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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
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<b>Baroness Berridge</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Bethell</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
<b>Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist</b>	Whip
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<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
<b>Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park</b>	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
<b>Lord Greenhalgh</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Keen of Elie</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
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<b>Baroness Sugg</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
<b>Lord True</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
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# Written Statements

*Wednesday, 13 May 2020*

## Coronavirus Loan Schemes

[HLWS228]

**Lord Callanan:** My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma) has today made the following statement:

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention the changes we have made to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme so that more businesses can access the finance they need.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme was launched on 23 March and is facilitated by the Government-owned British Business Bank and delivered through its delivery partners. Lenders offer loans of up to £5 million to support small and medium sized businesses with a turnover up to £45 million that are affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme was launched on 20 April. Lenders can offer loans of up to £50 million to support viable businesses with a turnover of £45 million and above that are affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

On 3 April we announced changes to the CBILS scheme. The first change was to the use of personal guarantees under the scheme. Since the launch of CBILS, lenders had been permitted, but not obliged, to require a personal guarantee from businesses for loans of any size provided through CBILS. Lenders were never and will never be permitted under any circumstances to use business directors' or their families' principal residence as security. We made changes to the use of personal guarantees through the scheme to provide further reassurance regarding personal assets during this difficult time.

The largest CBILS lenders had already confirmed, on a voluntary basis, that they would not require personal guarantees for CBILS loans under £250,000. The changes we made to the terms of the scheme mean that no lender will be permitted to require a personal guarantee for loans or other CBILS facilities under £250,000.

For CBILS loans over £250,000, lenders are still permitted to require a personal guarantee, although under no circumstances may they use primary personal residences for this. Upon launch, in the event of a default, lenders were previously expected to seek to recover the loss from business assets and then using any personal guarantees. Only when these had been exhausted were they permitted to claim the residual loss under the guarantee agreement. We made changes to these terms so that lenders may now only look to the personal guarantee for a maximum of 20 per cent of the remaining debt

before claiming 80 per cent of the residual loss under the guarantee agreement.

The second change concerned the requirements businesses had to meet to access CBILS. At launch, CBILS was designed to support SMEs unable to secure finance on commercial terms. Because CBILS was only available to companies that could not otherwise secure a debt facility, it meant that preferable terms, such as the government's coverage of initial interest payments, were unavailable to those businesses that were able to secure facilities on commercial terms.

We therefore removed this requirement, meaning CBILS can now support lending to smaller businesses even where they could have secured a loan on commercial terms. This means that in addition to meeting company size and sectoral restrictions, the only other requirement for businesses is to be able to demonstrate they have been adversely affected by Covid-19 and for lenders to judge that the business is viable. This means that more businesses affected by the outbreak will be able to benefit from a CBILS facility and the government's 12-month Business Interruption Payment and resulting lower initial repayments.

On 27 April, we announced further changes to the scheme. The cap on gross Government liability at the level of the lender's whole CBILS portfolio has now been removed. Previously the Government's gross liability was capped at 75 per cent of losses across the lender's whole CBILS portfolio. Removing the portfolio cap therefore gives lenders an 80 per cent guarantee across all CBILS lending. This change should provide further confidence to lenders to support the timely supply of finance to businesses.

We are also removing the 'forward looking' element of the viability test. The current economic uncertainty means that many businesses are having difficulties providing cashflow forecasts, which is slowing down some lending decisions. Allowing lenders to base lending decisions purely on an assessment of business liability pre Covid-19 removes the requirement for lenders to ask for evidence of future cashflow, thereby speeding up lending decisions.

Finally, charities and Further Education colleges need no longer show that at least 50 per cent of their income comes from trading to be eligible for both CBILS and CLBILS loans. In practice, this requirement precluded a large number of organisations in these sectors from accessing support through these schemes, and its removal will support these organisations to access both schemes.

The removal of the portfolio cap increases the statutory contingent liability of the CBILS scheme, and I will be laying an updated Departmental Minute today containing a description of that revised liability undertaken. The other changes do not impact the statutory contingent liability of the CBILS scheme.

The removal of the requirement for at least 50 per cent of the income of charities and Further Education colleges to come from trading to be eligible for CLBILS also does

not impact the statutory contingent liability of the CLBILS scheme.

For more information on this and other support for business, please go to <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/>

### Coronavirus-related Home Office Expenses

[HLWS234]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

To support employees who are working from home and need to purchase home office equipment as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, a temporary tax exemption and National Insurance disregard will come into effect to ensure that the expense will not attract tax and NICs liabilities where reimbursed by the employer. The expenditure must meet the following two conditions to be eligible for relief:

That equipment is obtained for the sole purpose of enabling the employee to work from home as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, and

The provision of the equipment would have been exempt from income tax if it had been provided directly to the employee by or on behalf of the employer (under section 316 of Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003).

The exemption is a temporary measure and will have effect from the day after the regulations come into force until the end of the tax year 2020/21.

HMRC will exercise its collection and management discretion and will not collect tax and NICs due on any reimbursed payments made from 16 March 2020 (the date the government recommended working from home) to the date these regulations take effect.

This measure is being announced outside the normal fiscal process in order to ensure that employers and employees are able effectively to manage their working from home arrangements as soon as possible.

The Government will lay the statutory instruments to update these charges before the House in due course. A tax information and impact note (TIIN) will be published at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/tax-information-and-impact-notes-tiins](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tax-information-and-impact-notes-tiins).

### Covid-19: Construction Industry

[HLWS230]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

*Our Plan to Rebuild: the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy* published by the Government on Monday 11 May makes clear that construction work can be undertaken across England providing sites are able to

operate safely in line with the new COVID-19 Secure guidelines. A number of developers have already announced plans to restart work on sites.

In doing so, the Government recognises that the construction industry needs to be able to adapt its normal practices. As part of this, temporary extensions to working hours may be required on some sites to facilitate safe working and allow tasks to be completed where social distancing can be challenging. Longer working hours may also be needed to facilitate social distancing in the wider community, for instance by reducing pressure on public transport. It might be necessary to start work earlier in the day or work until later in the evenings.

However, many construction sites in England are subject to controls which restrict their hours of operation. These controls include planning conditions, which might directly restrict working hours or which might restrict working hours through a construction management plan. These conditions may be necessary, for example, to make the development acceptable to local residents and businesses who might otherwise suffer from traffic, noise and other local amenity issues.

The purpose of this Written Ministerial Statement is to make clear that, with immediate effect, local planning authorities should take a swift and positive approach to requests from developers and site operators for greater flexibility around construction site working hours. This is to ensure that, where appropriate, planning conditions are not a barrier to allowing developers the flexibility necessary to facilitate the safe operation of construction sites during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to proceed at pace with work otherwise delayed as a result of COVID-19.

The National Planning Policy Framework already emphasises that planning enforcement is a discretionary activity and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control.

Where only a short term or modest increase to working hours is required, local planning authorities should, having regard to the reason for the condition and to their legal obligations, not seek to undertake enforcement action.

Where developers require longer term or more significant changes to working hours, they should apply to the local planning authority to temporarily amend a condition or a construction management plan in the usual way. In doing so, it will be important for applicants to consider potential impacts and, where necessary, to put forward brief plans to manage concerns, drawing on existing good practice. In return, local planning authorities should respond speedily and sympathetically and engage positively with applicants to find solutions. Local authorities should prioritise these types of applications and give early clarity on the acceptability of extended hours to developers. They should ensure that decisions are issued quickly – with the aim of doing so within 10 working days.

In allowing greater flexibility, the Government recognises the need to mitigate the impact that any temporary relaxation of working hours could have on local residents and businesses. Requests to extend working hours should be proportionate and should not involve working on Sundays or bank holidays.

However, local authorities should not refuse requests to extend working hours until 9pm, Monday to Saturday without very compelling reasons for rejection. In some cases, such as in areas without residential properties, extending working hours beyond this, including allowing 24 hour working where appropriate, may be justified. In all cases, sympathetic site management should be demonstrated to mitigate local impacts and local authorities should show best endeavours to facilitate such requests.

Applications should only be refused where there are very compelling reasons such as significant impact on neighbouring businesses or uses which are particularly sensitive to noise, dust or vibration, which cannot be overcome through other mitigation, or where impacts on densely populated areas would be unreasonable.

Any temporary changes to construction working hours conditions granted by local planning authorities should not extend beyond 13 May 2021.

This Statement covers England only. The need for the Statement will be reviewed when the requirement for social distancing on construction sites diminishes.

## **Covid-19: Planning System and Virtual Working**

[HLWS231]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

*Virtual working and planning – Responding to Covid-19 Restrictions*

### *Introduction*

The planning system has a vital role to play in enabling the delivery of housing and economic growth that will support the UK's economic recovery. It is important that the system continues to operate effectively, ensuring that all those involved, including local authorities, the Planning Inspectorate, developers, statutory consultees, local communities and others can engage in the process while adhering to the Government's guidance on social distancing.

This Statement sets out the Government's expectations for how the planning system should be operating during the COVID-19 emergency. It applies to applications and appeals under the Town and Country Planning Act; Development Consent Orders under the Planning Act 2008; the Compulsory Purchase Order regime and to development plans, including neighbourhood plans and spatial development strategies.

### *The role of digital*

Local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate drive the planning process forward and should ensure that it continues to operate effectively to support economic recovery. Moving to digital events and processes will be critical. This means adapting to working virtually, including virtual hearings and events (such as using video-conferencing and/or telephone) and making documents available for inspection online. The Government expects everyone involved in the planning process to engage proactively.

The Government considers that the current legislative framework allows for virtual hearings. It is confident that processes can be put in place in the vast majority of cases to allow for the participation of all parties. The Government recognises that the method by which hearings and events are conducted is a matter for the Inspectorate, operating in accordance with their legal obligations, and it expects these arrangements to be made as the default method of operation in the vast majority of cases. The Government recognises that in exceptional circumstances it may not be fair to proceed virtually and that alternative arrangements may be needed. These alternative arrangements should be taken forward speedily, where possible, taking into account the Government's guidance on social distancing.

The Government expects opportunities for virtual hearings and processes to be maximised. It will draw from current and emerging practice to inform policy and process in the longer term.

### *Virtual events*

The Government fully supports the Planning Inspectorate's programme for moving to digital inquiries, hearings, meetings and other events. Digital events present opportunities to increase participation in planning processes which are important for local communities and will minimise the impacts of delays to planning decisions which might otherwise occur due to the requirements for social distancing.

The Inspectorate conducted the first digital hearing event on 11 May and will be quickly scaling up in relation to further virtual events during May and early June where this is consistent with fair participation. In doing so it will accommodate essential legal and procedural requirements. The Government expects events to be taking place virtually by mid-June, other than in exceptional circumstances.

The Government expects Inspectors and Examining Authorities to take decisions about whether and how virtual events should proceed and to consider the practical measures needed to ensure fair participation.

The Courts have led in demonstrating the successful use of technology to continue their work. Recognising that the use of technology to support virtual planning events may be challenging, the Government expects that appropriate measures are put in place by the Inspectorate to test the technology and ensure that it enables fair participation. It also expects the Inspectorate to identify those more



exceptional circumstances where a virtual event may not be appropriate, making decisions about how to proceed based on the facts of each particular case.

#### *Digital documentation*

The effects of COVID-19 mean that it is not always possible to access public buildings. As a result, access to planning documents by making them physically available for inspection at local libraries, council offices etc, is now not available. During these exceptional circumstances, the Government considers that online inspection of documents should be the default position across all planning regimes, and it is actively exploring all options to achieve this.

The Government recognises there are sections of the community with limited or no access to the internet and authorities and developers should take reasonable steps to ensure those without access are involved and consider alternative and creative ways to achieve this where possible. This could for example, include sending out documents by CD or USB stick where this meets the needs of those requesting such documents.

As restrictions are eased, planning authorities and others should integrate the range of methods that are available to them into their approaches to ensure all sections of the community are reached as thoroughly as is practically possible.

#### *Site Visits*

Site visits, whether conducted by local authorities, planning inspectors or statutory consultees, are an important part of the process of considering development proposals and plans. Where site visits are required or necessary, they should be undertaken in line with the Government's guidance on social distancing and safety requirements.

The Planning Inspectorate will be restarting site visits from mid-May. The Government supports the Inspectorate's determination to facilitate site visits. It will expect Inspectors to use their judgement in deciding if a site visit is necessary or whether alternative approaches are acceptable, taking account of the particular circumstances.

#### *Publicity and community engagement*

The Government will introduce from tomorrow temporary regulations to supplement the existing statutory publicity arrangements for planning applications, listed building consent applications and environmental statements for EIA development.

Local planning authorities (and applicants of EIA development under the TCPA) now have the flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise applications if they cannot discharge the specific requirements for site notices, neighbour notifications or newspaper publicity. These steps will notify people who are likely to have an interest in the application and indicate where further information about it can be viewed online. These steps can include the use of social media and other electronic communications and must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development.

Guidance to accompany these regulations will also be published to highlight what alternative publicity local planning authorities could undertake. In particular, if local newspapers are not circulating in their area, authorities should seek to use local online news portals in the first instance.

In relation to development plans, the Government has issued additional planning guidance on reviewing and updating Statements of Community Involvement and Neighbourhood Planning to support authorities and neighbourhood planning groups in engaging with their communities on their plans at this time.

#### *Guidance and Advice*

The Planning Inspectorate has published and regularly updates guidance on its work during the COVID-19 social distancing measures, which can be viewed here (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-inspectorate-guidance>).

## **Education and Childcare Settings**

[HLWS232]

**Baroness Berridge:** My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

This week I have published guidance to set out how we will support early years, schools and colleges to welcome back more children from 1 June at the earliest.

