furloughed employees will have continuity of service in order that, for example, prospective parents do not lose out on statutory parental pay which requires a qualifying period. [HL3268]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Being placed on furlough does not have an impact on an individual's continuity of service. The Government is committed to supporting all workers at this time, including working parents. We have amended Regulations to ensure that prospective parents do not lose out on parental pay as a result of being furloughed. The changes will apply to workers starting a period of family-related statutory pay on or after 25 April 2020, and mean that individuals will be entitled to pay based on their usual earnings rather than a furloughed pay rate.

Parents: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential economic benefit of parents being allowed to undertake reduced hours on full pay rather than being furloughed whilst balancing work and care commitments during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3251]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is designed to help those who otherwise would have been made unemployed and to provide support to businesses as quickly as possible. Allowing employers to move staff to part-time and claim the difference would have substantially increased the risk of fraud. However, there is flexibility in the scheme as employers can decide how many staff to furlough, and staff can be furloughed multiple times while the scheme is in operation, provided they are furloughed for a minimum of three weeks.

The Government recognises that it is challenging for parents to balance paid work and childcare while schools and nurseries are closed. Schools remain open for children of key workers and the most vulnerable children, and the Government has put in place a national voucher scheme to provide free school meals for children while at home. Families who see a fall in earnings may become

eligible for support through the welfare system, including through Universal Credit (UC).

Parish Councils: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide parish and town councils with funding to enable them to support communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3066]

Lord Greenhalgh: Whilst we applaud the assistance that many parish councils are providing to their local communities in the current crisis, Government does not financially support parish councils. They are funded through a precept collected from within the overall council tax paid by the residents of the parish. There are no plans to change the funding arrangements for such councils.

On Saturday 18 April the Local Government Secretary announced an additional £1.6 billion of funding to support principal councils delivering essential frontline services, taking the total to £3.2 billion. Parish and Town Councils should liaise with the relevant principal authorities on how this money is allocated in their area.

Parish Councils: Coronaviurs

Asked by Baroness Scott of Needham Market

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether parish and town councils are eligible bodies for, and can therefore apply to, the (1) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, (2) Small Business Grant Fund, and (3) Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. [HL3068]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund have been designed to support smaller and rural businesses and some of the sectors which have been hit hardest by the measures taken to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

It is not expected that parish and town councils would be eligible to receive a grant as they are not businesses. Where parish and town councils have set up organisations, including trusts, that meet the grant criteria, they may be eligible and parish and town councils should liaise with their relevant local authorities to determine whether this is the case.

Pension Funds: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assist pension funds in matching their liabilities, in the light of the current COVID-19 pandemic-related issues in asset markets, by issuing (1) longevity or mortality gilts; (2) gilts linked to the consumer prices index; and (3) gilts specifically linked to limited consumer price inflation measures. [T] [HL3581]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Debt Management Office (DMO) continues to issue long-dated conventional gilts and index-linked gilts (linked to the Retail Prices Index), which are instruments often used by pension funds to match longer term liabilities. Decisions on the exact composition of debt issuance are informed by an assessment of investor demand for debt instruments by maturity and type as reported by stakeholders, and as manifested in the shape of the nominal and real yield curves; and by the government's appetite for risk. The former is noted at quarterly consultation meetings with market participants, held by the DMO.

At present, the UK Government does not have any plans to introduce any new debt financing instruments in response to Covid-19. The government remains open to the introduction of new debt instruments, but would need to be satisfied that any new instrument would meet value-for-money criteria, enjoy strong and sustained demand in the long-term and be consistent with wider fiscal objectives.

Planning Permission: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist on 2 April (HL2957), whether the Planning Inspectorate will accept Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project applications, including those for Sizewell C nuclear plant, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3202]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Planning Inspectorate is continuing to receive applications for Development Consent Orders for nationally significant infrastructure projects, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic. The Inspectorate has published guidance on how it will continue to carry out its duties under the Planning Act 2008 in respect of Development Consent Order applications. We are encouraging developers to consider pragmatic ways of adhering to the requirements on them in these exceptional circumstances to support the continuation of decision-making.

The application for the Sizewell C proposals is due to be submitted in May 2020. When an application is received the Planning Inspectorate have a period of up to 28 days to decide whether or not the application meets the satisfactory standards required to be accepted for examination.

Poland: Elections

Asked by Lord Alderdice

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that Polish citizens living in the UK are able to vote in the Polish Presidential election on 10 May; what steps they are taking to ensure voting at the Polish Embassy is considered a legitimate essential duty; and what discussions they have had with the government of Poland about the steps being taken to

ensure that adequate social distancing measures are in place at the Embassy when the election is held. [T] [HL3580]

Baroness Sugg: On 3 April, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) issued guidance to all missions in the United Kingdom setting out our expectation that countries intending to conduct Out of Country Voting should enable citizens to vote in a way compatible with current social distancing guidelines, for instance through postal voting or in-country representatives. The Polish parliament is currently considering draft legislation to allow for universal postal voting in the Polish presidential elections on 10 May. Senior FCO officials have received assurances from the Polish authorities that the proposed elections will be organised as a postal vote and that Polish citizens in the United Kingdom are not expected to vote in person. The Polish authorities have confirmed that consular and electoral commission staff organising the postal vote will respect social distancing guidelines at all times.

