

Session 2019-21
No. 56



Monday
18 May 2020

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

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

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Written Statements

Monday, 18 May 2020

Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS236]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government (Simon Clarke) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I hereby give notice of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's intention to seek an advance from the Contingencies Fund. The Department requires an advance of its cash requirement pending parliamentary approval of the Main Estimate 2020-21.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £1,415,000,000 will be sought in a Main Estimate for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £1,415,000,000 has been met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Future Trading Relationship with the US

[HLWS235]

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

Around 200 negotiators from the UK and the US held the first round of negotiations for a UK-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between 5-15 May 2020.

More trade is essential if the UK is to overcome the unprecedented challenges posed by Covid-19. New FTAs will be an important factor in facing that economic challenge, providing new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs who have faced significant challenges in this difficult period. An FTA with the US can help create opportunities for UK businesses, provide better jobs and boost the economy in every part of the country.

Both sides are hopeful that negotiations for a comprehensive trade agreement can proceed at an accelerated pace. Ambassador Lighthizer and I agreed that a second virtual round will take place in the weeks of 15 and 22 June, and that in advance of that negotiating teams will continue their work and meet virtually on a rolling basis, with meetings continuing throughout this week and beyond.

Negotiations over the past two weeks were conducted virtually but proceeded efficiently, with UK and US negotiators participating in extensive discussions in nearly 30 different negotiating groups covering all aspects of a comprehensive trade agreement. The discussions covered the following workstreams:

- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- Legal Group – Disputes

- Trade Remedies
- Rules of Origin
- Investment
- Legal Group – Core Text
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Competition
- Digital
- Telecoms
- Economics
- Customs
- Sectoral Annexes
- Cross cutting services
- Market Access for Goods, Overarching and Industrial Goods
- Good Regulatory Practice (GRP)
- Financial Services
- Sustainability, Environment and Labour
- General Coordination
- Market Access for Goods, Agriculture
- State Owned Enterprises
- Services Sectors
- Intellectual Property
- Procurement
- Sustainability, Anti-Corruption
- Market Access for Goods, Textiles
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)
- Subsidies

The meetings were positive and constructive, reflecting the mutual commitment to secure an ambitious agreement that significantly boosts trade and investment between our economies, the first and fifth largest in the world.

Both sides recognised the unprecedented circumstances in which these negotiations took place, with significant emphasis placed on supporting the post-Covid economic recovery.

During the meetings, the teams discussed their respective objectives and agreed on ambitious next steps for coming talks. Our preparatory work makes it possible for the UK and United States to quickly advance negotiations in a number of substantive areas that will shape our future bilateral trade relationship.

A number of areas showed particular progress, including where both teams identified positive alignment between respective negotiating positions. They identified a mutually high ambition for services, investment and digital trade, among other areas.

Both sides also set out a mutual commitment to creating new opportunities for businesses on both sides of the Atlantic and to delivering benefits for workers, consumers and farmers. This includes the confirmation that both

sides will quickly pursue a standalone Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Chapter and will continue the UK-US SME Dialogue.

In the same manner as this negotiating round, discussions in the second round will cover all areas to be included in a Free Trade Agreement.

The Government is committed to negotiating a comprehensive agreement with the US and we look forward to making further progress at the next round of negotiations. The Government will make a further statement on progress following the second round of talks.

Transport for London

[HLWS237]

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

It is vital that we take the necessary steps to protect the services which our critical workers, such as NHS staff, rely on - both in London and all across the country.

So far, we have invested billions into maintaining essential services across rail, buses, trams and ferries outside London, including £30m over 12 weeks for light rail services in Sheffield, Manchester, West Midlands, Tyne and Wear, and Nottingham; almost £400m to protect vital bus routes and temporarily suspended rail operators' franchise agreements to transfer all revenue and cost risk to government so that services continue to run.

This is alongside our wider agenda to level up transport networks across the whole country, including £5bn for buses and bikes announced back in February, £4.2bn for local transport settlements for eight Mayoral Combined Authorities subject to negotiations, a £1.7bn Transport Infrastructure Investment Fund to improve roads, repair bridges and fill millions of potholes; and the decision by government to take over the Northern network to protect services, drive up performance and rebuild passenger confidence.

We will continue to work with metro mayors, local authorities and transport operators all across the country to ensure that public transport is available for those who need it, including any ramp up in services required as people slowly start to return to work.

In order to keep vital public transport services running in London and further ramp up services to support social distancing, the Government agreed on Thursday 14 May a package of support for Transport for London. It comprises £1.095bn of new grant and a further loan facility of £505m. The support can be increased by a further £300m of grant and loan if revenue loss is higher than forecast at this time.

The settlement for TfL was needed for two reasons. Most important is the significant fall in revenue caused by covid-19. However, an important secondary factor was the pre-existing poor condition of TfL's financial position

as a result of decisions made over the last four years. Combined with significant cost increases and delays to Crossrail, this left TfL in serious financial difficulty even before the public health emergency.

It's important to note that around half of all bus and rail journeys in England are made on its services and that London is by far the most public transport-dependent place in the UK. Almost half of all Londoners, more in inner London, do not have access to cars. London's roads are the most congested in the UK; even with reduced passenger numbers and capacity, TfL's services are still essential to allow critical workers to travel and the city to operate.

Unlike local transport authorities in other towns and cities across England, TfL is responsible for London's bus network, principal road routes, various rail networks including the London Underground, London Overground, Docklands Light Railway and TfL Rail, as well as trams, cycling provision, and river services. To protect these services, It is important therefore that the rescue package takes steps to put TfL back on a sustainable footing while ensuring fairness for the wider British taxpayer. As result, the Mayor intends to adhere to the proposal in TfL's own business plan that fares should increase by RPI plus 1 per cent on all modes in January.

We have also set a number of other conditions, including: restoring services to 100 per cent of pre-Covid levels as soon as possible; requiring TfL to collect fares on buses while ensuring driver safety, which it had stopped doing during the crisis; easing congestion by the temporary suspension of free travel for over-60s in the morning peak and temporarily suspending free travel for under-18s all day. Disabled people will still be able to make use of their concession passes all day, and Special arrangements will be made for those children who qualify for free travel to schools.

These conditions are needed to avoid crowding and reduce the exposure of vulnerable groups. The Mayor has subsequently announced that the Congestion Charge will increase to £15, with extended hours of operation and has withdrawn the residents' discount for new applications.

The Congestion Charge will continue to have exemptions for NHS and care workers and Blue badge holders. Local residents will continue to receive discounts.

To help avoid such drastic action in the future there will be an immediate and broad ranging Government-led review of TfL's future financial position and structure.

The decision to offer support was not taken lightly, but reflects the exceptional circumstances the country finds itself in. I consider it vital to keep services in London running to the maximum levels possible to allow safe transport of passengers. Our messaging remains that people should avoid using public transport and work from home wherever possible, but as measures are slowly lifted it is vital that Londoners who need to use TfL services feel safe and secure.

This deal will encourage help protect those who need to use public transport and help us move towards greener and healthier walking and cycling options. Importantly, it will also provide certainty and stability for London's transport services in the future.

Written Answers

Monday, 18 May 2020

Academic Technology Approval Scheme

Asked by *Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to re-open the Academic Technology Approval Scheme certification scheme. [HL3677]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) requires all non EEA students subject to existing UK immigration permissions to obtain an ATAS certificate before they can apply for a visa to study a postgraduate qualification in subjects which could be used to assist programmes related to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. The decision by the Home Office to suspend all Visa Applications and close its Visa processing network, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, means that if an ATAS certificate were to be granted it could not be used. On 6 April, in consultation with other departments, we suspended ATAS. This suspension will remain in place until such time as we are able to properly assess applications. ATAS assessments require access to sensitive information and we placed the duty of care to assessment staff above maintaining a system which was not required while no visas are being issued. We have created processes for students already in the UK who need to extend their stay in the UK. These can be accessed through the Home Office Covid helpline or directly to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through the university.

Aerospace Industry: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support (1) Airbus, and (2) other aerospace companies to (a) ensure the survival of such companies, and (b) protect high-skilled jobs in the aerospace industry, during, and after, the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3774]

Lord Callanan: The Government regularly speaks with Airbus, as well as other aerospace companies and the Aerospace Growth Partnership, to assist the sector through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department has discussed the immediate challenges of the crisis with representatives from the sector, including how to help companies survive, and what will be needed to assist recovery in the aerospace sector after the pandemic.