It is over seven weeks since we asked schools, colleges, and childcare settings to allow only vulnerable children and those of critical workers to attend, and I encourage them to continue to take up this offer. This has been a huge ask of teachers, parents and children. I am immensely grateful for the response of all those working in education, childcare and children's social care who have undoubtedly helped to support the NHS and save lives.

But we all know the best place for children to be educated is in school and it was always my intention to get them back there as soon as the scientific advice allowed.

As the Prime Minister has confirmed, we are now past the peak of the virus and he has set out a roadmap for the next phases of our recovery. If progress continues to be made we expect that, from 1 June at the earliest, we will be able to begin a phased return to school, college and childcare for children and young people in key transition years, alongside the priority groups currently eligible to attend:

- Primary schools in England will be able to welcome back nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children, in smaller class sizes.
- Nurseries and other early years providers, including childminders, will be able to begin welcoming back children of all ages.
- Secondary schools and colleges will be able to provide some face-to-face support for Year 10, Year 12,

and 16-19 college students who are due to take key exams and assessments next year.

I have published the following guidance to support education and childcare settings to prepare for these changes on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

- Actions for educational and childcare settings
- Implementing protective measures in education childcare settings
- Information for parents and carers
- Initial planning framework

This guidance sets out protective measures that settings should put in place to reduce the risk of transmission. These include children and young people staying within their new, smaller, classes wherever possible and limiting contact between different groups. We have also set out a range of additional protective measures including frequent cleaning, encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene, considering refreshing the timetable to limit movement and stagger break and lunchtimes, and using outdoor space.

Staff and pupils in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households, to enable a track and trace approach to be taken in response to any confirmed cases.

We continue to follow the best medical and scientific advice and believe that this phased return is the most sensible course of action to take. We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by Government justify the changes at the time

We will also be updating our guidance for early years settings to confirm that paid childcare can be provided to the children of one household from today, Wednesday 13 May, including by childminders, who may choose to look after the children of one household if they are not already looking after vulnerable children or those of critical workers.

## M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange

[HLWS229]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** My Right Honourable friend, the Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps), has made the following Ministerial Statement

This statement concerns the Development Consent Order application for the M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange Improvement made by Highways England under the Planning Act 2008, which had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 19 June 2019.

Under section 98(1) of the Act the Examining Authority appointed to examine the application must complete its examination within six months. Under section 98(4) the Examining Authority must submit its recommendation report to the Secretary of State within three months of its completion of the examination. Under section 107(1) of the Act, following receipt of the Examining Authority's recommendation report, the Secretary of State must

decide whether to grant development consent within three months.

Sections 98(4) and 107(3) of the Act give the relevant Secretary of State power to set new deadlines in respect of the above which are later than the statutory maxima. For this application, the relevant Secretary of State is the Secretary of State for Transport. In exercising this power, the Secretary of State for Transport must, amongst other things, make a statement to Parliament announcing the new deadlines.

The examination for the M25 Junction 10 DCO began on 12 November 2019 and is due to close on 12 May 2020. The recommendation report would need to be sent to the Secretary of State on or before 12 August 2020. A decision in this case would therefore be made on or before 12 November 2020.

The deadline for the completion of the examination is to be extended to 12 July 2020 (an extension of two months) to enable examination hearings postponed in the light of Government advice concerning coronavirus (COVID-19) to be rescheduled and held in a virtual forum. Consequently, the deadline for the Examining Authority to submit its recommendation report to the Secretary of State for Transport is amended to 12 October 2020 and the deadline for the Secretary of State for Transport to take his decision is amended to 12 January 2021.

The decision to extend the examination under the Planning Act 2008 regime is not taken lightly and reflects the exceptional public health circumstances the country finds itself in.

The decision to set new deadlines is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant development consent.

## Negotiations with Japan

[HLWS233]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Liz Truss MP) has today made the following statement.

Coronavirus is the biggest threat this country has faced in decades. The Government is doing all it can to protect business from the worst effects of coronavirus in the immediate term. We must take steps to support our economy, reduce impacts and provide opportunities for the future economic recovery.

More trade is essential if the UK is to overcome the unprecedented economic challenge posed by coronavirus. It can give us security at home and opportunities abroad – opening new markets for business, bringing investment, better jobs, higher wages and lower prices just as we need them most. At a time when protectionist barriers are on the rise, all countries need to work together to ensure long-term prosperity and international trade is central to this cooperation.

That is why we will use our voice as a new independent trading nation to champion free trade, fight protectionism and remove barriers at every opportunity. The Government's ambition is to secure free trade agreements

(FTAs) with countries covering 80% of UK trade within the next three years, to become a truly Global Britain.

An enhanced FTA with Japan, the 3rd largest economy in the world in 2018, represents significant opportunities throughout the economy, from agriculture to digital. It will also help us increase the resilience of our supply chains and the security of our whole economy as we diversify our trade.

A deal with Japan will be a driving force to maximise the UK's advantage in the opportunities Asia Pacific affords. These bilateral negotiations are a logical first step to joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), given that Japan is CPTPP's largest economy.

Japan is a developed economy with high standards and we are major investors in each other's economies. Trade with Japan is integral to UK jobs and businesses. In 2018, around 9,500 VAT registered businesses exported £6bn worth of goods to Japan, employing 2.4 million people. Around 6,700 VAT registered business, employing 2.5 million people, imported £10bn worth of goods from Japan.

An enhanced FTA with Japan is therefore expected to deliver a significant and sustained long term boost to every region in the UK. Our analysis shows that in the long run, the UK economy could benefit from a £1.5 billion boost, as the trade deal could increase trade flows between both countries by £15.2 billion. UK workers' wages could increase by £800 million in the long run as a result of the deal.

Total annual tariff reductions on goods imports from Japan could be worth up to around £275 million per year in the long run. Some 59% of all Japanese goods imported into the UK and 44% of all UK goods exported into Japan are used in supply chains (average 2016-2018). So as well as reducing the price of consumer goods, lower tariffs could also cut the costs of domestic production in both countries.

Removing trade barriers with Japan could deliver huge gains, both for the 8,000 UK Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) across the UK already exporting goods with Japan as well as those making plans to enter the Japanese market. For example, total annual tariff reductions on goods exports to Japan could be worth around £33 million per year in the long run.

The deal will also provide cutting edge provisions on digital trade that maximise opportunities for trade across all sectors of the economy, providing trust and stability for UK businesses, entrepreneurs and exporters. Such provisions will reduce trade barriers and make it easier for

the SMEs already exporting goods to Japan. UK businesses will have the opportunity to lead on innovation, supporting the development of important emerging technologies, such as quantum computing. E-commerce and the creative industries will also benefit from the free flow of data and strong copyright provisions.

That is why today, the Department for International Trade is publishing a comprehensive document setting out the UK's strategic approach to an enhanced FTA between the UK and Japan. We will be placing copies in the House libraries. The document is set out in three parts:

- The Government's negotiating objectives for an enhanced FTA with Japan, using the existing EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement as a basis.
- The Government response to the Call for Input on trade negotiations with Japan, providing an overview of the responses received and setting out how these have fed into our policy development.
- A Scoping Assessment providing a preliminary assessment of the potential long-term economic impacts of an enhanced FTA between the UK and Japan.

The objectives published today are informed by our Call for Input, which ran for six weeks between 20 September and 4 November 2019 and gave businesses, interest groups and members of the public the opportunity to highlight their priorities for a potential future agreement with Japan.

A deal with Japan will help us to deliver opportunity and unleash the potential of every part of our United Kingdom. Analysis in the Scoping Assessment shows a UK-Japan enhanced FTA could have a positive impact on every UK nation and region in the long run, with Scotland, the East Midlands and London expected to benefit the most.

We are engaging with the devolved administrations, crown dependencies and overseas territories to ensure that we develop an enhanced FTA that works for the whole of the UK.

Our negotiating objectives clearly set out our priorities for an ambitious and comprehensive agreement, which will build on our existing EPA to strengthen the economic relationship with one of our largest bilateral trading partners.

The Government is committed to transparency and we will continue to ensure that parliamentarians, UK citizens and businesses have access to the information they need on our trade negotiations.



## Written Answers

Wednesday, 13 May 2020

### Accident and Emergency Departments: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Hoyle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many accident and emergency departments have closed in (1) Lancashire, and (2) England, since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK. [HL3600]

*Asked by Lord Hoyle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when was the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care informed of the decision to close the accident and emergency Department at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital. [HL3603]

**Lord Bethell:** To ensure NHS services can best meet the needs of their local population and ensure the most efficient and safe use of the available resources during the response to COVID-19, it has been necessary to implement some temporary service changes. These changes will be kept under review during the period of the pandemic and services will be reinstated at an appropriate future juncture.

The accident and emergency department at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital has been temporarily modified to provide an urgent care level service. This change is to facilitate the treatment of acutely ill COVID-19 patients on a single site, at the Royal Preston Hospital. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care was informed of this change on 25 March 2020.

In Lancashire, in addition to the change at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital, paediatric accident and emergency services are temporarily closed overnight at Ormskirk Hospital. NHS England and NHS Improvement have stated that there have been no further temporary closures of accident and emergency services in England during this time.

### Agricultural Products: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage UK consumers to support UK farmers by buying their meat, dairy and vegetable products during the current COVID-19 crisis. [HL3609]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Half of the food that the UK population consumes is home-grown, once we take account of food production that is exported, and is renowned for its quality and high standards of food safety, traceability, animal welfare and sustainability. We will always champion our farmers and producers; supporting them to grow more of our great British food, and to

provide a reliable and sustainable food supply to the British public.

The Government is aware that coronavirus represents a very significant challenge, affecting daily life and farming businesses up and down the country. We are supporting British farmers and the UK food and drink industry through this crisis and beyond.

We are working closely with the sector as they develop consumer-facing marketing campaigns. Specifically, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Dairy UK are launching a £1 million campaign, supported financially by Defra and devolved government partners, to encourage consumers to reconnect with milk.

Separately, Quality Meat Scotland, AHDB and Meat Promotion Wales have launched a £1.2 million 'Make It BFeef' campaign, aimed at showing consumers how they can recreate easy to cook restaurant-style meals with high-quality cuts, like steak.

We will continue to engage with and support similar initiatives that highlight the qualities of British meat, dairy, and vegetable products.

### Agriculture: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Rock*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they are giving to grant schemes to support dairy and tenant farmers. [HL3629]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Defra is working very closely with the dairy and other agricultural sectors through this period of disruption to manage the impact of COVID-19 on the dairy supply chain.

We have eased some elements of competition law to make it easier for dairy processors to come together to maximise production, processing and storage efficiency and ensure as much product as possible can be processed into high quality dairy products.

Moreover, in recognition of the unprecedented challenges facing this sector we announced on 7 May a new fund to support those dairy farmers who have seen decreased demand due to the loss of the food service sector. Eligible dairy farmers in England who have lost more than 25% of their income over April and May due to coronavirus disruptions will be eligible for funding of up to £10,000 each, to cover 70% of their lost income during this qualifying period. This will enable these producers to continue to operate and sustain production capacity without impacts on animal welfare.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board together with Dairy UK have launched a new £1 million campaign running over 12 weeks to drive an increase in the consumption of milk. Defra and the devolved administrations are jointly contributing towards the financing of this campaign.

Alongside the COVID-19 Business Interruption Loans Scheme, HMT has announced the new Bounce Back Loan

scheme which will also 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.

A vibrant tenanted sector is vital to a successful future for agriculture, a third of agricultural land in England is tenanted. Tenant farmers can access the business support schemes the government has put in place to help in these unprecedented times.

In addition, Defra has worked closely with the Country Land and Business Association and the Tenant Farmers Association on a joint initiative to encourage all rural landlords and tenants to work together collaboratively and compassionately at this time in respect of all tenancy matters, but particularly regarding rent payments, notices to quit and finalising new tenancy agreements. Furthermore, from 27 March 2020, court possession proceedings have been suspended for a 90-day period. This is in line with public health advice to limit all nonessential movement and it provides agricultural tenants with additional assurance that they are protected from eviction proceedings during this difficult time.

As the situation evolves Defra will continue frequent engagement with farming (including tenant farming) and processor representatives to understand the urgent support needed to help ensure the continued viability of all parts of the sector.

### **Agriculture: Seasonal Workers**

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they sought from the government of Romania any assurances that Romanian citizens coming to undertake agricultural or horticultural harvesting work in the UK, had been screened for coronavirus before being permitted to travel. [HL3667]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** All passengers on entry to UK are to follow Government's social distancing guidance strictly as per [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others) website available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

Various airlines and airports have implemented social distancing measures, by making reasonable adjustments and any individual who is ill and showing signs of COVID-19 should not be allowed to board the flight to the UK.

All flights to the UK are required to provide health announcements to passengers relating to the current COVID-19 outbreak and to provide information to the relevant airport in line with standard operating procedure. In the unlikely event that there is a seriously unwell

passenger on a flight, the Public Health England (PHE) Health Control Unit at Heathrow Airport in London will be informed. If the unwell passenger has COVID-19 like symptoms then on arrival they will be advised to self-isolate for 7 days and if symptoms worsen to call NHS111. All passengers will be provided with information leaflets and appropriate posters are on display on arrival in the UK about following Government's social distancing guidance.

In the white paper published on 11 May, 'The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy', the Government sets out the plan for managing the risks of transmissions being introduced from abroad. The paper states that: 'Alongside increased information about the UK's social distancing regime at the border, the Government will require international arrivals to supply their contact and accommodation information. They will also be strongly advised to download and use the NHS contact tracing app.'

All international arrivals to the UK not on a short list of exemptions will be required to self-isolate in their accommodation for fourteen days. Small exemptions to these measures will be in place to provide for continued security of supply into the UK and so as not to impede work supporting national security or critical infrastructure. These measures will be introduced as soon as possible and further details will be set out shortly'.