Population

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to restrain and reverse the projected growth in the world's population. [HL3369]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is committed to increasing access to voluntary family planning, empowering women and girls to make their own decisions about if, when and how many children they have, without coercion or discrimination, and with full, free and informed choice.

The UK is the world's second largest global bilateral donor on family planning and has committed to spend an average of £225 million per year on family planning up to 2021/22. We built on this commitment at UNGA 2019, where the Secretary of State announced a £600 million programme for reproductive health supplies up to 2025. Our investment in girls' education, empowerment and economic opportunities, will ensure that rapidly growing young populations can access education, jobs and services.

Postgraduate Education: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have extend the provision of funding for postgraduate research students funded by UK Research and Innovation whose studies have been disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3106]

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) funding, and (2) stipend extensions, they intend to provide to those doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers funded by UK Research and Innovation on fixed-term contracts who gave up their normal work in order to

support efforts in combatting COVID-19 and assisting the NHS with testing and community support work. [HL3107]

Lord Callanan: The Government is aware of the consequent pressures of COVID-19 on universities and research institutions. This is a difficult time for all - both undergraduate and post graduate students, academic staff and researchers. BEIS is working with Department for Education and others to consider how best to support researchers, universities, the research community and research institutions.

UKRI has confirmed it will offer a costed extension of up to six months for those PhD students due to complete by 31 March 2021 and whose study has been impacted by the pandemic. This will apply to those who have redeployed to work on COVID-19 related research or other action to support the response.

UKRI has also introduced processes for supporting grant awardees to switch their funding to support COVID-19 priorities.

Prescriptions: Rural Areas

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that NHS England implements the Electronic Prescription Service in dispensing practices to benefit rural patients. [HL3043]

Lord Bethell: The majority of dispensing practices are live with the prescribing functionality of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS). In the next round of general practitioner contract negotiations, the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement will look at what further support can be provided to dispensing practices to implement the EPS.

Press Conferences: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government why there has been no British Sign Language interpreter present at the daily COVID-19 briefings broadcast from Downing Street. [HL3343]

Lord True: It is vital that key information is accessible to all. Since the daily press briefings began, British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation has been available on the national broadcaster. The BBC provides BSL interpretation at the daily No10 press conference via its News channel, Youtube channel and iPlayer. This is available free to air.

Prisoners: Rape

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many incidents of female prison staff being raped by male

prisoners self-identifying as females occurred during the period January 2018 to May 2019. [HL3293]

Lord Keen of Elie: There is no record of any type of sexual assault on female prison staff by transgender individuals in custody. Strict safeguards are in place to care for and manage transgender individuals in custody while protecting our staff and other service users.

Prisoners: Sexual Offences

Asked by Baroness McDonagh

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many sexual assaults have been carried out by trans prisoners against women prisoners and prison officers in prisons in each year since 2010; in which prisons any such assaults took place; and in each case, what action was taken against the perpetrator. [HL3198]

Lord Keen of Elie: We have strict safeguards in place to care for and manage transgender individuals in custody while protecting our staff and others in custody.

There have been no reported incidents of any type of sexual assault against prison officers by transgender prisoners.

Since 2010, out of the 122 sexual assaults that occurred in the female estate a total of five of those were sexual assaults against females in custody perpetrated by transgender individuals. These occurred at HMP Low Newton, HMP Foston Hall, HMP Peterborough (Female) and HMP Bronzefield. However, we are not able to break this data down year by year, as it may then be used to identify individuals. Information on the action taken against each perpetrator is not held centrally.

Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to request students studying design and technology to produce personal protective equipment. [HL3349]

Baroness Berridge: We have no plans to request students studying design and technology to produce personal protective equipment.

Protective Clothing: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hannay of Chiswick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what cross-departmental assessment was made following the confirmation by the European Commission on 17 March that the UK was entitled to participate in the EU's joint procurement arrangements for personal protective equipment and other COVID-19 related supplies; and what decision was reached as a result. [HL3392]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom Government is working round the clock with industry, the National

Health Service, social care providers and the army to ensure the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other medical equipment such as ventilators.

As part of this national effort, we are working with international partners to make sure that we can increase supplies of medical equipment within the NHS and to deliver a strategy that provides the best outcome for the UK.

The UK is eligible to take part in European Union Joint Procurements during the Transition Period and we are participating in the joint EU procurement scheme on therapeutics that is soon to launch. We will consider participating in other future schemes on the basis of public health requirements, including any on PPE.

Protective Clothing: VAT

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to remove VAT from all personal protection equipment. [HL3209]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: A temporary zero-rate of VAT will apply to sales of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for protection from COVID-19 from 1 May 2020 until 31 July 2020.