Aerospace companies are also accessing the unprecedented package of support measures the Government has put in place, including loans, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

Africa: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on peace and security in Africa. [HL4054]

Baroness Sugg: COVID-19, and its economic consequences, will disproportionately adversely affect countries with existing humanitarian crises and high risk of instability, including countries in conflict and those at risk of seasonal climatic shocks. Supporting countries in Africa to mitigate the impacts of COVID 19 on peace and security is important and in the UK interest. The UK is considering this in our political engagement and international response.

Disrupted markets and trade, as well as the effects of lockdown measures will affect countries and regions with existing high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, increasing the need for support, while global supply chains to deliver humanitarian support continue to be significantly disrupted. Humanitarian access is also more difficult, including for essential international medical personnel.

Increased pressure on state institutions and stringent lockdown conditions may exacerbate existing tensions on access to resources and, with security forces more stretched than usual, could have implications for stability.

Ambulance Services: Protective Clothing

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government in which NHS ambulance service trust areas paramedics do not have access to full personal protection equipment when transporting suspected COVID-19 patients. [HL3203]

Lord Bethell: This information is not held.

Regular guidance has been issued to ambulance trusts on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including on the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be used in different circumstances. Staff should ensure the correct level of PPE is worn dependent on the patient presentation and the clinical skills that are required during patient care.

We are aware of the concerns about the supply of PPE. COVID-19 is generating unprecedented global demand on the supply chain, combined with a manufacturing slowdown in affected countries. The Government, NHS Supply Chain, and the National Health Service are doing everything to work with industry to secure additional supplies and manufacture further PPE.

Apprentices: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of young people losing apprenticeship opportunities due to the current crisis;

and what plans they have to provide access to high-quality and independent advice and guidance for such young people. [HL3637]

Baroness Berridge: We have introduced flexibilities to make it easier for apprentices of all ages to continue to benefit from the high-quality training that an apprenticeship provides. We are encouraging providers and assessment organisations to deliver training and assessments remotely and are keen that providers remain open for business to support learners.

Furloughed apprentices can continue to train and undertake end point assessments ensuring they can continue to progress in their careers. Where it is not possible to continue training, employers and providers can now initiate a break in learning so that the apprenticeship can resume when possible. We are pleased that 81% of apprentices have been able to continue with their studies.

We are also supporting employers and training providers during this challenging time so that people can continue to access high-quality apprenticeship opportunities. Employers can still recruit and start apprentices and eligible furloughed employees can also start apprenticeships.

Our new Apprenticeship Hub contains a full list of our guidance for apprentices affected by COVID-19 on GOV.UK, <https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/sections/360003798540-Apprentice>

People of all ages can also use Find an Apprenticeship to search for new apprenticeship opportunities: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>.

The National Careers Service will continue to provide high-quality, impartial careers information, advice, and guidance to young people at this difficult time via its helpline, website and web chat facility. The Careers & Enterprise Company will also continue to support schools and colleges, where possible, to provide young people with quality careers education and guidance.

Armed Conflict

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any progress towards a truce from Yemen, Libya and North and South Sudan; and what steps they are taking to promote a renunciation of the use of force by all states and other militant entities. [HL4023]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to work closely with international partners towards peace in Yemen, Libya, Sudan and South Sudan, amongst other countries in conflict.

We fully support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and the UN Special Envoy's call for all parties to engage in urgent political talks and de-escalate the conflict in Yemen. Now that Saudi Arabia have extended their unilateral ceasefire it is more important than ever

that all parties seize this opportunity for progress in Yemen. A permanent ceasefire and co-operation with the UN-led political process is the best defence we have against a potentially devastating outbreak of COVID-19.

We are also deeply concerned by the continuing fighting in Libya. All the signs are that, despite calls for a humanitarian truce, hostilities are continuing on all sides. UK leadership helped secure UN Security Council Resolution 2510, which demands full compliance with the UN arms embargo and an end to foreign military interference in Libya. We continue to urge all parties to agree a ceasefire and return to UN-led political talks, which is the only means of achieving the peace and stability that most Libyans crave.

We welcome recent progress made in both Sudan and South Sudan towards resolving their long-running conflicts. Through our membership of the Troika, we have engaged their governments and international partners to support their respective peace processes. At the UN Security Council on 28 April, the UK urged both governments to continue to focus on building sustainable peace. In South Sudan, conflict between the parties to the September 2018 Peace Agreement has reduced. In February this year, the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity marked a significant step forward in implementing the deal, bringing opposition leaders into the government. Although implementation of the Peace Agreement has slowed since the COVID-19 outbreak, we continue to urge all sides to ensure momentum is maintained. The Minister for Africa reiterated this point with 1st Vice President Machar on 29 April.

On Sudan, the UK supports Prime Minister Hamdok's commitment to secure a sustainable peace agreement to end conflicts in the county. We welcome initial progress in peace negotiations and agreement of a cessation of hostilities. We continued to urge all sides to engage constructively and swiftly to reach a comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement; at the UN Security Council on 24 April we urged all Sudanese stakeholders to remain fully committed in the efforts to achieve lasting peace.

Assessments: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Coussins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that all language students at supplementary schools who have been entered for a GCSE examination in that language this summer but are unable to sit it because of COVID-19 are refunded automatically with their full entrance fee. [HL3765]

Baroness Berridge: The department recognises that schools and colleges want clarity on exam fees following the announcement that GCSE exams will not take place this summer. The department and the exam boards are working together to ensure that they are provided with further information as soon as possible.

Assessments: Languages

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether supplementary schools which are (1) registered as community language examination centres, and (2) not registered as community language examination centres, have been informed that they can provide their language students with teacher assessments and predicted grades on the same basis as mainstream schools. [HL3763]

Baroness Berridge: This is a matter for the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) and I have asked its Chief Regulator, Sally Collier, to write directly to the noble Baroness. A copy of her reply will be placed in the House of Lords Library.

Birds of Prey

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) number, and (2) geographical spread within England, of (a) buzzards, and (b) red kites. [HL3796]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: A report published by the British Trust for Ornithology estimates that the number of breeding buzzards in Great Britain is 61,500 – 85,000 pairs and the number of breeding red kites is 4,370 pairs (<https://www.bto.org/our-science/publications/peer-reviewed-papers/apep-4-population-estimates-birds-great-britain-and>).

There is no similar data for English populations. However, buzzards are common throughout England and Natural England estimates that there are up to 30,000 breeding pairs. Natural England also estimate that there are 2,000 pairs of red kites which are most commonly found in central and southern England.

The most recent information on the geographical distribution of birds in Britain is provided by the BTO's 2007-2011 Atlas of breeding and wintering birds <https://app.bto.org/mapstore/StoreServlet>.

British Airways: Redundancy

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on Heathrow airport of reports that British Airways plans to make up to 12,000 staff redundant. [HL3803]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We recognise the impact of British Airways announcement will be very distressing news for BA employees and their families, and we stand ready to support them. The aviation sector is essential to the UK economy, and firms can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures, including schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

If airlines find themselves in trouble as a result of coronavirus and have exhausted the measures already available to them, the Transport Secretary is clear that the Government is prepared to enter discussions with individual companies seeking bespoke support as a last resort.

The Transport Secretary, Aviation Minister and DfT officials are in regular contact with the aviation sector, ensuring that the Government is kept fully aware of the latest developments with all firms and to understand where additional policy measures could address specific industry issues.

British Council: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional financial support to the British Council during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4053]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) remains committed to the British Council, who are a key driver of our soft power overseas and a precious part of the FCO family. In order to help stabilise their immediate financial position following the impact of Covid-19 on their ability to operate, we agreed to provide the British Council with £26m of additional funding for the 2019-20 financial year. We have also provided some of their 2020-21 Grant-in-Aid funding upfront this month to further alleviate pressures.

The FCO have also supported the British Council in accessing wider government relief available through the COVID-19 Job Retention Scheme and similar schemes in other countries. This will help them support many of their workforce, and those employed through its partners, funded through the commercial side of their business. We will continue to work closely with the British Council in the coming days and weeks to seek to address the impact of COVID-19 on their ability to operate.

British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hain*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they are providing to British nationals with urgent medical needs that cannot be met in the countries in which they are located. [HL4055]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: British travellers with urgent medical needs should get in touch with their insurer as soon as possible and call the relevant Embassy, High Commission or Consulate before they run out of medication if they have not been able to replace it using our published advice.

Since 23 March we have advised British travellers to return home. Where commercial options are not available, we have organised charter flights, prioritising the most vulnerable. For any British travellers still abroad, our

consular teams are available to assist those with medication needs.

Our Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates continue to support individual consular cases as they arise, prioritizing the most vulnerable.