### **Armed Conflict: Children**

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether information on grave violations of international law against children in situations of armed conflict is taken into account during Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessments. [HL3550]

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what, if any, information contained within the annual and country-specific reports of the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict is taken into account during Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessments. [HL3551]

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether independent experts on children and armed conflict are consulted as part of the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment process to ensure UK overseas security and justice assistance work meets our human rights obligations and our values. [HL3552]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is an active permanent member of the United Nations Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), which leads the international response to violations committed against children in conflict. These violations include: the recruitment and use of children, sexual violence against children, killing and maiming of

children, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals and the denial of humanitarian access to children in conflict.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) updated its guidance on Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) in 2017 by written ministerial statement. Since then, information on its implementation has been included in the FCO's Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report. The OSJA guidance applies to issues of international humanitarian law as well as human rights risks. As part of implementation of the OSJA guidance, Her Majesty's Government missions pool expertise from a range of sources including civil society partners and international organisations, according to the situation in the country concerned. This includes relevant UN sources of expertise.

The UN CAAC Working Group focuses on responding to the UN Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC which lists governments and armed groups for committing grave violations against children. As a member of the group, the UK applies diplomatic pressure to listed parties to enter into concrete UN action plans to verify and release any children associated with armed groups and forces, to prevent re-recruitment and ensure the provision of appropriate reintegration and rehabilitation assistance. We ensure that the technical assistance we provide is in line with international standards, and fully complies with our human rights obligations.

### Armed Forces: Recruitment

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recruit former personnel who were discharged on disciplinary grounds for the Armed Forces. [HL4120]

**Baroness Goldie:** Individuals wishing to re-join the Armed Forces can apply to do so. The single Services will consider all the circumstances of an individual's previous service in making a judgement on re-employment, including taking full account of the provisions set out by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, where appropriate.

### Arts: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Crathorne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of self-employed artists to access COVID-19 financial support schemes. [HL3466]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The new Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will help those with lost trading profits due to COVID-19. The new scheme will allow eligible individuals to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for 3 months. This may be extended if needed. 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 lost trading/partnership trading profits due to COVID-19. To qualify, their self-employed trading profits must be less than £50,000, with more than half of their income from self-employment. Some 95% of people who are mainly self-employed could benefit from this scheme.

More information about the SEISS, including the eligibility criteria and how to claim, is available on GOV.UK.

The SEISS supplements the other significant support announced for individuals and businesses, including the Government's relaxation of the earnings rules (known as the Minimum Income Floor) in Universal Credit, 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.

*Asked by Lord Crathorne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to provide quickly accessible grants and loans to (1) artists, and (2) self-employed people working in the creative industries, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3467]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The government has made a wide variety of economic support available to help businesses and self-employed people across the economy, including artists and self-employed people working in the creative industries. This includes:

- The Self-employment Income Support Scheme which will allow self-employed people to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 a month. This is initially available for 3 months, but may be extended;
- Bounce Back loans of up to £50,000, 100% guaranteed by the Government. These will be interest-free for the first 12 months. Businesses can apply online through a short and simple form;
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme for larger financing requirements;
- The option to defer VAT payments;
- Small Business Grants of £10,000 which will be paid to any property in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rates Relief.

*Asked by Lord Crathorne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to extend the (1) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and (2) Self-employment Income Support Scheme, to artists and others in the creative industries who rely on a mixture of self-employed income and zero-hours or fixed-term contracts. [HL3469]

**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. For the CJRS, this will depend on furloughing decisions by the employer. Furloughed employees must have been employed on 19 March 2020 and on their employer's PAYE payroll on or before 19 March 2020, and can be on any type of employment contract, including: full-time employees, part-time employees, agency, fixed-term, flexible or zero hour contracts.

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 guidance.

### **Arts: Government Assistance**

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of businesses in the creative sector with a turnover of less than £6.5 million that do not qualify for (1) a small business grant, (2) retailers, hospitality and leisure grants, and (3) the business rate holiday. [HL3829]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government does not have this information available. Local Authorities, which are operating the business grants schemes and the business rates holiday, do not have systematic access to data on the turnover of businesses in their area.

We are aware that some small businesses are finding themselves excluded from the business grants schemes because of the way in which they interact with the business rates system.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May the Government announced that it would make up to £617 million of additional funding available to Local Authorities to enable them to make discretionary payments of up to £25,000 to businesses in this situation.

The discretionary funds will be administered by Local Authorities, who will ask businesses to apply for a grant. Local Authorities will shortly receive guidance regarding which kinds of businesses should be considered a priority for these funds. It is the Government's intention that the following businesses should be considered a priority:

- Businesses in shared offices;
- Regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- B&Bs which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.

Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses outside of these areas, according to local economic need, so long as the grants are aimed at:

- Businesses with ongoing fixed building-related costs
- Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the Covid-19 crisis

- Business with fewer than 50 employees
- Businesses that were trading on or before 11th March

Businesses will need to apply to their Local Authority in order to receive grants. Each Local Authority will need to create their own process, which may take some time. The Government encourages businesses in the creative sectors which have not been eligible for grants to look out for their Local Authority's version of this scheme, and to contact their Local Authority for more information in due course.

Businesses in the creative sector which remain ineligible for business grants may be able to benefit from other measures in the Government's unprecedented package of support for business, including:

- An option to defer VAT payments by up to twelve months;
- The Bounce Back Loan scheme, which will ensure that small and micro businesses can quickly access loans of up to £50,000 which are 100% guaranteed by the Government;
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, now extended to cover all businesses including those which would be able to access commercial credit;
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, to support businesses with their wage bills;
- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, to provide support to the self-employed.

### **Aviation: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reintroduce COVID-19 screening of all incoming international passengers and air crew at all UK airports; and why such measures have not been in place throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3519]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Targeted screening measures were initially carried out at UK airports for inbound passengers during the containment phase of the pandemic when the aim was to prevent the virus coming into the UK. 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.

Airlines and airports have implemented additional measures in response to COVID-19 in line with advice from Public Health England (PHE), Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and the Chief Medical Officer, as well as following their existing internal protocols on preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

In time, the aviation sector will begin to restart and recover, and we are exploring measures that could be deployed in the aviation sector to ensure the public can be confident that flying is a safe and healthy way of travelling. Any changes to our approach will be led by advice from SAGE and the Chief Medical Officer.



*Asked by **Baroness Anelay of St Johns***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to ensure that passengers (1) arriving in, and (2) departing from, the UK by private aircraft follow COVID-19-related social distancing procedures when boarding and being seated on aircraft. [HL3587]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Firstly, following on from the Government's guidance on [social distancing](#) in relation to COVID-19, people should avoid travelling unless it is essential. We would therefore expect private aircraft journeys to be non-essential.

The Government's guidance regarding social distancing remains the same for private operations as commercial operations. The advice for travellers arriving in the UK is the same as for the rest of the population: they are advised to reduce their social contacts by staying at home and following the same social distancing measures as the rest of the country. If they begin to show symptoms, they should self-isolate. In case a passenger becomes ill in transit, all airports have been required to identify specific isolation areas to be used until the local health response arrives.

However, as you would expect 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.

*Asked by **Baroness Anelay of St Johns***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require airline passengers and crew to have their temperature tested on arrival and departure from the UK. [HL3588]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** 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.

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.

## **Business: Coronavirus**

*Asked by **Lord Stevenson of Balmacara***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to develop long-term COVID-19 recovery plans

for businesses which (1) stimulate demand, and (2) address any increase in unemployment. [T] [HL3846]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency including around £300 billion of guarantees – equivalent to 15% of UK GDP. As the Prime Minister set out in his statement in Parliament on 11 May, the Government's economic strategy will be closely coordinated with the public health strategy to ensure a safe return to economic activity. The Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy is set out on gov.uk.

## **Business: Government Assistance**

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assist businesses using director's capital or loans rather than third party loans. [HL3823]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has set out an unprecedented package of support for all businesses to protect against the current economic emergency, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme (CLBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), which can all be accessed by directors.

CBILS is available to all viable UK-based businesses with a turnover of less than £45m. It is particularly suited to businesses looking to mitigate against short-term cash flow difficulties, for example by accessing bank lending and overdrafts. By providing an 80% government guarantee on finance facilities up to £5 million, this scheme will help more businesses access the finance they need.

No lender can take a personal guarantee for a loan of less than £250,000 that is supported by the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. For loans over the value of £250,000, a personal guarantee can only be taken for 20% of the outstanding balance. However, a lender is not allowed to take a personal guarantee against a borrower's principal residence under the scheme. So even if a personal guarantee is required under the lender's credit policy for loans over £250,000, it cannot be taken against the borrower's home.

As of 6 May, over 34,000 facilities had been approved under CBILS, supporting over £5.7bn of finance to SMEs.

BBLs launched on 4 May, offering loans from £2,000 up to £50,000 to businesses including sole traders, small partnerships and unincorporated associations. The Government will cover the first year's interest payments, and no repayments are due by the borrower during this initial 12-month period. Thereafter, interest will revert to a fixed rate of 2.5%.

The Government has recognised that some businesses (e.g. sole traders) risk their personal assets, including their home, when borrowing as there is no distinction between



their personal and business assets (as there would be for limited liability companies). Therefore, a sole trader's primary residence and vehicle cannot be pursued should a borrower default on a loan in the BBL Scheme.

As of 6 May, nearly 160,000 facilities had been approved under BBLs, supporting almost £5bn of finance to SMEs.

CLBILs is available to all viable UK-based businesses with a turnover of more than £45m. The government is providing a guarantee of 80% on finance facilities up to £50m. This scheme responds to concerns from businesses that are not eligible for CBILs.

As of 6 May, 48 CLBILs loans worth nearly £290m had been approved.

Further support available to businesses includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, business rate holidays and grants to SMEs. These measures will support thousands of businesses to get through this and emerge stronger on the other side.

### Cancer: Surgery

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many operations to treat cancer have been cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and what assessment have they made of when such operations could resume. [HL3279]

**Lord Bethell:** The first published data covering the period of the COVID-19 outbreak for the month of March will be available during May.

National Health Service providers have previously been asked to maintain access to essential cancer surgery and other treatment throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with guidance from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and NHS England and NHS Improvement. Exceptions have been where clinicians consider that for an individual patient the risk of the procedure at the current time outweighs the benefit to the patient.

Local systems and Cancer Alliances are continuing to identify surgical capacity for cancer, and providers must protect and deliver cancer surgery and cancer treatment by ensuring that cancer surgery hubs are fully operational. Full use should be made of the available contracted independent sector hospital and diagnostic capacity locally and regionally.

Cancer treatment must be brought back to pre-pandemic levels at the earliest opportunity to minimise potential harm, and to reduce the scale of the post-pandemic surge in demand.

### Care Homes: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why their guidance *Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19*

*Incident in a Care Home*, published on 2 April, and the supplementary guidance, published on 17 April, differs from World Health Organisation guidance for long term care facilities; and what assessment they have made of the compatibility of that guidance with their obligations under the 2009 UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the European Convention on Human Rights. [HL3490]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department, NHS England, Public Health England (PHE) and the Care Quality Commission co-published *Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home* guidance on 2 April 2020, followed by the publication of PHE guidance *How to work safely in care homes* on 17 April 2020.

Residential care settings must always seek to fully protect the rights of disabled people now and throughout the course of this global pandemic. No changes have been made to the human rights protections in the Mental Health Act 1983 or as a result of the Care Act 2014 easements. The *Adult Social Care Action Plan*, published on 15 April 2020, includes information on supporting people to maintain their independence and responding to individual needs.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic. We are constantly reviewing our guidance in line with policy changes based at all times on the best scientific advice.

### Care Homes: VAT

*Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a care provider that is a (1) registered charity, (2) not-for-profit organisation, and (3) for-profit organisation, is required to pay value added tax when purchasing personal protective equipment. [HL3530]

*Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a care provider that is a (1) registered charity, (2) not-for-profit organisation, and (3) for-profit organisation is required to pay value added tax when purchasing medical supplies. [HL3531]

*Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a care provider that is a (1) registered charity, (2) not-for-profit organisation and (3) for-profit organisation, is required to charge value added tax on the services they provide to people. [HL3532]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** A zero rate of VAT is applied to certain purchases of specialist clothing and other specialist medical equipment by health bodies and charitable institutions that provide care or medical treatment. In terms of clothing, this covers specialist surgical masks, gowns and gloves. The items subject to the zero rate are set out in Section 3 of VAT Notice 701/6 "Charity Funded Equipment for Medical and Veterinary Uses".

The Government announced on 30 April a temporary zero rate effective from 1 May until 31 July 2020 for supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) recommended for use in connection with protection from infection with Covid-19. The relevant PPE is set out in guidance published by Public Health England on 24 April 2020 titled "Guidance, COVID-19 personal protective equipment" and further guidance is available on GOV.UK.

Social care or welfare services are generally exempt from VAT. Organisations offering such services are not required to charge VAT where they are regulated by the Care Quality Commission. The exemption is explained in VAT Notice 701/2 "Welfare Services and Goods".

### Children: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Addington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the long-term educational benefits of educational material provided by public service broadcasters to children who cannot attend school during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3451]

**Baroness Berridge:** We have no current plans in place to review the long-term educational benefits of material independently developed and provided by public sector broadcasters for children unable to attend school during the COVID-19 outbreak. For most children who benefited from materials offered by public sector broadcasters, this would only have been part of their overall educational provision, and it would be extremely difficult to isolate the impact of just this one element.

Many schools have set work for pupils and shared resources for children who are at home; the Department has issued guidance for schools which signposts to an initial list of free online resources identified by educational experts and teachers; many educational suppliers have also helpfully made their resources available for free.