The temporary relief is being introduced as an urgent response to the coronavirus emergency. Its main objective is to relieve businesses, particularly in the healthcare and residential care sectors, of the burden of tax on essential infection protection equipment needed to deal with the emergency.

The measure will allow VAT-free supplies of PPE to reach the widest possible range of businesses, charities and individuals.

Public Finance: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ongoing costs associated with measures announced to assist businesses and individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3311]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has announced unprecedented support for public services, business and workers to protect against the current economic emergency. These steps are necessary to ensure that the country, economy and public finances are stronger in the longer-term.

Precise costs will depend on a range of factors including the impact of the crisis on the wider economy and the level of take up for each scheme.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) have published a coronavirus reference scenario on 14th April which provides insight into the potential fiscal costs under a particular set of economic circumstances and have updated their policy costings table on 30th April. In their

scenario, the OBR estimate the direct cost of Government decisions to be £103.7 billion in 2020/21. The OBR note that the measures taken should help limit the long-term damage to the economy and public finances – and the costs of inaction would have been higher.

A full assessment of the economic and fiscal position will be made at the next Budget alongside an updated OBR forecast.

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recover the costs associated with measures announced to assist businesses and individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3312]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government has announced unprecedented support for public services, business and workers to protect against the current economic emergency. These steps are necessary to ensure that the country, economy and public finances are stronger in the longer-term.

The Government has announced substantial support through loans and guarantees, and businesses remain responsible for repaying government-supported loans.

It is clear that the costs of other measures of the Government's necessary response, and the impact on the economy, will lead to an increase in borrowing this year. The Government expects this increase in borrowing to be temporary and intends to finance this through the Government's normal debt management operations. The OBR note that the measures taken should help limit the long-term damage to the economy and public finances, and that the costs of inaction would have been higher.

Railways

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following their report Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge, published in March, what consideration they have given to reinstating plans to (1) electrify rail lines, and (2) prioritise rail routes, (a) between Cardiff and Swansea, (b) in the East Midlands, and (c) in the Lake District. [HL3147]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Electrification will play a significant role in our programme to decarbonise the railway. Network Rail's ongoing work developing the Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy will inform decisions about whether electrification or new technologies are the right option for all parts of the network where diesel trains currently run.

In deciding which schemes to take forward at each stage of the decarbonisation programme, the Department will consider the environmental impact as well as factors such as affordability; readiness of a scheme to proceed; deliverability; the disruption that might be experienced by passengers or freight operators during works; and availability of suitable rolling stock.

Railways: Electrification

Asked by *Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to assign new work to those working on railway electrification to ensure that experienced teams are not disbanded. [HL3180]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government expects electrification to play a significant role in the decarbonisation of the railway and to deliver other benefits for rail users. A strong supply chain will be necessary to deliver those benefits and value for money for taxpayers as part of a sustainable decarbonisation programme. Maintenance of a skilled workforce will therefore be one criterion in considering future electrification.

Refugees: Children

Asked by *Lord Dubs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied child refugees have been admitted to the UK under (1) section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, and (2) the Dublin Treaty, since 2016. [HL3256]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Over 220 children were transferred to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 when the Calais camp was cleared in late 2016. Since then we have been making continuous progress towards achieving our commitment of relocating 480 unaccompanied children. We will publish the current number of transfers under section 67 on 21 May 2020 along with the publication of the quarterly immigration statistics.

Between 2016 and 2019, 590 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were transferred to the UK under articles 8.1 and 8.2 of the Dublin III Regulation – the two principle articles in Dublin that allow an unaccompanied child to join a family member lawfully present in the UK.

Refugees: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the decision by the governments of Italy, Malta and Libya to disallow landing facilities for refugees and migrants rescued at sea, what plans they have to call for the establishment of COVID-19 testing and quarantining arrangements for refugees and migrants in those and other countries. [HL3018]

Baroness Sugg: This is a fast-moving situation and Italy, Malta and Libya are all adapting their approach to the evolving threat posed by COVID-19. Their responses include dedicated structures to quarantine rescued migrants, mandatory self-isolation for 14 days, testing regimes and, in Libya's case, disembarkation only in accordance with the Directorate for Combatting Illegal

Migration's capacity to provide shelter. The UK is monitoring these situations closely. In Libya, the UK continues to provide humanitarian support in the healthcare sector.

The UK has contributed over £744 million of UK Aid in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, including £20 million to the UN Refugees Agency (UNHCR) to ensure UK Aid meets the needs of vulnerable groups such as refugees. This includes providing access to health services and medical supplies, improving shelters so people with symptoms can isolate, and making sure that there are adequate hygiene supplies and facilities for hand washing in camps and large settlements, to prevent the humanitarian disaster that mass infections among refugees would bring.

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Coventry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to limit the vulnerability of refugees around the world to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3255]

Baroness Sugg: One of the main risks to ending the COVID-19 pandemic is the weakness of developing countries' healthcare systems. Those countries already struggling with humanitarian crises will be particularly stretched. Refugees are amongst the most vulnerable. They often live in close quarters without access to proper healthcare or shelter, many in crowded and unsanitary camps where social distancing and regular handwashing are almost impossible.