British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what assistance they have given to the Overseas Territories to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) which Overseas Territories have introduced testing for COVID-19. [HL4147]

Baroness Sugg: The Government is firmly committed to supporting the Overseas Territories in dealing with the various impacts of COVID-19. I am in regular contact with the political leaders and Governors of the Territories, to understand the situation on the ground, discuss their needs and identify how we can best support them. I am overseeing a cross-Whitehall Unit, led by officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development, to support the Territories on four key areas - healthcare, economy, security, and access (for transport and supplies). We have provided essential medical equipment, medical advice and facilitated the recruitment of healthcare professionals where needed. We have boosted testing capabilities in all the inhabited Territories, except Tristan da Cunha and Pitcairn where there are no cases of COVID-19. The testing capabilities will not only benefit the response to COVID-19 but will also support the testing of other diseases. We are also providing financial support to mitigate the economic impacts in the most vulnerable Territories.

Bus Services and Railways: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure bus and train services can operate safely when lockdown restrictions are lifted, in particular in relation to (1) social distancing, and (2) personal protective equipment for staff. [HL3760]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Keeping transport workers and passengers safe is of paramount importance. Working closely with other Government Departments, Public Health England, the Health and Safety Executive and the transport sector, we have produced guidance for organisations and transport users. The guidance sets out how passengers and staff can be as safe as possible when on the transport system, including by complying with social distancing guidelines. Where social distancing is difficult to maintain, we are recommending the use of face coverings for passengers and staff.

Where operators already use PPE to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, they should continue to do so. Additional PPE beyond this is not beneficial for

managing COVID-19 risks. COVID-19 is best managed in the workplace through changes such as social distancing and enhanced hygiene rather than PPE.

We will keep all our guidance under review and update it based on emerging evidence, including from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), and the experience of the relaxation of lockdown restrictions.

Buses: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their target date for all buses to be ultra-low, or zero, emission. [HL3806]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Transport, including buses, has a significant role to play in the economy reaching net zero. In "Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge", published in March, the Department noted there are no current Government targets set for buses in this respect. The forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan will set out how we will tackle transport emissions and get all road vehicles to ultimately be zero-emission.

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that letters have been circulated by GP surgeries to residents in care homes in the East of England stating that residents are "unlikely to benefit from mechanical ventilation" and will not be offered the treatment in hospital if admitted with COVID-19; whether any such letters have been circulated elsewhere; and on what authority and basis such guidance was issued. [T] [HL3292]

Lord Bethell: We are aware of reports of people in care homes being told by general practitioner (GP) surgeries that they are unlikely to be prioritised for mechanical ventilation if they contract COVID-19, because they could be too 'frail'. This stemmed from recent National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on prioritising critical care. NICE was forced to revise the guidance, which included use of the clinical frailty scale (CFS), following allegations it discriminated against people with learning and other disabilities. The guidance was revised on 25 March 2020 and now states: "The Clinical Frailty Score should not be used in younger people, people with stable long-term disabilities (for example, cerebral palsy), learning disability or autism. An individualised assessment is recommended in all cases where the CFS is not appropriate."

A letter was sent on 3 April 2020 to primary care, acute trusts and community trusts from the National Director of Mental Health, National Clinical Director (for Learning Disability and Autism) and the Medical Director for Primary Care to the NHS on the appropriate use of Do not

Resuscitate forms and clinical frailty assessments (which can be used to assess whether critical care is appropriate for a patient) following recent reports on inappropriate use. A copy of the letter is attached.

Furthermore, a letter to the system from Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer, and Steve Powis, National Medical Director at NHS England and NHS Improvement was sent out on 7 April 2020, addressing concerns recently raised regarding the use of DNR forms and supporting best practice in the application of advance care plans. A copy of the letter is attached.

Finally, NHS England and NHS Improvement have produced a GP Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for managing COVID-19 in general practice, published on 6 April. This includes a COVID-19 advance care plan template, guidance notes for completing an advance care plan and states that “Advance care plans should be made on an individual basis. It is not acceptable for advance care plans, with or without Do Not Attempt Resuscitation forms, to be applied to groups of patients”. A copy of the SOP is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID_Primary_Care_SOP_GP_practice [C0133-COVID-19-Primary-Care-SOP-GP-practice_V2.1_6-April(1).pdf]

Letter_maintaining_standards_quality [CNO Covid letter maintaining-standards-quality-of-care-pressurised-circumstances-7-april-2020.pdf]

Letter_LD_AUTISM_DNACPR [C0166-Letter-LD AUTISM DNACPR.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3292>

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much financial, or in-kind, assistance they have provided to care homes and home care providers since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; and how much of that assistance was given to for-profit care homes and home care providers. [HL3296]

Lord Bethell: We have set out a comprehensive action plan to support the adult social care sector in England throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, including ramping up testing, overhauling the way personal protective equipment is being delivered to care homes and helping to minimise the spread of the virus to keep people safe.

On 19 March we announced £1.6 billion to help local authorities deal with the immediate impacts of COVID-19, which many councils will have directed towards adult social care services. On 18 April we announced an additional £1.6 billion of funding to support councils delivering essential frontline services. We do not collect centrally the breakdown of local authority support for different types of care providers.

This funding is part of the Government's commitment to ensure the National Health Service and social care

system, and other public services, have the resources required to tackle COVID-19. The Government will continue to monitor pressures in the NHS and local government and will keep future funding under review.

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government why their Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home guidance, published on 2 April, does not recommend that a resident should be isolated until they have had two negative laboratory tests for COVID-19 taken at least 24 hours apart after the resident's symptoms have resolved; why that guidance does not require the use of eye protection when staff are working within two 2 metres of a resident; and why that guidance does not specify what personal protection equipment should be worn by cleaners in care homes. [HL3492]

Lord Bethell: The *Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home* guidance advised a 14-day isolation period over testing, based on the evidence available at the time of publication. The duration was chosen as a pre-cautionary measure and was informed by the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group and multiple Government advisory groups.

Care home staff are advised to wear eye protection if a two-metre distance cannot be maintained and there is needed for certain tasks where there is risk of droplets or secretions from the resident's mouth, nose, lungs or from body fluids reaching the eyes, for example prolonged tasks near residents who are repeatedly coughing or who may be vomiting.

Eye protection is not required when care home workers are not within two metres of someone with a cough. This advice applies to all care home staff, including cleaners.

Care home staff working in communal areas with residents but with no direct contact with residents although potentially within two metres of residents, do not need to wear eye protection.

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of personal protective equipment guidance on the spread of COVID-19 in care homes, and in particular guidance for looking after residents who are not in the very vulnerable category and who are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19. [T] [HL3867]

Lord Bethell: During the current period of sustained transmission of COVID-19, we recommend the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) regardless of whether residents in care homes have symptoms or not.

Working with care sector representative bodies, Public Health England (PHE) published tailored guidance *COVID-19 How to work safely in care homes* on 17 April,

as well as a specialised training video demonstrating the donning and doffing of PPE in care home settings. The PHE guidance also provides tables on when and which PPE to use. A copy of the guidance is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID-19_How_to_work_safely_in_care_homes [COVID-19_How_to_work_safely_in_care_homes.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3867>

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many care home residents were transferred to hospital with symptoms related to COVID-19 between 3 and 24 April. [HL4010]

Lord Bethell: The Government does not hold data on the number of residents transferred from care homes to hospitals with symptoms related to COVID-19. We are working closely with local authorities, the care sector and NHS England to understand the impact of COVID-19 on care homes and ensure everyone has access to the right care in the most appropriate setting for their needs.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to work closely with the sector to keep our policies and data under review as the pandemic goes on.

Cars: Exhaust Emissions

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge, published on 4 March, and the reported relationship between the increase in the purchase of sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and the average CO₂ emissions per mile for new cars rising since 2016, what plans they have to discourage the purchase of SUVs. [HL3804]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars, including SUVs, is a key priority for the Government's forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan. There are three primary measures to achieve this:

(i) regulation that requires manufacturers to reduce the average CO₂ emissions of new vehicles registered in the UK;

(ii) speeding up the transition to zero emission vehicles. The Department is investing around £2.5 billion in grants for plug-in vehicles and funding to support the roll out of improved charge point infrastructure, as well as consulting on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans from 2040 to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible;

(iii) making public transport and active travel the natural first choice for our daily activities.

China: Christianity

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of (1) churches being demolished, in particular the demolition of the Donghu Church, Qinghai Province, and (2) Christians streaming religious services at home being arrested, in China. [HL3843]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of reports of the demolition of Donghu Church and remain concerned by restrictions placed on Christians and other religious groups in China, including reports of individuals being detained for their beliefs. The freedom to practice, change or share ones faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy.