Additionally, leading state schools collaborated to open The Oak National Academy, which was launched online on 20 April. This initiative is led by 40 teachers who have assembled video lessons and resources for any teacher in the country to make use of if they wish to do so. 180 video lessons will be provided each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10.

*Asked by Baroness Uddin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have made as part of their COVID-19 emergency planning to ensure that local authorities have adequate funding for children with child protection plans who may not be attending school. [HL3728]

**Baroness Berridge:** As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19.

The government has announced £3.2 billion of additional funding to support local authorities in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

This funding is not ringfenced and is intended to help local authorities address any pressures they are facing in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, across all service areas, including children's social care.

Our latest guidance on vulnerable children is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

These are rapidly developing circumstances; we continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

### Coronavirus: Death

*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the five most prevalent underlying linked causes of COVID-19 death other than age. [HL3302]

**Lord Bethell:** According to the Office for National Statistics, in March 2020, the most common main pre-existing condition of people who died with COVID-19 in England and Wales was ischaemic heart diseases, with 541 deaths (14% of all deaths involving COVID-19). Pneumonia, dementia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes were also all in the top five most common pre-existing conditions. More information can be found online at GOV.UK at 'Deaths involving COVID-19, England and Wales: deaths occurring in March 2020'.

More information about measuring pre-existing health conditions can be found online at GOV.UK at 'Measuring pre-existing health conditions in death certification'.

### Coronavirus: Disease Control

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review data from the COVID-19 spread on the Diamond Princess cruise ship to inform decisions in regard to ending the lockdown. [HL3868]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government's approach to the next phase of the pandemic will be guided by the scientific advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). It is SAGE's role to ensure that timely and coordinated scientific advice is made available to support Government decisions.

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the scientific advice relating to the decision to allow mass gatherings such as the Cheltenham Festival in March. [HL3992]

**Lord Bethell:** The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies provides scientific and technical advice to inform Government decision-makers during emergencies. The scientific advice on public gatherings was published on the UK Parliament website on 30 March 2020. 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.

### Coronavirus: New Zealand

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the success of New Zealand in dealing with COVID-19, what plans they have to emulate the measures taken in that country, particularly those in regard to the control of flights into the country. [HL3645]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government's 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 the *Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE)* and the Chief Medical Officer. Protecting the health of the UK public will always come first.

### Coronavirus: Research

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish the scientific information provided by their scientific advisors relating to COVID-19. [HL4008]

**Lord Bethell:** The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) provides scientific and technical advice to inform Government decision-makers during emergencies. The evidence that informs the SAGE discussions is published on the GOV.UK website. The website is updated on a regular basis with the latest available evidence provided to SAGE.

### Coronavirus: Screening

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to increase the UK's COVID-19 testing capability; and whether the UK is on target to meet 100,000 tests a day. [HL3090]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government announced it had achieved its target to deliver 100,000 tests per day on 1 May 2020, with over 122,000 tests delivered on 30 April 2020.

The Government is rapidly scaling up the national effort to boost testing capacity for COVID-19 to protect the vulnerable, support the National Health Service, and

ultimately save lives. Further details of this work can be found in the Government's Testing Strategy titled 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): scaling up testing programmes', published on 4 April.

*Asked by Lord Naseby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the COVID-19 testing policy for hospital patients that have been discharged to nursing and care homes over the last four weeks. [HL3273]

**Lord Bethell:** As outlined in the Adult Social Care Plan, published on 15 April 2020, any patient who moves from the National Health Service to social care will be discharged in line with the current NHS COVID-19 Discharge Requirements. NHS England and NHS Improvement published a letter on 16 April addressed to all accountable officers of all hospitals (public and private sector) working for the NHS and discharge teams outlining the new requirement to test patients being discharged from hospital to a care home.

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports by researchers at the Lazzaro Spallanzani Hospital in Rome that they have developed a vaccine that can neutralise COVID-19 in human cells; and what plans they have to encourage scientists in the UK to be involved in the clinical trials of that vaccine. [HL4146]

**Lord Bethell:** As the Prime Minister has said, the hunt for a vaccine will be a truly global endeavour – no one country or company will be able to do this alone. The Government is closely monitoring the progress of vaccines being developed outside the United Kingdom, including at the Lazzaro Spallanzani Institute in Rome. The development of a COVID-19 vaccine is at the early stages but progressing rapidly. We will continue to support the two leading UK academic groups at present and connect key companies in the vaccines landscape. We are also working with regulators to facilitate rapid but well-supervised clinical trials in the UK, building on the UK's world-leading expertise in this area.

### Cycling and Walking: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create more space for walking and cycling during the COVID-19-related lockdown. [HL3658]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government welcomes appropriate changes to roads to give cyclists and pedestrians more space to enable social distancing. The details are for local authorities as they are responsible for managing their roads, but the Government is pleased to see that some local authorities have already begun to consider such changes.

There is a well-established range of traffic management measures already available to local authorities. Some measures, such as road closures, require Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to make them legal and enforceable, and we are aware that parts of that process are difficult for local authorities to comply with during the current situation. To assist with this, the Department has published temporary guidance, which suggests ways in which authorities can continue to make TROs, whilst still complying with the intention of the legislation.

This guidance has been circulated to local authorities already and will be kept under review. It will be withdrawn when circumstances allow.

## Dairy Farming

*Asked by **Baroness Redfern***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure long-term sustainability of the British dairy sector; and whether service contracts have been checked to ensure that all public services source milk from UK dairy farmers. [[HL3661](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Government is working closely with our agriculture sectors to manage the impact of COVID-19 and is determined that our dairy sector will emerge from the current COVID-19 crisis with a sustainable future. While the vast majority of Britain's dairy farmers continue to supply their contracts at the usual price, between 5 and 10 per cent of total milk production goes to the service trade, and these farmers have been impacted by the significantly reduced demand following the closure of the food service sector.

To support the sector we have temporarily eased of some elements of competition law to make it easier for the dairy industry to come together to maximise production, processing and storage efficiency and ensure as much product as possible can be processed into high quality 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. Exempted activities have been developed in conjunction with the dairy industry.

Moreover, in recognition of the unprecedented challenges facing this sector on 7 May we announced a new fund to support those dairy farmers who have seen decreased demand due to the loss of the food service sector. Eligible dairy farmers in England who have lost more than 25% of their income over April and May due to coronavirus disruptions will be eligible for funding of up to £10,000 each, to cover 70% of their lost income during this qualifying period. This will enable these producers to continue to operate and sustain production capacity without impacts on animal welfare.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board together with Dairy UK have launched a new £1 million campaign running over 12 weeks to drive an increase in the consumption of milk. Defra and the devolved

administrations are jointly contributing towards the financing of this campaign.

The dairy industry can also access various Government backed loan schemes. The COVID-19 Business Interruption Loans scheme is available to farmers, milk buyers and milk processors. In addition, the new Bounce Back Loan scheme, which will apply to businesses including those operating in agriculture, will ensure that the smallest businesses can access up to £50,000 loans.

In the longer term the Government is keen to see greater levels of collaboration between producers and we will continue to support farmers who want to harness the benefits of working together. Our Agriculture Bill includes powers to introduce a new domestic system for recognising producer organisations, which will be better tailored to the requirements of UK producers.

The Bill also includes powers to introduce and enforce statutory codes of practice to address unfair trading practices which can occur between milk producers and purchasers. We will carry out a full consultation on dairy contracts to take account of the range of stakeholder views and anticipate launching the consultation later this year.

British food and drink are renowned around the world for its quality and integrity and we want consumers, including public service organisations, to be able to benefit from our nutritious dairy and other agricultural products. Respecting our World Trade Organization commitments on public procurement, central Government and its executive agencies in England are mandated to source produce that meets UK minimum production standards, as outlined in the "Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering".

## Dairy Farming: Coronavirus

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what they are doing in relation to the measures to react to SARS-CoV-2 to support the adoption of agroecological farming practices in the dairy sector, which require small, largely grass-fed operations rather than factory farming. [[HL3594](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Defra is working very closely with the dairy and other agricultural sectors through this period of disruption to manage the impact of Covid-19 on the dairy supply chain.

The Government encourages environmentally-friendly farming. Each farming method has its own benefits and it is a farmer's commercial decision to choose the system that best suits their farm. Environmentally-friendly farming and food production can go hand in hand.

To support the dairy industry through impacts of Covid-19, we have introduced a wide range of measures, which will also benefit dairy farmers employing agro-ecological practices.

We have eased some elements of competition law to make it easier for dairy processors to come together to



maximise production, processing and storage efficiency and ensure as much product as possible can be processed into high quality dairy products.

Moreover, in recognition of the unprecedented challenges facing this sector we announced on 7 May a new fund to support those dairy farmers who have seen decreased demand due to the loss of the food service sector. Eligible dairy farmers in England who have lost more than 25% of their income over April and May due to coronavirus disruptions will be eligible for funding of up to £10,000 each, to cover 70% of their lost income during this qualifying period. This will enable these producers to continue to operate and sustain production capacity without impacts on animal welfare.

AHDB together with Dairy UK have also launched a new £1m campaign to drive consumption of milk. Running over 12 weeks, the campaign will highlight the role that milk plays in supporting moments of personal connection during times of crisis. Defra and the devolved administrations are jointly contributing towards the financing of this campaign.

Alongside the Covid-19 Business Interruption Loans Scheme, HMT has announced the new Bounce Back Loan scheme which will also 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 existing public intervention scheme for skimmed milk powder and butter continues to be available. This provides a floor price for dairy products, supporting the dairy industry to sell skimmed milk powder and butter into public intervention when the price they would receive on the open market falls below the intervention price. In addition from 7 May, UK dairy processors are also eligible to apply for EU funded private storage aid in respect of skimmed milk powder, butter and cheese.

For organic dairy farmers whose milk is being sold as conventional milk, we offered a derogation to allow these farmers to provide their cows with conventional feed in order to reduce costs.

The new Environmental Land Management scheme will be the cornerstone of our future agricultural policy. It will reward farmers and land managers for the delivery of public goods with public money. The ELM scheme is being designed collaboratively with stakeholders. We are considering how more environmentally-sustainable farming approaches, including organic farming and agro-ecological approaches, may fit within ELM where these contribute towards the delivery of environmental public goods. Land managers will be paid for delivering the following public goods set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan: clean air; clean and plentiful water; thriving plants and wildlife; protection from and mitigation of environmental hazards; beauty, heritage and

engagement with the environment; mitigation of and adaptation to climate change

Meanwhile, Countryside Stewardship (CS) provides a stepping stone to the future scheme, paying for environmental enhancements now as area-based payments are phased out. CS supports Defra's Strategic Objective of 'a cleaner, healthier environment, benefitting people and the economy'. Through the scheme, farmers can apply for funding to improve their local environment – from restoring wildlife habitats and creating woodlands to managing flood risk.

We will continue to offer Countryside Stewardship agreements in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

## Dairy Products and Meat: Labelling

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that UK meat and dairy products are properly labelled from farm to fork. [HL3608]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** In the UK we maintain high standards on information provided to consumers about their food, including the labelling of our high quality meat and dairy products. This is done through our legislation on the provision of food information and although food is a devolved matter, the same rules currently apply across all of the UK

The rules are based on the fundamental principle that information must not mislead consumers as to a food's characteristics, including its place of provenance and method of manufacture or production. Rules on traceability are in place through various regulations such as General Food Law 178/2002 which require businesses to be able to identify from where they have received food and to where they have supplied it ('one step forward and one step back'). It also requires food to be adequately labelled or identified to facilitate its traceability, including relevant documentation to support any claims about the food's origin or characteristics later made to consumers.

Rules on the marketing of milk and milk products, including those which reserve dairy terms including "milk" and "cheese" specifically for the marketing of dairy products, are included in the Common Organisation of the Agricultural Markets (Regulation 1308/2013). Rules requiring origin labelling of fresh and frozen meat are included in our food information regime.

New rules were introduced across the UK in April of this year that require the origin of the primary ingredient of a food to be made clear to the consumer. The rules require that labels inform consumers if the country or place of origin of the primary ingredient of a food product is different to that of the origin stated, or implied, for the product as a whole, or at least a statement that the origin of the ingredient is different. This will further help UK consumers to identify whether foods have been wholly or only partly produced here in the UK. These rules augment existing legislation requiring the origin labelling of a range of foods including most fresh and frozen meats, the



origin of which must be traceable under the regulations. There are no plans for information permitted or required on labels to change when the Transition Period ends.

Consumers are further informed about the provenance of their UK produced foods by a number of voluntary assurance schemes. Any such scheme or retailer providing such assurance must be able to show a proven chain of provenance supporting such claims.

### **Dairy Products: NHS**

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Albans***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the percentage of dairy bought by the NHS in England in each of the last 12 months that was produced by UK dairy farmers. [HL3809]

**Lord Bethell:** NHS Supply Chain, the main provider of consumables and equipment into the National Health Service, report that the great majority of their suppliers responded to a request for information on dairy products (milk, cream, eggs, yoghurt and cheese). All of these suppliers reported that 100% of the dairy products they supply into the NHS are produced in the United Kingdom.

Information is not available centrally on a month by month breakdown of such products purchased by individual NHS organisations.

### **Dementia**

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish guidance for local authorities on (1) treatment, (2) care, and (3) funding for people with dementia, during the COVID-19 pandemic; when any such guidance will be published; and what assessment they have made of the number of patients with dementia in care homes without staff who have had dementia training. [HL2855]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government has announced £1.6 billion of additional funding to support local authorities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic across all service areas.

The Department of Health and Social Care is working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, local authorities and providers to make sure the adult social care sector is ready. New adult social care guidance is available online and covers provision of residential care, supported living and home care.