The UK has long been supportive of initiatives to build resilience amongst refugees and their host communities, including in health and disease control. We have done this through programmes that are providing access to public health information, clean water, sanitation and health services. We are also working closely with all our international partners to coordinate a global response that includes actions to address the vulnerability of refugee populations.

We have committed £744 million to date in the fight against COVID-19. Our most recent funding includes new support to the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) and to UNICEF to help install new hand-washing stations and isolation and treatment centres in refugee camps as well as provide protection services and education opportunities for forcibly displaced children.

Relationship and Sex Education

Asked by *Lord Maginnis of Drumglass*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what lessons they have learnt from the criticisms of Warwickshire County Council's "All About Me" programme to deliver relationships and sex education that it included inappropriate content; what assessment they have made of whether other education authorities' relationships and sex education programmes include inappropriate content; and what steps they are taking to ensure programmes to deliver relationships and sex education in primary schools do not include inappropriate content

once it becomes a mandatory part of the curriculum in September. [HL3330]

Baroness Berridge: We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We also want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. That is why we are making relationships education compulsory for primary-age pupils, relationships and sex education compulsory for secondary-age pupils, and health education compulsory in all state-funded schools from September 2020.

Schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an approach that is sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of their pupils. The statutory guidance also sets out some clear advice on choosing resources. The guidance sets out that schools should ensure that they assess each resource that they propose to use and ensure that it is appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, and sensitive to their needs. These resources must also be factually accurate. The statutory guidance is available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf.

Schools will be expected to consult when developing and reviewing their primary school relationships education and secondary school relationships and sex education policy. Schools should also ensure that parents know what will be taught and when, and communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory relationships and sex education. Schools should also ensure that, when they consult with parents, they provide examples of the resources that they plan to use.

To support schools in their preparations, the department is investing in a central support package to help all schools to increase the confidence and quality of their teaching practice. We are currently developing a new online service featuring innovative training materials, case studies and support to access resources. This will cover all the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance and will include advice on what things to consider when selecting appropriate resources.

Retail Trade: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Smith of Basildon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what powers are available to local authorities to take action if retail outlets (1) open outside of the Government's COVID-19 guidelines, or (2) persistently flout the rules on selling essential items. [HL3080]

Lord Greenhalgh: The government's Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020 enforces the closure of certain businesses and venues in England, including many retail premises. Takeaway and delivery services may remain open and operational. Online retail is

still open and encouraged and postal and delivery service will run as normal.

Businesses and venues that breach the Regulations may be subject to prohibition notices, and a person, who is 18 or over, carrying on a business in contravention of the Regulations may be issued with a fixed penalty. Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers will monitor compliance with these Regulations, with police support provided if appropriate. With the support of the police, prohibition notices can be used to require compliance with the Regulations including requiring that an activity ceases. It is also an offence, without reasonable excuse, to fail to comply with a prohibition notice. If prohibition notices are not complied with, or fixed penalty notice not paid, this can also be taken to court with magistrates able to impose potentially unlimited fines.

Rohingya: Family Planning

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Bangladesh about the access of Rohingya refugees to sexual and reproductive health and rights services during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3447]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In May 2019, DFID undertook a gender review of the Rohingya response. This indicated that sexual and reproductive health and rights services have been accessible and effective in the camps. The Government of Bangladesh decided early in the crisis to deliver the national Essential Service Package to the refugees. This includes contraceptive options, ante- and post-natal care, midwifery services, and menstruation products. These are currently designated as critical services, alongside distribution of hygiene kits, during the COVID-19 period.

We are making representations to government about restrictions on telecommunications. This is needed to improve public health information about coronavirus and sexual and reproductive health and rights services.

Rohingya: UN Population Fund

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support the United Nations Population Fund has received to support their humanitarian work with the Rohingya population in Myanmar and neighbouring countries. [HL3444]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: From 2015 to 2016 DFID provided £500,000 to UNFPA through our Rakhine Humanitarian programme to maintain coordination services and strengthen gender-based violence preventative and response initiatives in crisis affected areas of Rakhine State, which included the Rohingya community. DFID is currently providing a nationwide £400,000 grant to UNFPA in Myanmar through our

health programme to provide technical support on maternal mortality death surveillance and response. This includes work by UNFPA to support the Maternal and Reproductive Division of the Ministry of Health and the Rakhine State Health Department to review, analyse and disseminate findings to tackle maternal mortality amongst all communities in Rakhine, including the Rohingya.

Since September 2017, DFID have provided £4,876,046 to the United Nations Population Fund to assist with the Rohingya response in the camps in Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh.