China: Nuclear Disarmament

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of China about nuclear disarmament verification. [HL3946]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK strongly supports effective nuclear disarmament verification as a vital step towards eventual nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament verification has been regularly discussed with all five Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Nuclear Weapons States as part of the so called 'P5 process', including at the first meeting in 2009 and at a dedicated meeting in 2012, both chaired by the UK. There have also been two bilateral meetings between UK and Chinese technical institutions involved in disarmament verification research, and both China and the UK participated in the UN Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

More broadly, the UK holds a regular Non-Proliferation Dialogue with China which allows for discussions on issues including nuclear security architecture, arms control and nuclear disarmament. The most recent Dialogue took place in November 2019 where the UK encouraged China to re-join the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

China: UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the government of China has ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea; and if so, what assessment they have made of that government's compliance with that convention. [HL3886]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The position of Her Majesty's Government is to oppose any activity which raises tensions or seeks to alter the facts on the ground in

the South China Sea. We take no position on sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea and encourage all parties to settle their disputes peacefully through the existing legal mechanisms, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We have frequent discussions with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and several other nations on the South China Sea, including as part of high-level political dialogues. Officials have raised our concerns about recent incidents in the South China Sea, including the creation of new administrative territories, with Chinese authorities.

China is a party to UNCLOS and ratified it in 1996. The UK challenges China where their interpretation differs from ours. For example, the UK has objected to China's claims based on "historic rights" in the South China Seas on the basis that such claims are not founded in law, insofar as it would be inconsistent with international law as reflected in UNCLOS.

The UK's position with regard to the classification of maritime features is that States may classify as islands those features which meet the definition of islands in Article 121(1) of UNCLOS. The UK's position is also that, as provided in Article 121(3) of UNCLOS, rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf. In addition, the UK's position is that under UNCLOS, low tide elevations which are situated beyond the breadth of the territorial sea from the mainland or an island, are not entitled to a territorial sea, and cannot be appropriated by any State.

Clinics: Nutrition

Asked by Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that NHS dietary clinics can reopen to provide support to patients and the NHS quickly. [HL3742]

Lord Bethell: Some NHS services were temporarily suspended whilst we concentrated on dealing with COVID-19. Now, as a result of the measures put in place, we appear to have come through the peak of new cases being reported and it has been decided to begin the 'reset' of services across the National Health Service, including nutrition and dietary services. Decisions on how to do this will be taken locally, based on local demand. The NHS issued guidance to NHS service providers on 29 April outlining the next steps in the NHS response to COVID-19.

Conditions of Employment: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is taking to support employees who are still attending work and not shielding but have conditions that increase their vulnerability; and in particular in

cases where employers are not willing, or able to support, such employees. [HL3795]

Lord Callanan: The Government has introduced important social distancing measures for all types of businesses to consider in order to minimise the risk of transmission in the workplace. The Government has been clear that it is vital that all employers follow this guidance, which is clinically led and based on expert advice.

The Government has stated that vulnerable people who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) need to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. Additionally, the government guidance sets out that members of staff who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable, as well as individuals whom they live with, should be supported by their employers as they follow the required social distancing and shielding measures.

If a business is not operating in line with the government guidance, there is a role for the relevant health and safety enforcing authority – the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or a Local Authority. Where the enforcing authority identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks – for example, employers not taking appropriate action to socially distance or ensure workers in the shielded category can follow the NHS advice to self-isolate for the period specified – the enforcing authority will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. These actions include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements with the guidance.

Contraceptives

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many NHS maternity units in England provide contraception to mothers after delivery so that there is no immediate need to access such services from a GP. [HL4460]

Lord Bethell: Women who give birth are given information about, and offered a choice of, all contraceptive methods by their midwife within seven days of delivery and therefore have no immediate need to access such services from a general practitioner.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether some banks are requiring companies to freeze all loans and leasing with other financing institutions before agreeing loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; and whether they consider such conditions are appropriate

in the context of an 80 per cent guarantee from them. [HL3754]

Lord Callanan: Since the launch of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), the Government has worked closely with the financial services sector to ensure that companies receive the full benefits from this support.

Accredited lenders are responsible for providing loans under the CBILS. Lending decisions on whether a business is eligible to access the CBILS are fully delegated to the accredited lenders, and individual lending decisions remain at the discretion of these lenders.

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State continues to work with banks and other finance providers to help SMEs access the finance they need and has discussed with these organisations the alternative forms of support for businesses that they are offering. The Government welcomed the statement by UK Finance on behalf of the financial sector which announced that banks, building societies and credit card providers are committed to supporting their business customers in continuing to trade.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether it is appropriate for banks to make discretionary charges for any personal contact for the arrangement of coronavirus business loans; and whether there are any conditions on the fees that are covered under the scheme. [HL3755]

Lord Callanan: Under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) the Government will make a payment to cover the first 12 months of interest payments and any facility arrangement fees charged by lenders, so businesses will benefit from lower upfront costs and initial repayments.

The exact terms of each loan under the CBILS are delegated to the 50+ accredited lenders and will vary from lender to lender. However, the Government expects that the benefit of the guarantee under the CBILS is fully reflected in the interest that is charged on the CBILS facility. This expectation is re-enforced by the State aid rules that also require this.

If businesses are worried about the specific terms of finance facilities available under this scheme, they should speak to their usual lender.

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State continues to hold a dialogue with all major CBILS lenders to monitor the implementation of the scheme.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the requirement on the British Business Bank website that Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme loans must 'have a borrowing proposal which the lender would consider viable, were it not for the pandemic' means that loans required to assist with the situation caused by the pandemic and lockdown are not eligible;

and if so, how that has been communicated to businesses. [HL3756]

Lord Callanan: The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) provides financial support to small and medium-sized businesses affected by coronavirus. In order for a business to be eligible for the CBILS, it must be considered "viable" by the lender prior to the onset of Covid-19. The lender must consider that the applicant (or its business group) has a viable business proposition determined by the lender's underwriting policies.

The viability test was amended in April to remove the requirement for lenders to include a 'forward-looking' element, which required an assessment of whether the business can trade out of the Covid-19 crisis. This means that any concerns over its short-to-medium term business performance due to the uncertainty and impact of COVID-19 cannot be taken into account when a lender is considering an application for loan. The applicant however must still satisfy the other eligibility criteria of the CBILS.

For smaller value facilities (e.g. those of £30,000 or below), in determining the eligibility of the applicant, lenders may decide to determine the applicant's credit worthiness based on its internal credit scoring models.

Changes have also been made to the eligibility criterion which previously required the applicant (or its business group) to have a business proposition that can reasonably be expected to enable it to meet its repayment obligations under a proposed facility.

Since the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme was launched, Government has listened to feedback from stakeholders and made changes to ensure that loans are processed as quickly as possible and businesses get the support they need. These changes include:

- Extending the scheme so that all viable small businesses affected by Covid-19 are eligible;
- Removing previous restrictions on the following groups to enable them to access the CBILS, subject to other eligibility criteria being met: Employer, professional, religious or political membership organisations and trade unions;
- Removing the ability for lenders to ask for personal guarantees for loans under £250,000, and reducing the personal guarantee for loans over £250,000 to 20% of the outstanding balance after recoveries;
- Introducing technical changes to ensure that applications will be processed faster;
- Removing the forward-looking viability test; and
- Removing the per lender portfolio cap.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the requirement for Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme applications to include a business plan means that cashflow statements are required; and if so, what assessment they have made of whether it is

appropriate to request such cash flow statements when the effect and duration of the pandemic is unclear. [HL3757]

Lord Callanan: Since the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme was launched, Government has listened to feedback from stakeholders and made changes to ensure that loans are processed as quickly as possible and businesses get the support they need.

Government has removed the forward-looking viability test that required an assessment of whether the business can trade out of the crisis. The only test that remains is whether a business was viable before Covid-19.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, any conditionality by the lender is permitted for the bounce back micro-loans; and whether that funding is automatic following ticks on an application form. [HL3758]

Lord Callanan: The Bounce Back Loan Scheme has been designed to enable businesses to access finance quickly. Businesses are required to complete an online application form, which is expected to be assessed by their lender within a matter of days. In some instances, the lender may ask a business for additional information, such as an HMRC self-assessment tax return to verify its status as a business.