Guidance for other sectors is being produced and updated regularly and the Government is also finalising COVID-19 related guidance for care homes including those housing individuals with dementia, which will be published shortly.

### **Developing Countries: Debts**

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Leeds***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure private creditors comply with the agreement reached by G20 leaders on 15 April to suspend debt payments owed by 77 of the world's poorest countries, in particular those debts that fall under UK jurisdiction. [HL3475]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Her Majesty's Government is deeply concerned about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-income developing countries. It is vital that all creditors work together to ensure that countries especially vulnerable to the pandemic are able to protect their citizens and economies.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer and his counterparts called on commercial creditors to participate in the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative on comparable terms to the official sector.

Her Majesty's Government is working closely with the Paris Club of official creditors and Institute of International Finance (IIF) to explore options for its membership to implement equivalent debt service suspensions. HM Treasury attended a joint meeting of the Paris Club and IIF on 28 April where both parties agreed to collaborate in support of the initiative.

### **Domestic Waste: Recycling**

*Asked by **Baroness Pinnock***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow local authorities to re-open household waste recycling centres. [HL3483]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Government has not required local authorities to close household waste recycling centres (HWRCs). Local authorities are working hard to keep essential collections in place and there have been changes in services in some areas due to reprioritisation of staff and social distancing concerns. We published [non-statutory guidance](#) on 5 May for local authorities on managing HWRCs in England during the coronavirus pandemic. It was developed in conjunction with Public Health England and the Home Office and sets out measures to support the operation of HWRCs in line with public health measures.

### **Emergencies: Risk Assessment**

*Asked by **Lord West of Spithead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much funding was allocated for preparations to counter the National Security Risk Assessment Tier 1 risk of pandemic in each year from 2010 to 2019. [HL3564]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Her Majesty's Government announces government spending through various fiscal events. Departments have jurisdiction to set their own budgets according to their budgetary priorities. It is for

individual Departments to determine how much funding to allocate to pandemic preparedness, taking into account their specific circumstances and requirements.

### Exercise Cygnus: Influenza

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Exercise Cygnus, carried out in October 2016, into the resilience of the NHS to deal with an influenza pandemic. [HL3148]

**Lord Bethell:** Working across Government and with stakeholders, the lessons identified from Exercise Cygnus have informed our preparedness, such as development of draft legislation support to the response to a future influenza pandemic and, strengthening health sector plans to surge and flex beyond normal operations. Learning the lessons from preparedness exercises, as well as other sources of expertise has ensured that the United Kingdom remains well prepared for infectious disease outbreaks.

The lessons learned from Exercise Cygnus continue to be considered by the Government and a range of stakeholders, including expert advisory groups and local emergency planners in reviewing response plans.

### Exercise Cygnus: NHS

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps were taken in response to the results of Exercise Cygnus, carried out in October 2016, to build capacity in the NHS in relation to the provision of additional (1) nurses, (2) doctors, (3) critical care beds, (4) morgue equipment, and (5) personal protection equipment. [HL3149]

**Lord Bethell:** The lessons identified from Exercise Cygnus continue to be considered by the Government and a range of stakeholders, including expert advisory groups and local emergency planners.

Working across Government and with stakeholders, the lessons from Exercise Cygnus have informed our preparedness, including strengthening health sector plans to surge and flex systems and resources beyond normal operations, and stockpiling personal protective equipment specifically for a pandemic influenza, informed by expert advice.

### Farnborough Airport: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many flights of private aircraft (1) landed, and (2) departed, from Farnborough Airport from the start of lockdown on 17 March to 14 April; and what measures they have in place to record the identity and contact details of the passengers and crew of such flights so that they can be traced if any develop COVID-19. [HL3586]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** DfT does not hold official statistics on private aircraft flight movements for the time period stated in the question. The Civil Aviation Authority collects some very limited information on non-commercial flight movements at a selection of UK airports which contains the total number of flight movements (arrivals + departures) in monthly block totals however Farnborough is not included in this data.

### Food Poverty: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the poll by the Food Foundation, published on 4 May, which found that five million people in UK households with children have experienced food insecurity during the lockdown in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and what steps they are taking to address this. [T] [HL3875]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Defra has read the Food Foundation report and will continue to monitor flows of information about food insecurity. Over the last two years Defra has worked with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Food Foundation and other NGOs to improve monitoring of household food insecurity, and the Food Insecurity Experience Scale questions are now included in the Family Resources Survey.

The measures the Government has taken in recent weeks represent an injection of £7 billion into the welfare system and form part of one of the most comprehensive packages of support introduced by an advanced economy in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

DWP's priorities are ensuring that people get their benefit payments and that the department can continue to support those who need it the most. Additional support is being made available through the national Free School Meals (FSM) voucher scheme. Schools can ensure that families with FSM-eligible children receive a weekly shopping voucher to the value of £15 per eligible child. A large number of schools have already signed up to this scheme.

The Government will continue to work closely with charities to identify the impacts of the coronavirus outbreak on vulnerable people, including children who have experienced food insecurity. We are also working through the Food and Essential Supplies to the Vulnerable Ministerial Task Force to identify where the Government can best support the economically vulnerable. Defra will work with other departments in the coming weeks on this.

### Freight: UK Relations with EU

*Asked by Baroness Quinn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and plan to have, with (1) The Road Haulage Association, and (2) The Freight Transport Association, about the negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU. [HL3628]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department engages with the FTA and RHA regularly on issues related to the UK's departure from the EU, preparations for the end of the Transition Period and the progress of the ongoing negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU.

### **Gaza: Agriculture**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that Israeli forces levelled Palestinian farmland and fired teargas at farmers in Gaza. [[HL3556](#)]

**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 and have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

### **Heathrow Airport: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what applications or approaches have been made for financial assistance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic by Heathrow Airport Ltd since 1 March. [[HL3576](#)]

**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 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. It would not be appropriate to comment in individual cases.

The Department is continuing to work closely with the sector and has been clear that if individual companies find themselves in trouble as a result of coronavirus and have exhausted the measures already available to them, including raising capital from existing investors, then we are prepared to enter discussions with individual companies seeking bespoke support as a last resort. However, any intervention would need to represent value for money for taxpayers.

### **Hebron: Crimes against Property**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of violent behaviour of Israeli settlers under the protection of Israeli forces towards Palestinian property in Hebron. [[HL3557](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made representations on these reports, we condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity.

### **Hebron: Land**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about the reported plan approved by Israel's Attorney General to confiscate Palestinian land close to the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. [[HL3558](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made representations on these reports, the practice of confiscations causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid actions that make it more difficult to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

### **Hebron: Religious Buildings**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to protect the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron in the light of its listing as a Unesco World Heritage site. [[HL3559](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** In our meetings with the Israeli authorities we regularly raise the need to respect the status quo of the holy sites in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid actions that make it more difficult to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

### **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Costs**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the publication of their Full Business Case – High Speed 2 Phase One, published on 15 April, why “spend up to the end of 2019 has been treated as sunk and excluded from the appraisal”; whether they have written off such costs in any other major projects previously; if so, which; and whether the exclusion of such costs is compliant with the guidance issued in The Green Book. [[HL3454](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The spend to date on HS2 up to the end of 2019 was £7.5bn (2015Q1 prices, excluding VAT). However not all of this is treated as sunk costs in the economic case as the land and property costs could be recoverable were HS2 not to go ahead.

*What would the benefit-cost ratio figures be if those costs had been included;*

The benefit cost ratio figures including sunk costs are as follows:

	<i>Full Network</i>	<i>Statement of Intent</i>	<i>Parliamentary Powers</i>
BCR without WEIs	1.1	0.8	0.8
BCR with WEIs	1.3	1.0	1.0

*Whether the writing off of development costs up to the time of Notice to Proceed is in compliance with the HM Treasury's Green Book;*

The appraisal of HS2 has been undertaken in compliance with HM Treasury's Green Book. The Green Book states that "[w]hat matters are costs and benefits affected by decisions still to be made";

*What other Government-funded projects have had the development costs written off; and whether any such costs were written off in order to improve the benefit-cost ratio figures;*

Costs have not been written off in the approval of HS2, HS2 Ltd's delegated Funding Envelope (the "Target Cost") for Phase One is £40bn (2019 prices). This Target Cost includes the costs already spent on the project.

### Horticulture: Peat

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of when commercial horticulture will have ceased using peat and peat-based products. [HL3481]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** In 2015 2.1 million cubic metres of peat were sold in growing media products in the UK. Data was not collected for 2016 and 2017. Sales data for 2018 is currently being compiled and 2019 data will be collected later this year.

Of the peat sold in growing media products in 2015, 0.9 million cubic metres were extracted in the UK and 1.1 million cubic metres were extracted in the Republic of Ireland. The remaining 0.1 million cubic metres were extracted in other EU countries. This data comes from the same survey which gathered data for 2018 and 2019 and data will be available for subsequent years on this basis.

The forthcoming data will allow us to assess progress towards the phasing out of peat in both the retail and commercial horticulture markets. However, this data will not include some significant market changes this year with the introduction of new peat-free products with significantly reduced peat content by major retailers and brands. Data from 2020 sales will be collected in 2021.

The Government is committed to phasing out the use of peat in horticulture in England by 2030. In 2011 we introduced a voluntary target for amateur gardeners to phase out the use of peat by 2020 and a final voluntary phase-out target of 2030 for professional growers of fruit,

vegetables and plants. While some progress has been made, we stated in the 25 Year Environment Plan that we would consider implementing further measures if there is insufficient movement to peat alternatives by 2020. We will set out our plans around the use of peat in horticulture in due course.

### House of Lords: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what arrangements have been made to support parliamentary staff working for the House during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3719]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** The safety and well-being of staff and members is at the forefront of the Administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are a range of interventions which have been put in place to support staff during the pandemic, and these are regularly updated and communicated to staff, including on a dedicated section of the parliamentary intranet. The guidance is informed by advice from Public Health England.

### Human Rights: Coronavirus

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the widespread global lockdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19, what assessment they have made of reports that some governments, particularly those in North Africa and the Middle East, are using the opportunity to prevent freedom of expression, crackdown on dissent and curb civil society; how they are monitoring such reports and in which countries; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL3789]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned by reports that some governments are using the current crisis to curb freedom of expression and civil society. The UK supports freedom of expression as a fundamental human right, which must be respected at all times. We are closely monitoring the human rights situation in Middle East and North African countries. On 9 April, the UK participated in the UN Human Rights Council's first ever virtual conversation with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Discussion focused on the human rights implications of the COVID-19 crisis which included concerns about restrictions being imposed on freedom of expression. In his statement to the Council, our Ambassador to the UN in Geneva stressed the importance of ensuring that parliaments, media and civil society all play their role to scrutinise the actions of governments and international agencies, and that we make use of the international human rights frameworks. The British Government remains committed to standing up for human rights and the rule of law in all circumstances.



## Humanitarian Aid: Coronavirus

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial assistance they (1) have made, and (2) intend to make, to the United Nations COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. [HL3570]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK strongly supports the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) to tackle COVID-19. Of the £744 million of UK aid pledged to support the global effort to combat COVID-19 so far, £220 million has gone to UN agencies in the GHRP, such as the World Food Programme and UN Refugee Agency, as well as humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross and international NGOs. DFID is also adapting its programmes across its country network to respond to COVID-19 and address the needs of the most vulnerable, as outlined in the GHRP.

Our support will help protect millions of people in the world's poorest countries and ensure they can treat those who are infected. By taking action to support vulnerable countries' health systems now, UK aid is reducing the risks of the virus becoming entrenched in certain areas and taking years to eradicate.

## Identity Cards: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce a COVID-19-related identity card system after lockdown restrictions have been lifted. [HL3723]

**Lord True:** The Government has no plans to introduce identity cards.

## International Assistance: Security

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times, in the last three calendar years, following assessment via the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment process, UK justice or security assistance (1) to any state has been refused, and (2) projects have been modified, on the basis that there was considered to be serious risk that any such assistance would directly or significantly contribute to violations of the right of the child, including the use of UK assistance in hostilities. [HL3553]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) updated its guidance on Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) in 2017 by written ministerial statement. Since then, information on its implementation has been included in the FCO's Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report. Information on the number of times that projects informed by the OSJA guidance have been either refused or modified on the basis of specific forms of human rights

risks, is not held centrally nor readily available. Any technical assistance we provide is kept under regular review to ensure it is in line with international standards, and fully complies with our human rights obligations and the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance process.

## Israel: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Deech*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reporting that Israel has had a role in spreading COVID-19; what steps they are taking to address any fake news about such a role; and what discussions they are having with governments that endorse such news. [HL3687]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Misinformation about coronavirus is dangerous and hampers the global fight against the disease. We urge all authorities to do all they can to prevent the circulation of such misinformation. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem are in regular contact with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities respectively. We welcome the ongoing cooperation between the PA and Government of Israel in their respective responses to COVID-19.

## Israel: Palestinians

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the number of Palestinian children imprisoned by Israeli authorities, in particular regard to the threat of COVID-19 transmission in prisons. [HL3555]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK has serious concerns about the continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. We continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities on this issue. We also encourage steps to be taken that will reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in prisoners whilst simultaneously respecting fundamental human rights.

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the statistics published by Military Court Watch showing that in February, of the Palestinian security prisoners held by Israel, 81 per cent of adults and 75 per cent of children were held in Israel in contravention of Article 76 of the fourth Geneva Convention; and what was the outcome of any such representations. [HL3611]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK has serious concerns about the continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. 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.

### Israeli Settlements

*Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about its recent proposed annexation of territory in the West Bank. [HL3463]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We made clear our deep concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April. 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. The Prime Minister reiterated our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during a call with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 6 February.

*Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to raise the recent proposal of the government of Israel to annex territory in the West Bank at the next meeting of the UN Security Council. [HL3464]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We made clear our deep concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April. 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.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about its plans to commence discussions from 1 July on applying Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements and other territory in the occupied West Bank. [HL3520]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We made clear our deep concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April. 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. The

Prime Minister reiterated our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during a call with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 6 February.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) EU member states, and (2) the United States, about the government of Israel's intention to commence discussions from 1 July on applying Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements and other territory in the occupied West Bank. [HL3521]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to work closely with international partners strongly advocating a two-state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties. 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 may pave 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.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of any decision by the government of Israel to unilaterally annex part of the West Bank after 1 July on the viability of a two-state solution. [HL3522]

**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 may pave 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.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 13 February (HL1282), what steps they intend to take in response to the government of Israel's actions should it unilaterally annex parts of the West Bank. [HL3523]

**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 may pave 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. We continue to work closely with international

partners strongly advocating a two state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take, in collaboration with the EU, to prevent any annexation of the West Bank by the government of Israel. [[HL3554](#)]

**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 may pave 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. We continue to work closely with international partners strongly advocating a two state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties.

### Legal Aid Scheme and Trials: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) financial impact of COVID-19 on legal aid lawyers, and (2) the long-term impact of court trials that need to be restarted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3641](#)]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** We recognise the vital public service provided by legal aid practitioners. We know that the Covid-19 outbreak has created a range of challenges for the legal profession. We are doing all we can to overcome these and ensure that the justice system continues to operate effectively, maintaining access to justice for those who need it.

In doing this, we are working closely with legal practitioners and other providers of legal support across the justice system, to understand their concerns and the immediate and longer-term support needs to keep the justice system running during the crisis and recovery beyond. Key representative bodies have continued to engage with Ministers and senior officials throughout this challenging period, and officials have sought out the views of the legal services sector on the impact of the crisis on their businesses.

The measures introduced by HMT have provided some support to the profession. We are working with practitioner representative bodies to understand any gaps in the provision for particular parts of the profession.

The Legal Aid Agency has taken steps designed to help support legal aid provision during this period including making money available in interim payments and halting debt collection.

For criminal practitioners we have provided greater access to hardship payments to allow practitioners to

claim 1 month after they were first instructed instead of 6 months and to lower the threshold for work done on the case from £5,000 to £450. We estimate up to 20,000 cases under the LGFS (Crown Court litigators' fee scheme) and 27,000 cases under the AGFS (Crown Court advocacy fee scheme) could be eligible under the new provisions, increasing the amount of funding brought forward (when combined with the interim payments already available) from £45m to £140m.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is working hard in partnership with the judiciary to keep our justice system functioning during this unprecedented public health emergency. Our priorities are to maintain access to justice and to protect the safety of all who work in the courts and tribunals.

The courts are now in a position, with approval from Public Health England and Public Health Wales, to take some first steps towards the resumption of jury trials. A limited number of trials will take place, conducted safely and observing social distancing rules, at courts including the Old Bailey in London and at Cardiff Crown Court. These will also help us to understand how it might be possible to conduct trials more widely as the situation with coronavirus develops.

### Legal Aid Scheme: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk posed to legal aid lawyers who have to attend police stations and psychiatric hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3643](#)]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The safety of legal aid practitioners is of critical importance and the Government has taken steps to ensure their safety, while also ensuring that individuals can still receive crucial legal advice.

Guidance has been issued that all Mental Health Tribunals should be conducted remotely. Where this is not possible, secure mental health inpatient settings tend to be configured in such a way that isolation of patients is straightforward. NHS England and Improvement have taken steps to ensure rigorous infection control procedures and have restricted all non-essential visits, while still permitting essential legal visits. These measures minimise the risk of infection spreading within inpatient settings and so protects attending legal aid practitioners.

Criminal legal advice can continue to be delivered over the telephone via the Defence Solicitors Call Centre. A joint criminal justice interview protocol has been issued stating that legal advice should take place whenever possible over the telephone or by video link. Where this is not possible, interviews must be carried out in accordance with Government advice and the NPCC has issued guidance on the safe operation of custody suites to support this.

To further support this, HMCTS have launched a new cloud video platform to expand remote hearing capacity

and enable all parties in a criminal hearing to take part remotely.

We have ensured that mental health and crime providers will be remunerated for remote advice in the same manner as for in-person hearings.

### **Life insurance: Coronavirus**

*Asked by **Baroness Manzoor***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they intend to provide to (1) consumers, and (2) insurers, about endowment policies that are set to mature during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3510]

*Asked by **Baroness Manzoor***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require that endowment policy providers allow policy holders to (1) extend the terms of, and (2) make additional contributions to, such policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3511]

*Asked by **Baroness Manzoor***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of endowment policies maturing during the pandemic on the number of people who are left with a shortfall and cannot repay their mortgage; and what steps they are taking to support such people. [HL3512]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Financial Conduct Authority has said that, in light of COVID-19, insurers must consider very carefully the needs of their customers and show flexibility in their treatment of them.

Consumers should check the terms of their individual policies and contact their provider if they wish to make changes to their policy.

The Government encourages customers who are concerned about the current financial situation to get in touch with their lender or insurer at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss their options.

On the 17 March, the Chancellor announced on behalf of the sector that banks and building societies will offer a 3-month 'mortgage holiday' for borrowers that are financially struggling with their repayments. This forbearance measure will enable affected borrowers to defer their mortgage payments for up to 3 months while they get back on their feet. In addition, the FCA issued guidance confirming that this captures borrowers whose mortgage is in a closed book or owned by a firm that is not regulated for mortgage lending.

Furthermore, lenders have agreed a 3-month moratorium on possession action to start immediately to provide customers with reassurance that they will not have their homes repossessed at this difficult time, meaning firms cannot commence or continue repossession proceedings against customers at this time.

### **Oilseed Rape: Pests**

*Asked by **Lord Farmer***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any evidence that unrestrained depredation by cabbage stem flea beetle of oil seed rape prevents the growth of that crop; and what plans they have to review the ban on neonicotinoids following any such assessment. [HL3598]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Oilseed rape is a valuable crop for farmers and there is a greater risk of crop loss due to cabbage stem flea beetle (CSFB) since the restrictions on neonicotinoids came into force in 2014. Some growers have been heavily affected while others have not experienced similar problems. Defra has monitored the incidence of CSFB on untreated oilseed rape through the Crop Pest and Disease Survey. In autumn 2019, average numbers of CSFB were higher than levels before the ban on use of neonicotinoid insecticides. Out of 82 sites assessed, however, only eight had levels that exceeded the recommended threshold for spray application. Six of these eight sites were in the East of England.

The Government supports restrictions on neonicotinoids because the clear advice from scientific experts is that these seed treatments should not be used on flowering crops, such as oilseed rape. There is clear evidence on the toxicity of neonicotinoids to bees and their persistence in the environment. We are not prepared to put our pollinator populations at risk and so we will maintain the current restrictions on use of the three neonicotinoids when the transition period ends. We will only take a different position if the scientific evidence changes.

The Government supports a major, long-term research platform for Crop Genetic Improvement. This includes OREGIN, which is a dedicated programme on oilseed rape breeding to improve the resource use efficiency, sustainability and resilience of the crop. The research is carried out in close partnership with growers and breeders and determines beneficial traits to be included in breeding programmes to offer improved resistance to priority pests and diseases. The work is helping to reduce reliance on agrochemical inputs and also improve the overall resilience of crops.

### **Oral Questions**

*Asked by **Lord Blencathra***

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans there are, if any, to publish a record of the length of time taken by members of the House to ask supplementary questions. [HL3456]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** When introducing virtual proceedings the Lord Speaker and his Deputies have consistently emphasised the importance of brevity when asking and answering supplementary questions, and the

part that this can play in allowing a greater number of members to contribute within the time limits. These sentiments were echoed in an email that I sent to all members on 12 May, updating them on virtual proceedings. Revised guidance issued by the Procedure Committee on the same day also stated that 'Members should avoid taking up time in Virtual Proceedings thanking other members for their contributions'. There are no plans to publish a record of the length of time taken by members of the House to ask supplementary questions; the Procedure Committee will continue to keep these matters under review.

### Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing non-governmental organisations to help the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3457]

**Baroness Sugg:** The UK has so far pledged up to £744 million of UK aid to support the global effort to combat COVID-19. This includes £200 million for charities and international organisations, who are critical partners in meeting the huge challenge of tackling the virus. As part of this package, there is funding for international NGOs, including UK charities. In addition, extra funding has been allocated to NGOs through the DFID Unilever COVID-19 Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition.

DFID is also adapting its programmes across its country network to respond to COVID-19 and has committed significant funding through the multilateral system. We also expect NGOs to play a key role in delivery through these channels.

Additionally, The Small Charities Challenge Fund is open on an ongoing basis for applications for grants of up to £50k from the very best small British development charities. Applications will next be reviewed on 24 September 2020 and projects which address the impacts of COVID-19 will be prioritised.

### Parliament: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Naseby*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to spare capacity for COVID-19 testing being used to facilitate the testing of Parliamentarians, particularly those aged over 70. [HL3046]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government is rapidly scaling up the national effort to boost testing capacity for COVID-19. As our capacity has continued to increase, we have now expanded testing to a wider range of people, including all those over the age of 65 and those unable to work from home where they have symptoms.

However, the advice remains that those over the age of 70 or considered vulnerable should follow the Government's advice on shielding to reduce their

personal risk. Where people are able to work from home they should, and we welcome Parliament's recent changes to allow Parliamentarians to participate in business remotely.

### Peat

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what volume of peat and peat-based products were sold in each of the last five years; what volume of peat was extracted from the UK in each of the last five years; and what volume of peat was imported from the Republic of Ireland in each of the last five years. [HL3479]

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of when all retail products sold in the UK will be peat-free. [HL3480]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** In 2015 2.1 million cubic metres of peat were sold in growing media products in the UK. Data was not collected for 2016 and 2017. Sales data for 2018 is currently being compiled and 2019 data will be collected later this year.

Of the peat sold in growing media products in 2015, 0.9 million cubic metres were extracted in the UK and 1.1 million cubic metres were extracted in the Republic of Ireland. The remaining 0.1 million cubic metres were extracted in other EU countries. This data comes from the same survey which gathered data for 2018 and 2019 and data will be available for subsequent years on this basis.

The forthcoming data will allow us to assess progress towards the phasing out of peat in both the retail and commercial horticulture markets. However, this data will not include some significant market changes this year with the introduction of new peat-free products with significantly reduced peat content by major retailers and brands. Data from 2020 sales will be collected in 2021.

The Government is committed to phasing out the use of peat in horticulture in England by 2030. In 2011 we introduced a voluntary target for amateur gardeners to phase out the use of peat by 2020 and a final voluntary phase-out target of 2030 for professional growers of fruit, vegetables and plants. While some progress has been made, we stated in the 25 Year Environment Plan that we would consider implementing further measures if there is insufficient movement to peat alternatives by 2020. We will set out our plans around the use of peat in horticulture in due course.

### Pharmacy: Conditions of Employment

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the families of pharmacists and their staff who have died from COVID-19 will be eligible for the death in service payments announced by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. [HL3783]



**Lord Bethell:** The Government is in the process of setting up a life assurance scheme for frontline health and social care staff who contract COVID-19 during the course of their work.

The scheme is non-contributory and pays a £60,000 lump sum where staff die as a result of COVID-19 and had been recently working in frontline roles and locations where personal care is provided to individuals who have recently contracted COVID-19. These arrangements cover pharmacy teams working in hospitals and general practitioner practices.

The scheme permits the Secretary of State to consider exceptional cases which may not fall within the eligibility criteria, such as cases from community pharmacy.

### **Plants: Imports**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on plant disease of trees and shrubs brought from mainland Europe to the UK. [HL3477]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The UK has robust controls in place to protect against plant pest and disease threats. Horizon scanning for new and emerging threats is carried out continuously and the results are considered monthly by all UK Plant Health Authorities, facilitated by the Defra-chaired UK Plant Health Risk Group. The UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR) is the principal screening tool used for this purpose and all outputs are published. This includes an assessment of the likely impacts of pests screened, including those which are present in mainland Europe but not in the UK. The UKPHRR also includes details of pests which have been introduced to the UK from other countries, including in Europe, assessing their potential for further spread and resulting impacts. The UKPHRR now has more than 1000 entries, informing decision making and prioritisation in relation to plant health threats. Where necessary more detailed assessments are made for risks identified via the UKPHRR through Pest Risk Assessments (PRAs). These PRAs will be used as the basis for UK plant health legislation and UK legislation is updated frequently to protect against new and revised threats.

The UK is proud of its world-leading plant biosecurity standards and we have recently introduced additional national measures against key threats including *Xylella fastidiosa* and the Emerald ash borer. These have introduced additional controls on the import of hosts of *Xylella* which are considered to pose a high risk of harbouring the pathogen. These requirements are based on the outcome of an update to the UK PRA for this pathogen and include details on potential impacts should this pathogen be introduced, including on plants from Europe.

The Tree Health Resilience Strategy sets out the current state of knowledge on tree health in England and provides a framework for management of our trees, including

horizon scanning for new and emerging threats associated with plant imports from mainland Europe and beyond. The latest Woodland Natural Capital Accounts, published by the Office for National Statistics in February 2020, classify 85% of woodlands in Great Britain as in a favourable condition for tree health.

### **Ports: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to UK ports who have experienced a loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3497]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government announced an unprecedented package of financial measures to support businesses through these trying times, worth £350 billion. My Department's officials and I have been working closely with operators across the maritime sector, including our Ports, to understand how these measures can be applied.