The UK has committed £256 million in funding to the Rohingya response in Bangladesh since August 2017. In Myanmar's Rakhine State, the UK is providing support to all communities affected by crises and remains the second largest donor.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial support the United Nations Population Fund will receive in each of the next three financial years to support their humanitarian work with the Rohingya population in Myanmar and neighbouring countries. [HL3445]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is developing plans for the continued funding of the Rohingya response in Bangladesh once the current programme ends, as well as for continued support to Rohingya IDPs and communities in Myanmar. Sexual and reproductive health services for Rohingya IDPs and refugees and host communities will remain a high priority, for which the United Nations Population Fund is a valued partner.

Schools: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Burt of Solihull***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to providing 'top up' income support for employees who are unable to work their full hours due to childcare commitments arising from school and nursery closures. [HL3250]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognises it is a challenge for parents to balance paid work and childcare while schools and nurseries are closed. Schools remain open for children of key workers and the most vulnerable children, and the Government has put in place a national voucher scheme to provide free school meals for children while at home.

Families who see a fall in earnings may become eligible for support through the welfare system, including through Universal Credit (UC). Existing UC claimants are likely to receive a higher award as a result of a fall in earnings. For employed claimants this will be updated automatically using information from the PAYE system. In response to the crisis, the Government has strengthened the welfare system, including by increasing the UC standard allowance and the Working Tax Credit basic element by £20 per week. In addition, to protect people's

jobs and incomes as far as possible during the crisis, the Government has announced a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies

*Asked by **Lord Triesman***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the names of the members of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies that have been providing them with advice on the COVID-19 pandemic; whether they intend to publish the minutes of the meetings of that Group since 14 January; and if so, where they intend to publish those minutes. [HL3226]

Lord Callanan: SAGE is not a membership body. HMG has not published the names of SAGE participants in line with advice from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure and standard procedure for COBR meetings, to which SAGE gives advice.

HMG will be publishing the names of those participants, who give their consent to this, in the coming days. This will allow for transparency on who is contributing to the science advice being given to the Government.

In line with its usual approach, HMG will publish the minutes of relevant SAGE meetings once SAGE stops convening on this emergency. In addition, the evidence which has been used to inform SAGE advice will be published in the coming weeks where appropriate. Papers relating to SAGE will be published on the Gov.uk website.

Self-employment Income Support Scheme

*Asked by **Lord Clement-Jones***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the introduction of the COVID-19 Self-employment Income Support Scheme on (1) creative workers who have had recent gaps in their earnings because of pregnancy or caring responsibilities, (2) creative workers who have just returned to the UK from overseas working, (3) deaf and disabled workers who claim Universal Credit or other benefits, and (4) those who have become self-employed since April 2019. [HL3121]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will help those adversely affected by COVID-19 and means the UK will have one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world.

Those in any industry who have recent gaps in their earnings for whatever reason could still be eligible for the SEISS. For example, if an individual is self-employed but is taking a break from their trade because of a new baby or adoption, or have done since 6 April 2019, they may still be eligible because HMRC will treat the individual as still trading. Individuals may also be eligible for the grant if they are self-employed and are non-resident in the UK,

but will have to confirm to HMRC that their UK trading profits are at least equal to their other worldwide income.

Self-employed individuals, including eligible deaf and disabled individuals, can make a claim for Universal Credit while they wait for the grant. The grant may affect the amount of Universal Credit they get, but it will not affect claims for earlier periods.

It has not been possible to include those who began trading after the 2018-19 tax year in the SEISS. This was a very difficult decision and it was taken for practical reasons. Unlike for employees, self-employed income is not reported monthly, but at the end of each tax year on the individual's Income Tax Self Assessment return. This means that the most reliable and up-to-date record of self-employed income is from the 2018-19 tax returns, which were due at the end of January 2020. The Government recognises that those who started trading more recently will not have submitted a tax return for the 2018-19 tax year, and it considered alternative approaches. However, HMRC would not be able to distinguish genuine self-employed individuals who started trading in 2019-20 from fake applications by fraudulent operators and organised criminal gangs seeking to exploit the SEISS.

Those who are not eligible for the SEISS could be eligible for other significant financial support announced for UK businesses, including the Bounce Back Loans Scheme for small businesses, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the deferral of tax payments.

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government how profits are defined under the COVID-19 Self-employment Income Support Scheme. [HL3123]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The new Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will help those adversely affected by COVID-19. It means the UK will have one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world. Full guidance on how HMRC work out trading profits and non-trading income for the SEISS can be found on GOV.UK.

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the self-employed can still earn at the same time as claiming through the Self-employment Income Support Scheme during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3124]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Individuals who receive a grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme can continue to work, start a new trade or take on other employment including voluntary work, or duties as an armed forces reservist. Full guidance on the SEISS can be found on GOV.UK.

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) remove the £50,000 earnings cap for those self-employed people who may claim a grant through

the COVID-19 Self-employment Income Support Scheme, and (2) provide support for self-employed people who run as limited companies and pay themselves in dividends, not PAYE, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3126]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Some 95% of people who receive the majority of their income from self-employment could be eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), based on 2017-18 data. The scheme, including the £50,000 threshold, is designed to be targeted at those who need it the most, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income. The self-employed are a very diverse population. They have a wide mix of turnover and profits, with monthly and annual variations even in normal times. Some may see their profits unaffected by the current situation, while others have substantial alternative forms of income: for example, those who had more than £50,000 from self-employment profits in 2017-18 had an average total income of more than £200,000. The self-employed can also offset losses against profits in other years and other forms of income.