Businesses from all sectors can apply for a facility. The business must self-certify to its lender the following:

- Confirm it is UK-based in its business activity, and established by 1 March 2020;
- Confirm it has been adversely impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19);
- Confirm it is not currently using a government-backed Coronavirus loan scheme (unless using BLS to refinance a whole facility); and
- Confirm it is not in bankruptcy, liquidation or undergoing debt restructuring.

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether money laundering checks are impeding businesses from approaching alternative lenders to their own bank for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; what percentage of loans are granted via applications to a different lender; and whether in-person presentation and certifications are required for money laundering checks to be carried out. [HL3759]

Lord Callanan: It is important that thorough due diligence is conducted by lenders as part of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS).

Businesses are free to apply for a CBILS facility from any of the 50+ accredited lenders. Lending decisions are fully delegated to the lenders. As such, money laundering checks are subject to each lender's internal policy. The

robustness of these policies is thoroughly tested before a lender can become accredited to CBILS.

The British Business Bank does not hold information regarding an applicant's banking or borrowing history.

Asked by Lord Carrington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow dairy farmers affected by the collapse of the service trade during the COVID-19 pandemic to access the Retail Grant Hospitality Scheme or apply for bounce back loans in response to such farmers reported difficulty in accessing the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. [HL3762]

Lord Callanan: The Government has announced a package of measures designed to support businesses facing difficulties in this period of uncertainty, including the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF), and the Bounce Back Loans Scheme.

Businesses in England that would have been in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) on 11 March with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for the following cash grants per property via the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund:

- Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000.
- Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000.

Guidance on the types of businesses covered by the Expanded Retail Discount can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Any enquiries on eligibility for, or provision of the RHLGF should be directed to the relevant local authority.

Asked by Viscount Trenchard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in discussions with the European Commission about amendments to the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak, adopted on 19 March, to permit small and medium enterprises whose capital is principally represented by long-term shareholders' loans but whose businesses were viable until the COVID-19 pandemic to apply for loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; and whether they have raised in such discussions the case for permitting those enterprises to apply for such loans even if those businesses could be deemed as 'undertakings in difficulty' under EU State Aid rules. [HL3820]

Lord Callanan: Although the UK has left the EU, under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, the EU State Aid rules continue to apply in the UK until the end of the Transition Period. The State aid rules are a sole competence of the European Commission. The

Commission has introduced some flexibilities into the rules to deal with the impacts of the Coronavirus, in the form of a Temporary Framework.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) is a State Aid approved scheme under the European Commission's Temporary State Aid Framework. Companies that do not pass the 'undertaking in difficulty' test are eligible for support, in recognition of the impact of Coronavirus, unless they were in difficulty on 31 December 2019, prior to the outbreak.

Coronavirus: Children

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government for a report from their Permanent Representative to the United Nations on how governments are responding to the statement by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's statement on the physical, emotional and psychological effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, published on 8 April. [HL4036]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is concerned that COVID-19 and measures taken to tackle it could have a disproportionate impact on marginalised and vulnerable groups, and is clear that measures taken to tackle the crisis must be designed to mitigate, rather than contribute to, this. We are working with international partners to ensure that child protection is integrated into a comprehensive response to COVID-19 that supports those groups who will be hit the hardest and are often with limited or no state protection. We welcome the statement made by the Chairpersons of the 10 UN Treaty Bodies on 24 March calling for a human rights approach in fighting COVID-19 and in the subsequent guidance provided by other Treaty Bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In negotiations in Geneva on a draft Human Rights Council Presidential statement on human rights and COVID-19, the UK has supported specific mention of children's rights, and proposed additional language highlighting the need to consider the particular situation of women and girls, and the role they can play in the response. A number of other countries have also proposed adding strengthened wording on children's rights, reflecting many of the concerns raised in the statement by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many deaths as a result of COVID-19 have occurred in a hospital, broken down by each hospital. [HL2958]

Lord Bethell: Data broken down by trusts and regions on deaths of patients who have died in hospitals in England and had tested positive for COVID-19 at time of death or where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate is attached, due to the size of the data.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

COVID_daily_announced_deaths
[COVID_daily_announced_deaths.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-25/HL2958>

Asked by Lord Dobbs

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response by Lord Bethell on 22 April (HL Deb, col 56), when they will publish their analysis of the increase in non-COVID-19 deaths that has taken place as a result of the restrictions in place to address the pandemic; and when they expect to publish an analysis of (1) the predicted trends, and (2) the estimated totals, for future non-COVID-19 deaths as a result of such restrictions. [T] [HL3688]

Lord Bethell: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is publishing a report on the increase in non-COVID-19 deaths observed in weekly deaths statistics, in coming weeks. This is mentioned in ONS's statement of upcoming analysis on deaths and COVID-19. The report will analyse how the number of non-COVID-19 deaths occurring in different places of death, for different age groups and for different causes of death differ from previous years' data and will suggest how these findings correspond with possible reasons for the increase.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the actions taken by the government of Sweden in regard to social distancing on slowing the spread of COVID-19. [HL3032]

Lord Bethell: Direct comparisons between countries are difficult. Outbreak responses includes packages of control measures and the components of packages differ between countries, as do the times at which they are introduced. Real-time comparisons of impacts of COVID-19 on different countries are likely to be less accurate and less useful than the comparisons that we can expect to occur at the end of the pandemic, when complete data are likely to be available.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what scientific modelling they have seen to inform the development of possible strategies to replace the COVID-19-related lockdown in place in England. [HL3614]

Lord True: Scientific advice and analysis have underpinned the Government's policy making in the development of current social distancing measures and our recently published roadmap. We will continue to be guided by science in our approach.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment was made of the effect of 'superspreaders' in the epidemiological models used to predict the spread of COVID-19. [HL3784]

Lord Bethell: The Government relies on modelling work undertaken by several academic groups, who report to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies through its various subgroups. A collection of modelling information, including methodologies, which has informed decision making on COVID-19 has now been published online on GOV.UK and further papers will be published online at regular intervals.

Coronavirus: Hospitals*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to build new hospitals to cope with any influx of COVID-19 patients. [HL2655]

Lord Bethell: The Government has taken a number of actions to ensure the National Health Service has sufficient hospital capacity to care for COVID-19 patients, including:

- in order to plan for reasonable worst-case scenarios, we have opened a number of Nightingale hospitals across England, which will provide thousands of extra beds if local services need them as a result of the virus;
- the NHS has created extra capacity of 33,000 additional beds freed up across NHS hospitals – the equivalent of building 50 district general hospitals - plus 8,000 beds through an unprecedented deal with the independent sector;
- in addition, since February the Government has been running a new capital facility to provide additional funding to NHS organisations, where needed for any urgent building works linked to the coronavirus response; and
- this is on top of the 40 new hospitals and 20 hospital upgrades the Government announced as part of the Health Infrastructure Plan – which we are continuing to deliver and committed to doing so as soon as possible.

Coronavirus: Mental Health Services*Asked by Baroness Uddin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ensure frontline workers are provided with support and counselling following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3097]

Lord Bethell: The Government has provided £5 million to fund a collaboration between Mind, Samaritans, Shout and Hospice UK that provides information, emotional support and access to a crisis text service for people working on the frontline.

The Department has commissioned NHS England to develop a comprehensive emotional, psychological and practical support package for National Health Service staff during and following the COVID-19 response. This currently includes: free access to well-being apps; a dedicated support helpline and text service (in partnership with the Samaritans); and a separate helpline offering bereavement support (in partnership with Hospice UK). The Department is working with partners to extend both helplines to the social care workforce and will also be introducing an app and website aimed at providing timely information for the adult social care workforce.

Coronavirus: Protective Clothing*Asked by Lord Warner*

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what date they first requested help from the British Healthcare Trades Association to obtain personal protective equipment, and other equipment, needed as a result of COVID-19; and what action has been agreed as a result of their discussions with that Association. [HL3102]

Lord Bethell: The Department meets with a number of trade associations, including the British Healthcare Trades Association, on a weekly basis. There have been regular discussions at these meetings on the challenges of responding to COVID-19. The Government issued a 'call to arms' for industry partners and other manufacturers to respond through a central hub for COVID-19 support. So far, we have received over 12,000 offers of support.

Asked by Lord Marlesford

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the evidence (1) for, and (2) against, the use of protective face masks to limit the spread of COVID-19 between individuals who have to enter public spaces or use public transport to go to work; and in what circumstances they would recommend the use of such masks. [HL3206]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom Government continues to be led by the evidence in our response to COVID-19. Following Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies advice, from 11 May the Government advises the public to consider wearing a face covering in confined indoor settings where social distancing is not possible or where they are more likely to come into contact with people they do not normally meet, for example on public transport or in some shops.