These support packages will safeguard jobs and protect our industries and have already been taken up by businesses across the country, including by Ports. We will continue to liaise with HM Treasury and the maritime industry, including with our Ports, to ensure that these support packages continue to reflect their needs and to address any other issue they have.

### **Press Freedom: Coronavirus**

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Worcester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which countries have used COVID-19 as a pretext to introduce restrictive measures against independent media outlets and to arrest and intimidate journalists for providing critical coverage of the relevant government's COVID-19 response. [HL3569]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing threats to free and independent media around the world, which were already very alarming. Media freedom is vital to functioning democracies and journalists must be able to investigate and report without undue interference. We must oppose all attempts by any state to use the pandemic to adopt restrictions on press freedom, silence debate, abuse journalists or spread misinformation.

We are also deeply concerned to see that across the world, publications are contracting and closing, and journalists being made redundant because of falling revenues. The UK, as part of the Executive Group of the Media Freedom Coalition, issued a statement on 6 April reaffirming the fundamental importance of media freedom and calling on all states to protect access to free media during the COVID-19 pandemic. And in the UK statement at the UN Human Rights Council's virtual conversation with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on 9 April, we stressed the important role of the



media, alongside parliaments and civil society, in scrutinising the actions of governments and international agencies during this crisis.

### Prison Accommodation: Sanitation

*Asked by Lord Birt*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of prison cells in England and Wales do not contain a toilet. [HL3500]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Prison operating standards state that prisoners in normal accommodation should have sanitation either within their cell or as an annex to the cell. The vast majority equating to around 68,400 (90%) of cells, including all newer prisons, have modern sanitation inside the cell. These cells hold approximately 91% of the prison population.

The remaining 7,600 (10%) do not have in-cell sanitation. The majority of these are at sites subject to open conditions, where prisoners have 24-hour access to sanitation facilities that are not physically integrated into their cells.

In a small number of older prisons, however, it has not proved possible to install in-cell sanitation or the cost of doing so would be prohibitively high. In such cases, a system of electronic unlocking is in place, in which prisoners are able to request via an in-cell call bell that the cell door be remotely unlocked for a limited period of time to allow them to access to shared facilities on the wing.

### Prisoners' Release

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners were, are, or will be within two months of the end of their release date in (1) March, (2) April, (3) May, and (4) June 2020. [HL3690]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** In the prison population serving a determinate sentence (excluding recalls) as at 31 March 2020, there were:

- 7,346 with a release date from 31 March 2020 to 31 May 2020 (inclusive)
- 5,503 with a release date from 30 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 (inclusive)
- 4,503 with a release date from 31 May 2020 to 31 July 2020 (inclusive)
- 4,185 with a release date from 30 June 2020 to 31 August 2020 (inclusive)

### Prisoners

*Asked by Lord Dobbs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to involve prisoners in the production of personal protection equipment. [HL3534]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** We have been working with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust and the Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to explore what items of equipment or support materials could be manufactured in prison workshops to help support front line medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

HMP High Down has already successfully assembled 3,500 face visors and 2,000 pairs of goggles for the Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

We are also mobilising HMPs: High Down, Swansea, Channings Wood, Wakefield, Risley, Highpoint, Whatton and New Hall for the manufacturing of "Scrubs" (garments worn underneath medical coveralls) and "Scrub Bags" (used to launder other garments) for NHS staff.

### Public Libraries: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Bird*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to assist libraries to loan more audio books and e-books during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what conversations, if any, they have had with the publishing industry about that issue. [HL3749]

**Baroness Barran:** Libraries across England have responded swiftly to the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting to meet their users' needs. Although the physical doors are closed, library services have developed innovative and exciting digital ways to continue to provide services. This has included repurposing stock budgets to meet the increase in demand for e-books and e-audiobooks.

Arts Council England has provided £151,000 (around £1,000 per library authority) to supplement existing e-book funding. Publishers and aggregators have also responded positively. Two aggregators have offered to match the ACE investment where money is spent on e-audio items. Through conversations with the sector we also know that publishers are lifting restrictions to enable remote storytelling so that library Rhyme Times can continue online.

### Public Transport: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost to Her Majesty's Treasury of running train and bus services, under new arrangements put in place by the Government since the outbreak of COVID-19, in the month to 25 April, or until the latest date for which they can make an assessment. [HL3578]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Government has approved £3.5 billion of additional expenditure to ensure that vital rail services continue to operate. From this additional expenditure, £2.9 billion relates to the 2020/21 financial year. It is not yet possible to provide an estimate of the total cost incurred to date.

In respect to bus services, the Government has made available up to £167 million of new funding over twelve weeks under the new COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG), of which over £7 million has been paid to local transport authorities and over £41 million to bus operators as of 12 May.

*Asked by Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have requested, or required, reductions in executive remuneration, bonuses and other executive benefits in return for additional subsidies of train and bus operators to operate services granted since 1 March; if not, whether they intend to do so; and if so, what such reductions have been or will be. [HL3579]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** To bring stability and certainty to the industry during this turbulent time, private sector train operating companies have seen a temporary suspension of their existing franchise agreements' financial mechanisms, and all revenue and cost risk has been transferred to the Government. Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) commenced on 1 April 2020 (effective as of 1 March 2020) for an initial period of six months.

Under the EMAs, whilst basic pay will continue at the same levels as before the EMAs were agreed, any bonuses, rewards or discretionary benefits paid to any staff, directors or officers under any schemes which have not previously been approved by the Secretary of State in writing, are viewed as a disallowable cost.

In relation to bus operators, the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) is designed to help bus operators cover the costs of operating an appropriate service level during the COVID-19 period. Executive remuneration and payouts are a disallowable expense for the purposes of this grant scheme.

### **Railways: Freight**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to support rail freight through the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3595]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government has worked closely with the rail freight industry since the onset of the pandemic to provide support and assistance, particularly to support their excellent efforts to keep freight moving around our country.

At an operational level, the Government has supported Freight Operating Companies (FOCs) by supporting the work to prioritise freight in the revised rail timetable and ensuring its workforce is recognised as critical workers.

To help mitigate the impacts of lower than normal rail freight volumes, the Department has agreed temporary changes to the Mode Shift Revenue Support grant scheme by changing rates to help partially loaded trains to continue to operate. To provide immediate financial support, the Department has supported Network Rail

(NR) in setting out a package of measures which include short term deferral of track access charge payments and making immediate payments to FOCs for services they provide to NR. In addition, the Government has put in place a broad package of substantial support for businesses throughout the economy, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, helping rail freight to trade at this challenging time.

Rail freight will have a key role to play in the recovery from the crisis. We continue to work closely with the industry to support its future growth, so it can continue to deliver significant economic and environmental benefits to the UK.

### **Railways: North of England**

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to asking Network Rail to convene a meeting with an independent chairman with wide operating experience to identify ways of improving performance in railway movements in the North of England, particularly in relation to the bottleneck between Manchester Piccadilly and Oxford Road stations, without major infrastructure investment. [HL3654]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department recognises the importance of improving the performance of rail services around Manchester and last year Richard George, a railway industry leader with wide operating experience, looked at this subject. Since January, his work has been taken forward to be developed in detail by a Task Force co-ordinated by Network Rail and involving train operators, Transport for the North and other stakeholders. This Task Force is working up options for improving performance through timetable changes without infrastructure investment, as well as considering the appropriate infrastructure investment in the longer term.

### **Remote Working: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Hollins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy on home working for parents whilst schools are closed during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what assessment they have made of the benefits of having one parent work from home as the primary care giver. [HL3536]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government has advised everyone to work from home if possible. Guidance on staying at home is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>.

We have also asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, but asked schools and all childcare providers to continue to provide care for a

limited number of children, including children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. Guidance for schools is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>.

## Rights of Way: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Pinnock***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to issue guidance on the rights of access to public rights of way during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3517]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Government has published general guidance on access to green space on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-guidance-on-access-to-green-spaces> and FAQs on what you can and can't do <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#public-spaces--outdoor-activities--exercise>. Defra has also issued guidance to local authorities and organisations such as the National Farmers Union and the CLA to pass on to their members specifically on rights of way. This advises landowners and occupiers who have a path crossing through a garden or working farmyard to display a polite request, if necessary, for the public to use another path and includes suggested wording. Further information for landowners can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operational-update-covid-19>

## Sanctions

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish, in draft, any secondary legislation relating to the introduction of a Magnitsky-style sanction regime prior to any such legislation being laid before the House; and whether such sanctions will cover those who, directly or indirectly, (1) profit from, and (2) are involved in, human rights abuses. [HL3737]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We will lay secondary legislation in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 to establish the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky-style') sanctions regime in the coming months. A global human rights sanctions regime will allow us to respond to serious human rights violations or abuses anywhere in the world. We are a global leader in the promotion and protection of human rights and we want to demonstrate that the UK can be a force for good in the world.

All designations will need to meet the legal tests as set out in the Sanctions Act, which includes ensuring designations are underpinned by robust evidence. The sanctions regime is not intended to target individual countries, but those who commit serious human rights violations or abuses anywhere in the world.

## Schools: Staff

*Asked by **Lord Lingfield***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect teaching and non-teaching staff from COVID-19 when schools re-open. [HL3615]

**Baroness Berridge:** The school workforce is central to the country's response to COVID-19 and we thank them wholeheartedly for their support at this difficult time.

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased. We therefore anticipate, with further progress, that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June, to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time.

A range of actions will be taken to prevent transmission of the virus, including protective measures to minimise contact and mixing. Public Health England is clear that if early years settings, schools and colleges implement these measures, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand washing, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.

We have published guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement protective measures, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

Access to testing is already available to essential workers, including all school staff.

These are rapidly developing circumstances. We continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

## Science: Finance

*Asked by **Baroness Hollins***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide funding to science and discovery centres which are not eligible for the support available to museums and cultural organisations. [HL3537]

**Baroness Barran:** We recognise that these are extremely difficult conditions for leisure attractions such as science and discovery centres. These organisations educate and entertain visitors of all ages on what science

is and the important discoveries over the centuries that have changed all our lives.

We have announced unprecedented support for business and workers, including those in the tourism and attractions sector, to protect them against the current economic emergency. This includes the Job Retention Scheme, VAT payment deferrals for firms and £330bn worth of government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses. The Chancellor has also announced a Bounce Back loan scheme to help small businesses access loans of up to £50,000, with a 100% government-backed guarantee for lenders.

Our immediate national priority is containing the spread of the virus. As soon as it is safe to do so, we will be encouraging people to visit leisure attractions once again. On 11th May 2020 the Government published a roadmap setting out how we expect organisations such as science and discovery centres to open back up and welcome visitors again.

### Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies

*Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem*

To ask Her Majesty's Government for a list of attendees at each of the meetings of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies that have taken place since 1 January. [HL3501]

**Lord Callanan:** Her Majesty's Government (HMG) does not routinely publish 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. For the COVID-19 response and to ensure transparency on who is contributing to the scientific advice being given to the Government, we have published the names of those participants who have agreed for their names to be published at this point. HMG will publish the minutes of relevant SAGE meetings once the body stops convening on this emergency. The minutes will also list all of the attendees.

The names that have been published are available on the SAGE page on GOV.UK.

### Self-employment Income Support Scheme

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to bring forward the start date for the Coronavirus Self-employment Income Support Scheme. [HL3489]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Delivery of the SEISS is a substantial operational task for HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) because it requires an entirely new system to be built and tested from scratch in a matter of weeks. In early May HMRC began contacting individuals who may be eligible for the scheme, and HMRC have invited them to

claim using the GOV.UK online service. This service will open on 13 May, ahead of schedule, and those eligible will have the money paid into their bank account by 25 May, or within six working days of completing a claim.

### Sheltered Housing: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support or funding they are giving to support sheltered-housing providers, including information, training, personal protective equipment and other provision to ensure the safety of staff and residents, particularly those who have difficulty understanding or complying with the Government's COVID-19 advice and associated regulations; and whether they are considering introducing further measures in relation to supported-housing providers to address the COVID-19 epidemic. [HL3593]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government deeply values and applauds the hard work of supported and sheltered housing providers and workers in supporting vulnerable people across the country during this pandemic.

The Government has published guidance issued by Public Health England on working practices in supported living during the pandemic. This can be found (attached) at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-supported-living-provision>

We have also given councils an additional £3.2 billion of funding so they can continue to provide essential services and support vulnerable people.

We have extended testing to all front line essential workers which includes those working in supported, extra-care, sheltered and retirement housing, and we have provided additional supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) for local distribution to a broad range of essential front line workers.

For those supported and retirement housing residents who may be shielding, the Government is helping shielding individuals who request our support with free deliveries of weekly parcels of food and household essentials, help with delivery of medicines, and help with social contact and basic needs.

My Department continues to engage regularly with sector stakeholders.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Residential care and home care guidance [200512 COVID-19\_guidance for supported living provision - GOV.UK - HL3593.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-28/HL3593>



## Sleeping Rough

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were sleeping rough in England and Wales (1) between November and December 2019, (2) in January 2020, (3) in February 2020, and (4) in March 2020. [HL3627]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** MHCLG's latest official annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot Statistics published on 27 February 2020 provides information about the estimated number of people sleeping rough across all local authorities in England 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. There were 4,266 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn 2019 in England. For more information please see the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>

The devolved administrations publish their own statistics on homelessness which contain information on rough sleeping. The Welsh Government publish a national annual rough sleeping monitoring exercise, which includes a two week information gathering exercise followed by a one night snapshot count. The figures are not directly comparable between countries as they have a different methodology, coverage and are carried out at different time periods. For more information please see the following link: <https://gov.wales/national-rough-sleeper-count>

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 to local authorities as part of the wider government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Rough Sleeper count [200512 national-rough-sleeper-count-november-2019-814 - HL3627.pdf]

Rough sleeping snap shot [200512 Rough sleeping snapshot in England\_ autumn 2019 - GOV.UK - HL3627.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-28/HL3627>

*Asked by Lord Bird*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make permanent housing and support, including the Housing First model, the default option for people with complex needs who had previously been sleeping rough and who have been supported under the Everyone In initiative. [HL3653]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** 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. This includes those rough sleeping or who have been living in accommodation with communal sleeping spaces such as night shelters.