Income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages, and is not eligible for support. Under current reporting mechanisms it is not possible for HM Revenue and Customs to distinguish between dividends derived from an individual's own company and dividends from other sources, and between dividends in lieu of employment income and as returns from other corporate activity. Expanding the scope would require HMRC to collect and verify new information. This would take longer to deliver and put at risk the other schemes which the Government is committed to delivering as quickly as possible.

Individuals who are not eligible for the SEISS may be able to access other support Government is providing, including the Bounce Back Loans Scheme for small businesses, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the deferral of tax payments. More information about the full range of business support measures is available on GOV.UK.

Sky Lanterns

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ban sky lanterns. [HL3322]

Lord Callanan: The Government has no plans to place a ban on sky lanterns.

Local Authorities have powers to apply local controls to restrict or ban the use of sky lanterns on council or public land. Some councils in England, Scotland and Wales have applied a voluntary ban from council owned land.

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute has published a Code of Practice for sky lanterns, which aims to provide guidance for manufacturers, importers, and retailers.

Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to provide care for rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3153]

Lord Greenhalgh: We have been working with the Greater London Authority and a number of hotel chains across the country to secure accommodation for rough sleepers and we have now introduced a centrally coordinated process across Government for block booking hotels.

Over 90% of those on the streets and in communal night shelters known to local authorities at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have now been made offers of safe accommodation – ensuring some of the most vulnerable in society are protected from the pandemic.

This response is backed by £3.2 billion of additional funding for local authorities to enable them to respond to COVID-19 pressures across the services they deliver. This is in addition to £3.2 million in targeted funding to ensure that we minimise the risk to those currently unable to self-isolate.

The Government has made clear that no one should be without a roof over their head and this funding further demonstrates our commitment to assist the most vulnerable in society.

Sleeping Rough: Immigrants

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of migrants sleeping rough; and what guidance they have issued to local authorities about the provision of emergency accommodation for such migrants. [HL3039]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Department's latest official annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot Statistics published on 27 February 2020 provide information about the estimated number of people sleeping rough across all local authorities on a single night between 1 October and 31 November 2019. These statistics provide a way of estimating the number of people sleeping rough across England on a single night and of assessing change over time.

The majority of people sleeping rough on a single night in England in 2019 were from the UK. In 2019, there were 2,735 people from the UK (64 % of the total) estimated to be sleeping rough on single night, 937 people (22 % of the total) who were EU (Non-UK) nationals and 151 people (4 % of the total) who were from outside the EU and the UK. The nationality of 443 people (10 % of the total) was 'not known'.

For more information please see the following (attached) link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>.

We are providing £3.2 million in targeted funding to help support individuals who are sleeping rough off the streets, and an additional £3.2 billion for local authorities as part of the wider Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is at the discretion of local authorities, using their existing legal powers, to decide who they can accommodate during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether this is British citizens or foreign nationals.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Rough sleeping snap shot [200505 Rough sleeping snapshot in England_ autumn 2019 - GOV.UK - HL3039.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-22/HL3039>

Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide further tools to local government to support small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3240]

Lord Greenhalgh: Government is providing a package of support for businesses and workers, in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. This includes £12.3bn for local authorities to deliver to SMEs under the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund. On 1 May, the Business Secretary announced a further up to £617 million available to local authorities to support small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grant funding. Government is working closely with all local authorities to help them make payments to businesses as quickly and effectively as possible, whilst safeguarding public funds. As part of this we have provided detailed guidance and FAQs, regular briefings and one-to-one support from ministers and officials. Government will also provide additional funding to local authorities to meet the administrative costs of delivering this policy. Alongside support through local authorities, the Chancellor pledged an additional £10 million to increase Growth Hub capacity and provide high-quality business advice and guidance across all 38 Growth Hubs.

South Asia: Protective Clothing

Asked by *Lord Naseby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK Ambassadors and High Commissioners in southern Asia have been instructed to approach their respective host governments to assess the possibility of establishing joint ventures in the production of personal protective equipment. [T] [HL3626]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is working tirelessly to secure vital supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) from overseas partners to meet UK demand. A joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office-Department for International Trade team was established to work with our network of overseas Posts to identify leads for medical equipment, conduct due diligence, and support the Department for Health and Social Care with the procurement process.

We are also working to establish relationships with suppliers in priority markets, including South Asia, where excess manufacturing capability exists and export restrictions aren't in place, with a view to securing the UK's future PPE supply. We have asked Posts to begin engagement with potential suppliers, and engaging governments where appropriate.