The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with if you are infected but have not developed symptoms. It is important to wear face-coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on or taking them off.

Coronavirus: Ventilators

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients who are being treated in hospital for COVID-19 have been attached to a ventilator. [HL2959]

Lord Bethell: Information on the number of patients who are being treated in hospitals for COVID-19 and have been attached to a ventilator is not currently published. We will continue to review what data we make publicly available.

Culture: Finance

Asked by *Lord Cormack*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that (1) museums, (2) galleries, (3) historic buildings, and (4) cathedrals and churches, are compensated for any lost revenue in the period of enforced closure (a) since the closure was introduced, and (b) if the closure continues into the next four months. [T] [HL3859]

Baroness Barran: My department is in constant contact with sector bodies, museums and heritage sites directly to assess impacts and are working to develop support for the sector in response to COVID-19. We are also in close contact with counterparts in the devolved nations, as culture is a devolved matter. Significant support has been delivered at speed by DCMS arm's-length bodies. Arts Council England have launched a £160m Emergency Funding Package, the National Lottery Heritage Fund a £50m Heritage Emergency Fund, and Historic England launched a £2m Emergency Fund. All of these are delivering much-needed support across the sector.

We are also pleased that there has already been support pledged for the sector including through the Job Retention Scheme and the availability of grants of up to £25,000 to leisure businesses, including museums operating from smaller premises through the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. The Government continues to monitor the impact of these and other measures.

Dental Services: Fees and Charges

Asked by *Lord Colwyn*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the National Health Service (Dental Charges) Regulations 2005 will be amended to set out any revised NHS dental charges in England for the year commencing April 2020. [HL3683]

Lord Bethell: In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic climate a decision was made to freeze dental patient charges at 2019/20 levels. This is a temporary freeze being kept under review. No

changes have been made to current dental exemption arrangements.

Devolution: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Wigley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional financial allocation they have made respectively to (1) the Welsh Government, (2) the Scottish Government, and (3) the Northern Ireland Executive, to deal with the implications of COVID-19, in addition to the budget allocation for the current financial year. [HL3938]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Our response to Covid-19 needs to be UK-wide and that is why UKG has so far announced almost £7 billion of additional funding to the devolved administrations to support people, business and public services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This means £3.5 billion for the Scottish Government, £2.1 billion for the Welsh Government and £1.2 billion for the Northern Ireland Executive.

This is in addition to the UK-wide measures that the people and businesses in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will benefit from, including the Job Retention Scheme, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

Following agreement with the devolved administrations, the Department of Health and Social Care is procuring tests, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and ventilators on a UK-wide basis. The devolved administrations will therefore receive a share of this equipment, rather than a share of the funding.

Disease Control

Asked by *Baroness Thornton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the plans developed by NHS England to improve pandemic response planning as a result of Exercise Cygnus. [HL3956]

Lord Bethell: NHS England is a key partner in the ongoing cross-Government work to develop the United Kingdom's pandemic preparedness. This Department continues to work across Government and with key stakeholders, including NHS England, to develop coordinated multi-sector response plans for a future influenza pandemic.

The lessons from Exercise Cygnus, along with expert scientific, clinical and operational advice, have informed the UK's preparedness to ensure that the country remains well prepared for infectious disease outbreaks. This includes work such as development of draft legislation support to the health system response to a future influenza pandemic and strengthening plans to surge and flex beyond normal operations, as demonstrated by the considerable increase in critical care capacity as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Doctors: Migrant Workers

Asked by *Baroness Finlay of Llandaff*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether refugee doctors who are not yet fully registered with the General Medical Council are able to work in the NHS as medical assistants; and if so, (1) what pay grade they are placed on, and (2) whether they are afforded full indemnity, including full vicarious liability indemnity and death in service compensation. [HL3258]

Lord Bethell: The local employing organisation will decide if refugee doctors who are not registered with the General Medical Council are able to work in the National Health Service. All providers of Care Quality Commission-regulated activity have a duty to ensure that their staff have the skills, knowledge and experience for the work undertaken.

A temporary Medical Support Worker job description has been developed in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer's office, designed for doctors who are not registered with the General Medical Council. The NHS Job Evaluation Scheme, which helps to ensure staff receive equal pay for work of equal value, has evaluated this job as band 6, meaning a basic salary of £31,365 to £37,890. Enhancements may also be paid for working unsocial hours.

Indemnity for individuals employed or engaged to work for an NHS trust will be covered by the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts and if they are engaged by a general practitioner (GP) practice providing NHS GP services, they will be covered by the Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice. To ensure there are no gaps in indemnity coverage for NHS staff, the Coronavirus Act 2020 provides additional powers to provide clinical negligence indemnity for NHS activities related to the COVID-19 outbreak, where there is no other indemnity arrangement in place. Information about death in service compensation is yet to be confirmed.

Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the rise of cases of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what support they have provided to the victims of that violence. [HL3660]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation. We are working closely with domestic abuse charities, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the police to understand the impact of COVID-19 on domestic abuse incidents.

The Government has announced £28m of funding to support domestic abuse charities. The Home Office has announced an additional £2 million in funding to help

bolster specialist helplines and on line services so that victims can continue to seek support.

We have also launched a campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse and signpost victims to the support services available. The campaign, under the hashtag #YouAreNotAlone, aims to reassure those affected by domestic abuse that support services remain available during this difficult time. Details of these services can be found at www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse.

Educational Institutions

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to re-open (1) schools, (2) colleges, and (3) universities; and when they intend to announce any such plans. [HL3821]

Baroness Berridge: 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 to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings from the week commencing 1 June 2020. We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing. As a result we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

From the week commencing 1 June 2020 at the earliest, we will be asking primary schools to welcome back children in Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups (vulnerable children and children of critical workers). We will ask secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges to offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 and year 12 (and equivalent) students who are due to take key exams next year, alongside the provision they are offering to priority groups.

Regarding the re-opening of universities, the department expects universities, as autonomous institutions, to make their own judgements based on the latest Public Health England guidance. Universities are continuing to provide high quality teaching online. We are working with the higher education sector to develop guidance and best practice that will be needed for universities to make informed decisions about their provision.

Additionally, we have also provided guidance to parents and carers about schools and education settings during the coronavirus outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>.

Elections: Legislation

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to modernise and codify electoral legislation as recommended by the Law Commission. [HL3548]

Lord True: The Government welcomes the Law Commission's recently published *Electoral Law* report. The Government will consider the issues raised in the report, in conjunction with our wider programme of electoral integrity reforms, and will respond fully in due course.

Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards encouraging operators providing electric vehicle charging infrastructure to introduce a single payment method for all public chargepoints. [HL3805]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government wants the consumer experience of electric vehicle charging to be straightforward and hassle free. In July 2019 the Department challenged industry to provide debit and credit card payment at all newly installed rapid chargepoints by spring of this year, and to develop a roaming solution across the charging network, allowing electric vehicle drivers to use any public chargepoint through a single payment method. While the industry has responded with the majority of new rapid chargepoints offering contactless payment, further action is necessary to ensure drivers can access all public chargepoints with ease. The Department will therefore consult later this year on a range of measures aimed at making charging electric vehicles just as easy as filling up a traditional petrol or diesel car, including ease of payment.

Email: Fraud

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to add a link to the SAFERjobs scheme to webpages where they advise the public on how to report suspicious emails and phishing attempts. [HL3793]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is up to SAFERJobs to include any guidance that the government provides. The Government is, however, continuing to put out general advice to the public on staying safe online.

On 21 April the Government launched a revised Cyber Aware campaign, to coincide with the launch of the NCSC's new Suspicious Email Reporting Service. The new campaign will:

- Provide the public and key stakeholders (industry, academia, tech community etc) with the assurance that

HMG and the Intelligence and law enforcement community are working on their behalf to minimise the cyber threat;

- Empower the public and micro-businesses to understand the best ways to stay safe online and feel empowered to take necessary protective actions; and
- Support NCSC and wider efforts to combat the threat 'at source', taking down or blocking malicious URLs and SMS messages, and working behind the scenes to stop the threat reaching the public. We will prioritise areas where there is the most need for user behaviour to change, or there is active public concern.

We also recently launched a gov.uk page on coronavirus-related fraud and cybercrime. The page includes easy-to-follow steps for people to better protect themselves and signposts other relevant advice and tips. It can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>

The public should make all reports of fraudulent phishing emails and telephone calls to Action Fraud which is the national reporting facility for fraud and cyber crime <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>.