The Government allocated £28 million to pilot Housing First at scale in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and West Midlands combined authorities in May 2018. Our independent contractors for the evaluation, ICF, are making progress and the first interim process report is due to be published later this year. We will use this to inform any potential future decisions on roll out.

This funding is alongside significant investment including £112m across England in 2020/21 for the Rough Sleeping Initiative to help around 270 areas tackle rough sleeping across 2020/21. The funding is a 30% increase on the previous year and will be used to introduce and expand a range of measures, including housing support and housing-led solutions, as well as specialist support workers.

## Small Businesses: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Burt of Solihull*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to extend their financial support for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic to small businesses that do not have their own premises. [HL3460]

**Lord Callanan:** A discretionary fund has been set up to accommodate eligible small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grant funds scheme. The Business Secretary and Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government spoke to local authorities in England on 1 May to set out that up to £617 million would be made available. This is in addition to the £12.33 billion funding previously announced for the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF), meaning an amount of up to £617 million.

Government has introduced legislation helping tenants who are facing difficulties paying rent by implementing a pause on commercial forfeitures and we will review this. Government is urgently investigating what other support may be provided to commercial property owners as they seek to recover from the current crisis.

We have been working quickly to support the UK's businesses and commercial real estate sector through the crisis. This has included support through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Corporate Financing Facility - support which is available to both tenants and landlords. 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.

## Special Educational Needs

Asked by **Lord Addington**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of vulnerable students who are not attending the available school places for those with special educational needs. [HL3450]

**Baroness Berridge:** 69,000 of the children and young people in attendance on Thursday 7 May were classed by schools as vulnerable. Of these, around 20,800 were children and young people with special educational needs who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, and 35,000 were children in need (reported by schools as having a social worker). The remainder were unknown, where schools either did not provide this information or the children were classed vulnerable for other reasons.

The department is working with educational settings and local authorities to improve our understanding of the total number of vulnerable children for whom continued attendance at educational establishments would be beneficial and appropriate. We are asking local authorities to work with educational providers, families and the child or young person to carry out a risk assessment to judge whether the child or young person's needs cannot be met safely at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can have their needs safely met in the home environment. Attendance may not be appropriate for some children, including because of health considerations for them and their family. Full guidance on the definition of vulnerable children and options for continued attendance can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>.

Asked by **Lord Lingfield**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 13 March (HL2079), whether any regional workshops on the annual reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans have taken place so far in 2020; and if so, which local authorities have sent representatives. [HL3616]

**Baroness Berridge:** In February and March 2020, we delivered training on Annual Reviews of Education Health and Care Plans across the country. 11 out of 13 planned workshops were delivered. The remaining 2 workshops were postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

A total of 98 local authorities attended the training events. The local authorities in attendance at the training events are listed in the attached table.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL3616\_Table [HL3616 - Table showing list of local authorities attending training on Annual Reviews of Education Health and Care plans.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-28/HL3616>

## Sri Lanka: Crimes against Humanity

Asked by **Baroness Northover**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with international partners about action on alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sri Lanka. [HL3968]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government regularly engages with international partners on the importance of truth, accountability and justice for all victims of the civil war in Sri Lanka. At the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, the UK works closely with the Core Group on Sri Lanka, and made clear our continued support for justice for victims of conflict in a joint statement delivered at the UNHRC in February. The British High Commission in Colombo also regularly engages with international partners on this important issue.

The UK has long supported Sri Lanka's accountability commitments made to the UNHRC through resolutions 30/1, 34/1 and 40/1 as the best way to establish truth regarding alleged crimes committed by all sides during the Sri Lankan civil war, as well as to achieve accountability and reconciliation. We continue to underline the importance of accountability, justice and reconciliation in our engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka.

## Statutory Instruments: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Scott of Needham Market**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the rule requiring statutory instruments to be laid before Parliament at least 21 days before coming into force remains applicable as a default position even during the COVID-19 pandemic; and whether any departure from that rule needs to be justified by reference to specific necessity and not a general disapplication. [HL3720]

**Lord True:** The 21-day rule is a long-standing convention that gives Parliament adequate time to scrutinise secondary legislation subject to the negative procedure before it comes into force. It also protects those affected by changes in the law by giving them time to prepare. The Government is committed to complying with this important convention as far as possible, and continues to apply it, in the usual way, during the COVID-19 period.

Many SIs laid as part of the Government's response to COVID-19 have not adhered to the convention in order to enable the swift implementation of the necessary emergency legislation. In line with standard procedure, this is being determined on a case-by-case basis, with the

default position being that the 21-day rule is complied with wherever possible. If an SI does need to be laid fewer than 21 days before it comes into force, then justification must be set out in the Explanatory Memorandum to explain why the urgent action is needed and what the impact of delaying the legislation would be.

### Supermarkets: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Greengross*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to work with supermarkets to ensure that anyone at increased risk from COVID-19 or with a disability under the Equality Act 2010, of any age, and their carers, has priority access to home deliveries and stores if they need it. [HL3657]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Government's response to food vulnerability caused by COVID-19 is built around three categories of vulnerability: Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV), other Non-Shielded Vulnerable (NSV), and the economically vulnerable.

Individuals in the CEV group are those who have a medical condition that is deemed to put them at very high risk of COVID-19 related serious illness. This group has been asked to 'shield' by the Government until at least the end of June, meaning they need to stay at home at all times and minimise all contact with others, including other members of their household.

There are around 2.2 million people in England who fit into this group. The majority will have received a letter from the NHS or been contacted by their GP to inform them of their vulnerable status. The group comprises people of all ages - with extreme respiratory conditions (such as cystic fibrosis), certain types of cancers (such as leukaemia), those who have had organ transplants, as well as a range of other conditions or medical histories.

Many within this group have local family and friends who can get the vital provisions needed. There is a significant subset of the CEV group however who do not. Individuals in this group can register as extremely clinically vulnerable with the Government. Data from these registrations is shared with supermarkets on an ongoing basis, whereby supermarkets provide individuals with access to priority access to booking slots for delivery. The vast majority of supermarkets are engaged in this data-sharing initiative.

Individuals in the NSV group are those who are unable to access food and other essential supplies due to a COVID-19 related change in physical or financial circumstance.

We have been working quickly with local authorities, retailers, food businesses and the voluntary sector to support those who do not necessarily fall into the shielded category, but who may be struggling to access food and essential supplies as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. We have been careful to ensure that the definition of non-shielded food-vulnerable people includes those who are unable to access food due to the impact of COVID-19 on

food services and delivery, as well as those who are in temporary isolation or enhanced social distancing. This group would include disabled people whose disabilities make it difficult for them to comply with social distancing requirements in food shops or whose access to food has been compromised by COVID-19. This could be a result of increased delivery demand, or their usual support networks being unable to help due to self-isolation or social distancing.

This group of non-shielded vulnerable people are now able to access food in a variety of ways, including through being paired with volunteers who will shop for them, and through food deliveries from local retailers, wholesalers and food businesses, many of whom will be able to take orders over the phone. We have also been working with retailers to enable these individuals to access priority delivery or click and collect slots.

Over 750,000 people have signed up as NHS Volunteer Responders via the mobile app GoodSam. Verified volunteer responders can receive tasks to help those in their communities, including through shopping for vulnerable people for food and essential supplies. Health and care professionals and a number of approved Voluntary and Community Services organisations are now able to refer vulnerable individuals into the system to receive support from volunteers. It is now also possible for individuals to self-refer for assistance from the programme, if they consider themselves to be vulnerable and in need of support.

Supermarkets have also been working at pace to expand the total number of delivery and click and collect slots. Most supermarkets are offering prioritised delivery or click and collect slots to those they have identified as vulnerable from their customer database (for example by age, shopping habits, previous use of vulnerable customer helplines).

### Supported Housing: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Farmer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the welfare of young people in unregulated accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3599]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government is committed to ensuring that vulnerable children and young people remain protected. Local authorities, social workers and those providing support and care for our most vulnerable children and young people deserve our immense gratitude.

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. They are continuing to prioritise their responsibilities towards vulnerable children and young people, including those in independent and semi-independent provision. While we will continue to work with local authorities and providers of this provision to ensure that placements remain as stable as possible during this time, we continue to consult

on new measures to improve the quality of this provision and ban the placement of under 16s, given that this provision does not deliver care and therefore cannot be appropriate for a child of this age.

We are also working with those delivering services on the frontline to ensure that the support needed for vulnerable children and young people continues. The government has provided £3.2 billion of additional funding to support local authorities to address pressures they are facing in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including for delivering children's social care.

### Temporary Accommodation

*Asked by Lord Bird*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, under the Everyone In initiative, local authorities should continue to support people into self-contained emergency accommodation regardless of priority need, local connection or immigration status. [[HL3651](#)]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** 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. This includes those rough sleeping or who have been living in accommodation with communal sleeping spaces such as night shelters.

We are ensuring local authorities are supported, with £3.2 million in targeted funding to help support individuals who are sleeping rough off the streets, and an additional £3.2 billion provided to local authorities as part of the wider Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding has been provided to help local authorities to reduce risks to public health and to support individuals on the basis of need.

The Government is aware of concerns about those with no recourse to public funds experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis. The legal position on those with no recourse to public funds has not been amended. The Government recognises that these are unprecedented times, and expects local authorities to support people who are sleeping rough, and also to minimise unnecessary risks to public health, acting within the law.

### Temporary Accommodation: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Bird*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) amount, and (2) percentage, of the £3.2 billion funding announced for local authorities during the COVID-19 outbreak will be dedicated to support local authorities to secure self-contained accommodation and provide assistance to people sleeping rough and in night shelters. [[HL3652](#)]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The £3.2 billion of funding provided to local government is paid through a grant that is not ring-fenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how this funding is spent. This

funding will enable local authorities to respond to COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, stepping up support for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people. This is in addition to £3.2 million in targeted funding for councils to support vulnerable rough sleepers.

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. This includes those rough sleeping or who have been living in accommodation with communal sleeping spaces such as night shelters.

### Transport: Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement on 24 April of an emergency fund to support transport links to the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly, how much of the £10.5 million has been allocated to (1) passenger ferries to and from the Isle of Wight, (2) passenger ferries to and from the Isles of Scilly, (3) fixed wing air services, (4) helicopter services, (5) St Mary's Airport, (6) inter-island passenger ferries, and (7) freight transport links. [[HL3453](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** On Friday 24 April the Government announced up to £10.5 million for lifeline ferry and freight services to the Isle of Wight and the Scilly Isles as part of a multimillion support package for essential freight services. This fund will help ensure these communities continue to have access to vital medical services on the mainland while protecting the flow of supplies to these regions.

Grants will be provided over a period of three months. Two grants of £1.5m each have already been provided to operators in the Isles of Wight and the Isles of Scilly for the month of April. Subsequent monthly grants are subject to joint approval from my Department and HM Treasury. The allocation of funding between operators, which remain confidential for commercial reasons, is based on each service provider's needs so that they can continue operating minimum service levels connecting the Isles to the UK mainland.

### Transport: Tunisia

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many passengers, and (2) what volume of cargo, travelled from (a) Tunisia to the UK, and (b) the UK to Tunisia, in each of the last five years. [[HL3478](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The number of passengers and volume of freight carried by air and by sea between Tunisia and the UK directly in the last five years are given in the attached tables.



i) There were no direct sea journeys carrying passengers to or from Tunisia from the UK in the past 5 years. Data on country of destination for indirect voyages (such as cruises) are not collected by the Department.

The latest year of data available, and is published on GOV.UK, is 2019 for air freight and passenger statistics and 2018 for port freight statistics. Statistics relate to direct freight and passenger journeys between the UK and Tunisia.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

No of passengers travels - UK-Tunisia & Tunis-UK [Passenger travelling into the UK from Tunisia and to Tunisia from the UK.docx]

Volume of cargo - UK-Tunisia & Tunisia - UK [Volumes of cargo - UK - Tunisia and Tunisia - UK.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-28/HL3478>

### Universities: Finance

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the impact on the finances of UK universities of students being based at home and not using university accommodation for the (1) current academic year, and (2) 2020/21 academic year. [T] [HL3892]

**Baroness Berridge:** As my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19.

According to the latest statistics published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, total sector income

from residential operations (excluding catering and conferencing operations) was £1.92 billion in 2018/19. This represents nearly 5% of total income for the UK higher education sector, although this figure varies across providers.

The government has announced a range of measures to protect students and the higher education sector from the impact of coronavirus, bringing together collective action from the government and sector organisations. Details are on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-support-package-for-universities-and-students>.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Winchester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement on 4 May of the support package for higher education providers as a result of the impact of COVID-19, what criteria they will use to provide research funding for universities; and how they will ensure (1) accessibility of the funding to a wide range of universities, and (2) diversity of institutional provision. [T] [HL4052]

**Lord Callanan:** As part of the announcement on 4 May, the Government confirmed that Research England would bring forward £100m for Quality-related Research (QR) Funding in Academic Year 2019-20. This will be allocated to HE institutions in England eligible to receive funding from Research England as a “top-up” to their overall QR allocation.

QR is selectively allocated to maintain excellent research with impact wherever it is found (based on excellence and impact performance as assessed through the Research Excellence Framework), and to provide support for the next generation of researchers and for research activities which lever funding from external sources such as the charitable and business sectors.

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