Sports and Voluntary Organisations: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the availability of professional trainers and coaches provided by voluntary organisations and sports clubs during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL2992]

Baroness Barran: Sport England has been working closely with its strategic partners, the Chartered Institute of the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA), UK Active, Community Leisure UK and the national governing body for group exercise EMD UK to make it easier for personal trainers and group exercise instructors to provide physical activity for people in their community and beyond. This has included work to assist personal trainers to make sure they have adequate insurance cover and guidance to promote remote activity sessions safely.

Government recognises the impact that covid-19 is having on the sport sector, and we are continuing to engage with sporting organisations to understand how it is affecting them and to provide support.

At the present time, although all elite and grassroots sport has been suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak, the government recognises the importance of staying physically active for mental and physical health. There has been much innovative thinking across the sport and physical activity sector on how to keep people active whilst social distancing restrictions are in place.

Daily exercise is one of the reasons that people are allowed outdoors and campaigns such as Sport England's 'Join the movement' campaign, under the hashtag #stayinworkout, provides the advice and tools needed to help people to stay as physically fit as possible. Its online hub offers free exercise content and advice from organisations such as the NHS. Workouts from fitness brands and influencers such as Les Mills on Demand, The Body Coach (Joe Wicks) and FiiT are also available via

the hub, many of whom are offering extended free trials to help people get active at home.

Syria: Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they support the UN's proposal for a ceasefire throughout Syria until the COVID-19 pandemic is over; and if so, what discussions, if any, they have had with the governments involved in that conflict about that proposal. [HL3131]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We support the UN call for an immediate, lasting, and nationwide ceasefire in Syria to enable complete focus on countering COVID-19. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa discussed this with Geir Pedersen, UN Special Envoy for Syria, on 1 April and we have expressed our support for this initiative at the UN Security Council and in bilateral discussions with some of the countries involved in the Syrian conflict. However, we have not discussed this proposal with the Assad regime since we have had no diplomatic relations with them since 2012.

Transport: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following their announcement to provide up to £167 million to bus operators under the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant on 3 April, what plans they have to provide funding to the (1) light rail and tram, and (2) passenger and freight shipping, and (3) ferry, sectors. [HL3111]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government announced a multi-million-pound support package on 24 April, including support for the light rail systems in Sheffield, Manchester, West Midlands, Nottingham, and Tyne and Wear, and is working with local authorities to identify what support is needed to allow essential services to continue. The support package also included up to £17 million for critical freight services routes between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, up to £10.5 million for lifeline ferry and freight services to the Isle of Wight and the Scilly Isles, and further support for critical routes between Britain and the European mainland.

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the continuity of (1) essential transport services, consistently across, and within, modes, and (2) viable services after the removal of COVID-19 movement restrictions; why competition law has been temporarily suspended for Isle of Wight ferry services; and what plans they have to suspend such law for other transport providers and modes, in particular open access rail operators. [HL3112]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak has had

unprecedented effects across the transport sector and the Government has provided comprehensive support packages across the transport sector, to ensure vital routes for supplies and people kept open.

The Government announced a multi-million-pound support package on 24 April, including support for the light rail systems in Sheffield, Manchester, West Midlands, Nottingham, and Tyne and Wear, and is working with local authorities to identify what support is needed to allow essential services to continue. The support package also included up to £17 million for critical freight services routes between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, up to £10.5 million for lifeline ferry and freight services to the Isle of Wight and the Scilly Isles, and further support for critical routes between Britain and the European mainland.

The Government also announced, on Friday 3 April, a funding boost totalling £397 million for vital bus operators, to help keep bus routes running during the coronavirus pandemic.

To help keep the railways open, the Government has provided train operators (on franchises let by the Department) the opportunity to temporarily transition onto Emergency Measures Agreement, which suspend the normal financial mechanisms of franchise agreements, transferring all revenue and cost risk to the government.

The Government has also provided a comprehensive support package for businesses, which includes measures to support workers through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and support to businesses through the COVID Corporate Financing Facility, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

The Department is engaging with the transport sector on a regular basis to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on their businesses and providing guidance on how to access the government's business support schemes.

The Government has already set out five clear tests to consider before making any adjustment to its approach. Work is underway across government and working closely with transport providers to consider how the transport system could be restarted safely and reliably once these conditions have been met

Competition law has been temporarily suspended for Isle of Wight ferry services to allow the Isle's lifeline operators to maintain a crucial lifeline between the island and the mainland. With the exception of the Solent Maritime Crossings, the Government has no current plans to grant further exclusion orders for transport providers during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Travellers: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have access to basic utilities, water and sanitation during the COVID-19 pandemic. [\[HL3116\]](#)

Lord Greenhalgh: Local authorities have a responsibility to look after vulnerable groups in their area, including Gypsy and Traveller communities. That is why I wrote to local authority Chief Executives on 11 April highlighting the need to mitigate potential impacts of COVID-19 amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities. In this letter, I noted that some Gypsies and Travellers may need assistance in accessing basic facilities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal, to enable them to adhere to public health guidelines around self-isolation and social distancing.