Foreign Students: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what provision they are making to ensure international students can return to the UK to resume their studies who left the UK to return home for the duration of the lockdown, and what support they will provide to international students who are no longer in a position to return to the UK to complete their studies due to financial losses as a result of the crisis. [HL3592]

Baroness Berridge: The government is applying discretion under current circumstances to ensure that international students are not negatively impacted due to COVID-19. We have published bespoke Tier 4 visa guidance for students and sponsors affected by changes to UK immigration and borders due to COVID-19. This guidance includes the latest information for those who might have questions around visa expiry, switching visa category within the UK and distance learning – it also specifically confirms that sponsors do not need to withdraw sponsorship if a student is unable to attend for more than 60 days due to COVID-19 but intends to resume their studies eventually.

We are working closely with universities and are pleased to see that the sector is making every effort to enable students to continue their studies – including moving learning online either in the UK or in student's home country – so that their teaching and assessment can proceed. Students experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 should contact their higher education provider. Many providers have hardship funds which students can apply to for assistance.

GCSE: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether students studying for GCSEs in a foreign language at a supplementary school will be eligible to sit the examination in the Autumn if they have been unable to do so this summer due to COVID-19. [HL3764]

Baroness Berridge: We are working with the independent qualifications regulator, Ofqual, and the exam boards to ensure that students have the opportunity to sit exams in the autumn. This includes those who have studied at supplementary schools. Ofqual will be consulting on proposed arrangements.

General Practitioners: Training

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow (1) final year GP Speciality trainees, and (2) those on the Targeted GP Training Scheme, to join the GP Register without completing their final exams. [HL3928]

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to allow individuals who have completed three years of GP Speciality Training but failed to pass the Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners examination to join the GP register. [HL3995]

Lord Bethell: The Government has no plans to allow general practitioners (GPs) in training who have not completed their final exams, or those who have failed to pass the Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners' examination, to join the GP register.

The emergency powers in the Medical Act 1983 do not allow the General Medical Council to grant temporary specialist or GP registration to doctors who have not previously held this type of registration.

If a doctor has been removed from GP training due to failure to demonstrate competence for practice, there is no means in statute for them to become fully qualified GPs without demonstrating this competence.

The Royal College of General Practitioners and the four statutory education bodies are working to find a solution for trainees who have had their examinations cancelled as a result of COVID-19 to demonstrate their competence and qualify as a GP. A temporary recorded alternative to the Clinical Skills Assessment is rapidly being developed (subject to approval by the General Medical Council). The Royal College of General Practitioners is also working with their testing partner to enable the Applied Knowledge Test to resume at test centres with appropriate social distancing safeguards in place from July and are investigating options for remote invigilation for those who are shielding.

Health Professions: Training

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial and practical provision they will make for the final-year cohort of nursing, midwifery and associated health professional students who have not opted to cut short their courses to work in the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic, but who may see those courses extend past the planned date for qualifying. [HL3894]

Lord Bethell: Universities and practice learning partners are working together to try and ensure students' learning outcomes are met and competencies are signed off to complete the programme at the expected time. However, as in usual circumstances, some students may need to extend beyond three years if they cannot meet the required learning outcomes or minimum clinical hour requirements.

Work is ongoing across Government with key partners to agree the arrangements for final year students who may need to extend beyond three years, the outcomes of which will be communicated as soon as possible.

Health Services and Social Services: Protective Clothing

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for Lord Deighton, appointed to lead the national effort to produce essential personal protective equipment for frontline health and social care staff on 18 April, to give a statement to the House about his work on that effort. [T] [HL3573]

Lord Bethell: Lord Deighton is an unpaid advisor to the Government and not a Departmental Minister. Ministers are responsible to Parliament for the work of the Department.

Health Services: Contracts

Asked by *Baroness Crawley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish details of any contracts made with private healthcare providers for the provision of NHS funded acute care. [HL4107]

Lord Bethell: NHS England will ensure that details of the contracts it has entered into under the 2020 Directions are published online on the GOV.UK website, in accordance with regulation 4(1) of The National Health Service (Procurement, Patient Choice and Competition) (No. 2) Regulations 2013.

Hereditary Peers: By-elections

Asked by *Lord Grocott*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what are the current outstanding by-elections for hereditary peers,

indicating in each case the numbers of electors to be involved. [HL4273]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The by-elections for hereditary peers currently outstanding are to fill the vacancies left by the retirements of the Earl of Selborne and the Countess of Mar. In respect of the vacancy created by the retirement of the Earl of Selborne the remaining 46 Conservative excepted hereditary peers are eligible to vote. In respect of the vacancy created by the retirement of the Countess of Mar the whole House is entitled to vote to fill the vacancy as she was elected by the whole House to act as a Deputy Chairman.

HMS Dasher

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether all papers and reports relating to the loss of HMS DASHER are embargoed for release until 2043; and if so, why. [HL4067]

Baroness Goldie: No papers and reports relating to the loss of HMS DASHER are embargoed. They are freely available at The National Archives, Kew.

Hong Kong: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China about the recent arrests of political opponents by the Hong Kong police. [HL3865]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by the arrests of a number of political figures in Hong Kong, and are following these cases closely. We expect any arrests and judicial processes to be conducted in a fair and transparent manner. The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to Hong Kong's way of life and as such is protected in both the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. It is essential that any protests are conducted peacefully, and that the authorities avoid actions that inflame tensions. The authorities should focus on rebuilding trust through a process of meaningful political dialogue. Officials have raised our concerns with the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities.

Horticulture

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the UK horticultural industry. [HL3797]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government recognises the crucial role that the UK's horticulture industry plays in both feeding the country and promoting people's wellbeing. It is clear that the coronavirus pandemic is having an impact on horticulture businesses up and down the country and the Government is acutely

aware of the challenges facing parts of the industry at this time.

We know it is vital that the sector has access to the labour it needs, and we are aware of concerns about the impact that current restrictions on the movement of people could have on the number of seasonal workers coming to the UK. We are therefore urgently considering what measures could be put in place to help mitigate labour shortages.

We will continue to work closely with representatives from across the horticulture supply chain to identify what short-term and long-term support the sector needs. As horticulture is part of the agricultural sector, impacts of COVID-19 on the horticulture industry are being overseen by the UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group, which meets weekly to monitor UK agricultural markets and to provide forewarning of any atypical market movements. During the coronavirus outbreak, this has allowed Defra and the devolved administrations to share the latest stakeholder information and data to assess the effects of COVID-19 on the agricultural industry, to ensure we have an evidence base of what is happening in specific markets and geographical regions.

We will continue to monitor the situation and to work closely with the sector to assess and respond to emerging issues as they arise.

Horticulture: Coronavirus

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether horticulture is as critical to the national economy as agriculture; and whether they plan to treat horticulture equally to agriculture in their plans for economic recovery. [HL3813]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government recognises the crucial role that all agricultural sectors are playing during this time.

As horticulture is part of the agricultural sector, impacts of COVID-19 on the horticulture industry are being overseen by the UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group, which meets weekly to monitor UK agricultural markets and to provide forewarning of any atypical market movements. During the coronavirus outbreak, this has allowed Defra and the devolved administrations to share the latest stakeholder information and data to ensure we have an evidence base to assess the effects of COVID-19 on the agricultural industry, in specific markets, or geographical regions.

Officials are having regular meetings with the different agricultural sectors to understand the specific issues affecting each sector. It is clear that the coronavirus pandemic is having an impact on horticulture businesses up and down the country and the Government is acutely aware of the challenges facing parts of the industry at this time. We have been working closely with the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) on reviewing when and how garden centres can reopen safely and as of

May 13th 2020, garden centres have been allowed to reopen. This will allow businesses to sell their products directly to the public once again and in doing so bring about the wider benefits to consumers, especially for physical and mental wellbeing, which gardening can bring. There is extensive ongoing engagement being undertaken by the department with representatives from the horticulture supply chain to capture emerging issues and to identify what short-term and long-term support the sector, as a whole, needs.

We will continue to monitor the situation and to work closely with the sector as restrictions are removed and recovery begins.

Hospital Wards: Gender

Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to review their Delivering same-sex Accommodation guidance, published in September 2019, particularly Annex B: Delivering same-sex accommodation for trans people and gender variant children; and if so, when. [HL3139]

Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to withdraw the Delivering same-sex Accommodation guidance, published in September 2019. [HL3140]

Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Delivering same-sex Accommodation guidance, published in September 2019, provides for someone who is undergoing a personal process of changing gender but who (1) is not planning to undergo, (2) is not currently undergoing, or (3) has not undergone, gender reassignment by changing physiological or other attributes of sex; and if so, why. [HL3141]

Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of allowing patients to self-identify their gender on (1) the treatment of such patients, and (2) other patients accommodated in the same wards. [HL3142]

Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether hospitals are required to provide single-sex services to patients. [HL3144]

Lord Bethell: In September 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement published a revised version of the guidance on *Delivering Same-Sex Accommodation*. The team are reviewing feedback received and considering further revisions.