The Government is determined to ensure everyone gets the support they need to look after themselves and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak and are enabled to take the necessary measures to reduce the spread of the virus. We are holding regular discussions with representatives from Gypsy and Traveller communities to understand the issues they are facing, and to understand what guidance and support is needed, including for local authorities. On 18 April, the Local Government Secretary announced that councils across England will receive a further £1.6 billion to help them to deal with the immediate impacts of coronavirus. This takes the total funding to support councils to respond to the pandemic to over £3.2 billion.

Trident Submarines

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure Continuous At Sea Deterrence until the deployment of the first Dreadnought submarine. [\[HL3117\]](#)

Baroness Goldie: The Government is committed to maintaining a Continuous At Sea Deterrence posture for as long as the global security situation demands. We are providing the investment and resources to maintain the VANGUARD Class to assure the transition to the Dreadnought Class.

Turkey: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the government of Turkey has submitted proceedings to withdraw parliamentary immunity from 28 opposition MPs of the Republican People's Party, the People's Democratic Party and the Democratic Regions Party; and what representations they intend to make, if any, to that government about such reports. [\[HL3133\]](#)

Baroness Sugg: This is a matter for the Turkish Parliament. We will continue to follow closely developments on this. As a modern democracy, we expect Turkey to undertake any subsequent legal processes transparently and to fully respect the rule of law. We consistently encourage the Turkish government to uphold the rule of law, to respect fundamental freedoms and to adhere to its international obligations.

UK Relations With EU

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord True on 23 March (HL2421), how many agreements have been reached in respect of mutual recognition of (1) driving licences, and (2) blue badges. [HL3247]

Lord True: The recognition of both driving licenses and blue badges is a member state competence and the Government is seeking to secure both with EU members via bilateral agreement. Discussions are ongoing in both of these policy areas. Recognition of disabled blue badges currently operates on a policy of goodwill among EU member states. The Government has asked UK local authorities to continue to recognise disabled blue badges and hopes that EU member states will reciprocate.

Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) proportion, and (2) number, of people who have made new Universal Credit claims since COVID-19 pandemic related policies were introduced in the UK have dependent children; and of those, what (a) proportion, and (b) number, are subject to the two-child limit benefit policy. [HL3267]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The information requested is not currently available as most COVID claims have not yet got to the stage where they are due their first payment. We plan to release an assessment of how many claimants are affected by the child-limit policy as part of our regular statistics on the two child limit. This assessment is due to be released in summer 2020.

Asked by Baroness Sherlock

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether an employee who is isolating due to COVID-19 and is in receipt of Statutory Sick Pay can claim Universal Credit to supplement their income. [T] [HL3438]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Employees who are self-isolating in line with government advice because they are displaying symptoms, or someone in their household is displaying symptoms, of Coronavirus, and are unable to work as a result, will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Other eligibility criteria apply. Emergency legislation has also been introduced to suspend the SSP 'waiting days'. This means that employees will receive SSP from the first day they are unable to work due to coronavirus.

Universal Credit is also available for those on low incomes who need extra financial support and an individual can claim both Universal Credit and Statutory Sick Pay if they meet the criteria for entitlement.

Visas

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 24 March (HL2422), what discussions they have had with (1) the EU, and (2) individual member states about allowing UK citizens to visit the EU for up to 180 days without a visa. [HL3246]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The EU has already legislated such that UK nationals will not need a visa when travelling to the Schengen area for short stays of up to 90 days in every 180-day period. This will apply from the end of the transition period to all UK nationals travelling to and within the Schengen area for purposes such as tourism.

Provisions for UK nationals intending to stay in the Schengen area for longer than 90 days in any 180-day period will depend on the approach taken by the EU or by the relevant Member State(s). UK nationals intending to stay in the Schengen Area for longer may need a visa or permit to do so. Member State rules vary and UK nationals should check entry requirements with the Embassy of the relevant Member State.

Future mobility arrangements with the EU are subject to ongoing negotiations. Information about travel to the EU for UK nationals after the transition period is provided on the gov.uk website and these pages are updated regularly.

Voluntary Organisations: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) guidance, and (2) support, they have provided to voluntary and not-for-profit organisations such as amateur sports clubs who normally generate funds through social occasions in their own licensed premises to enable them to continue functioning after the lockdown period; whether any such guidance is published; and if so, where. [HL3171]

Baroness Barran: The Government has announced a number of support packages for voluntary and not-for-profit organisations, who have been impacted by Covid-19. These include the National Lottery Community Fund's £300m, the Arts Council's (£50m) and Sport England's (£20m) Emergency Funding packages. The Government is also distributing £310m via the National Lottery Community Fund to support voluntary organisations most affected by Covid-19 as part of the wider £750m Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise funding package announced by the Chancellor. This is in addition to the wider HM Treasury support packages, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Business Interruption Loans and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants, all of which the charitable sector are eligible for.

Full details of Government guidance and support during the current coronavirus epidemic for organisations | including amateur sports clubs can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

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