The guidance is clear that providers of National Health Service-funded care are expected to have a zero-tolerance approach to mixed-sex accommodation, except where it is

in the overall best interest of all patients affected. There are some clinical circumstances where mixed sex accommodation can be justified. These are few, and mainly confined to patients who need highly specialised care, such as that delivered in critical care units.

There are currently no plans to withdraw the guidance. The guidance is relevant to all patients including patients who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment as set out in the Equality Act 2010. That is, a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning sex. The review will include consideration of whether the language used within the guidance needs to be clearer.

NHS trusts have not been asked to provide the information required to make an assessment of the impact of allowing patients to self-identify their gender and there are no plans to ask them to do so. NHS trusts will be required to provide single sex services to patients, unless it is appropriate to do otherwise based on the patient's clinical condition.

Hospitals: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many BAME NHS staff have been diverted to the COVID-19 frontline in NHS hospitals since 1 January; and what percentage of those moves were not to provide additional capacity but to fill vacant roles. [HL3831]

Lord Bethell: The Department does not hold the data requested.

House of Lords: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what plans he has to enable the House to return to functioning in the Palace of Westminster. [HL4000]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: On 7 May the Commission agreed to proceed with plans for enabling hybrid sittings. Hybrid proceedings would involve both virtual and physical participants. Any return to members attending the House would need to be staged and in line with guidance from Public Health England, including social distancing measures. The Procedure Committee will need to consider the procedural changes required to enable hybrid sittings to work effectively, and members will be provided with more detail on this in the weeks ahead.

Housing: Energy

Asked by Lord Stunell

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment have they made of the number of certified retrofit coordinators required under PAS2035:2019 that (1) will be required to support the delivery of the Retrofit Standards Framework at its commencement in June

2021; (2) are currently certified; and (3) are awaiting certification; and whether they are satisfied that there will be enough coordinators to enable the planned Whole House Retrofit policy in England to be delivered to the original timescale. [[HL3817](#)]

Lord Callanan: We estimate that 250 – 1,000 retrofit coordinators will be required to meet the PAS2035:2019 requirements for the Energy Company Obligation. The number of retrofit coordinators required will depend on the number of projects and the number of measures per project.

Currently, around 80 people have graduated from the training with around an additional 230 going through the process.

The training can be provided fully on-line and we are monitoring uptake as well as considering options to increase it should we deem it necessary.

Human Rights: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking internationally to ensure human rights are safeguarded, including in relation to the use of surveillance, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3965](#)]

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken, if any, to coordinate an international response to any misuse of government power in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3969](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned by reports that some governments are using the current crisis to fail to comply with their human rights obligations, including in relation to the use of surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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; both the immediate impact of the response on human rights around the world, and the social and economic consequences, including the prospect of greater inequality. 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. We support the call made by the UN Secretary-General in his message of 22 April that human rights must be at the front and centre of the COVID-19 response and recovery. The UK Government remains committed to standing up for human rights and supports all efforts by the UN to minimise long-term damage to global economies, societies, politics and freedoms.

Human Rights and Press Freedom: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to (1) human rights defenders, and (2) journalists, in relation to work to document international responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3966](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to protecting and promoting human rights throughout the world through both bilateral and multilateral engagement. We work with and support human rights defenders, who play an essential role in upholding and promoting respect for human rights, democratic freedoms and civil society. The UK published the document 'UK Support for Human Rights Defenders' in July 2019, making it available in all six UN languages to ensure its widest reach. It sets out our ongoing dedication to supporting and protecting human rights defenders worldwide. Our diplomatic network will always take into account the local context and regularly engages with NGO representatives and human rights defenders to address the challenges which human rights defenders face and how the UK can help overcome them. The UK will continue to give strong support to human rights defenders worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic to enable them to carry out their work safely and without fear, and we regularly assess how we can enhance our ability to make a positive difference.

Immigrants: Health Services

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that people with irregular migration status in the UK are informed about (1) free access to NHS treatment for COVID-19, (2) treatment for COVID-19, and (3) treatment for underlying medical conditions if hospitalised from COVID-19 related complications. [[HL3915](#)]

Lord Bethell: Regulations came into force on 29 January 2020 to add Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (now known as COVID-19) to Schedule 1 of the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015. This means there can be no charge made to an overseas visitor for the diagnosis, or, if positive, treatment, of COVID-19. The exemption from charge does not extend to any pre-existing conditions, unless separately exempt under the Regulations.

This message has been disseminated to National Health Service staff, the public and organisations representing vulnerable migrant groups. It has also been published in 40 languages on Public Health England's Migrant Health Guide.

Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many flu vaccines have been manufactured in the UK in each of the last three years. [HL3070]

Lord Bethell: The Department does not hold this information. This is commercial information.

Iran: Capital Punishment

Asked by Lord Turnberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, on 22 April, condemning the execution of two prisoners under the age of 18 by the Iranian authorities. [HL3930]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by the reports of the executions of these two juvenile offenders. In her statement, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, stated these executions are prohibited under international human rights law and has violated the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Iran had signed up to. It remains a long-standing policy of the United Kingdom to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. The UK regularly raises human rights with the Iranian authorities at all levels and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues.

Iran: Satellites

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Iran about the launching of a satellite by the Revolutionary Guard on 22 April; what information they have on the carrier used to launch the satellite; and what information they have sought from that government about the purpose of the satellite. [HL4133]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of reports concerning the recent launch of a military satellite by the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC). The launch - using ballistic missile technology - is of significant concern and inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231. The UN has called upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Iran must abide by this. We remain concerned about the activities of the IRGC and the revelation it has developed an independent military space launch capability, and call on Iran urgently to cease all forms of destabilising activity.

Iraq: Kurds

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they are taking following threats by the government of Iraq to withhold federal budget payments to the Kurdistan Regional Government. [HL4117]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK encourages the Government of Iraq (GOI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to work together to resolve all issues in line with the Iraq Constitution. Following the appointment of new Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, we will continue to encourage strong GOI-KRG cooperation, including on issues relating to federal budget payments to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Iraq: Refugees

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of people resident in Makhmur refugee camp in Northern Iraq; what assessment they have made of reports that the camp (1) was hit by a Turkish drone strike on 15 April, and (2) has been subject to three such attacks since December 2017; and what representations, if any, they have made to (a) the government of Turkey about any such attacks, and (b) the Kurdistan Regional Government about its blockade of that camp. [HL3698]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We understand around 12,000 people are resident in Mukhmur refugee camp in northern Iraq. We closely monitor reports of Turkish airstrikes in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which Turkey has said were targeting members of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). We share concerns about restrictions imposed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on the movement of camp residents. Our Consulate General in Erbil discussed these concerns with the KRG authorities in April.

Israeli Settlements

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter sent by 130 parliamentarians calling for sanctions to be imposed on the government of Israel should the annexation of the West Bank take place. [HL3881]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This letter is currently being considered and the Government will respond in due course.

Jerusalem: Religious Freedom

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli authorities have

prevented dawn drummers from operating during Ramadan in the Old City of Jerusalem. [HL4103]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made an assessment of these reports, we are committed to working with all parties to ensure that Jerusalem can remain a diverse city which affords all of its residents freedom of religion and belief and respects the status quo of the holy sites.

Judiciary and Legal Systems

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the interactions between the (1) legal, and (2) judicial systems, in the UK and Poland. [HL3798]

Lord Keen of Elie: The interaction between the Polish and UK legal systems is conducted within a framework of international law and practical cooperation.

The UK Government has not held any assessment of the interactions between judicial systems in the UK and Poland. The separation of powers doctrine underpins the UK's constitutional framework. The UK Government upholds the fundamental tenet of judicial independence. Judges are free to engage with other judiciaries independently without interference or oversight from the Executive. Any oversight of such activities would be for the Lord Chief Justice.

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the interactions between the (1) legal, and (2) judicial systems, in the UK and Hungary. [HL3799]

Lord Keen of Elie: The interaction between the Hungarian and UK legal systems is conducted within a framework of international law and practical cooperation.

The UK Government has not held any assessment of the interactions between judicial systems in the UK and Hungary. The separation of powers doctrine underpins the UK's constitutional framework. The UK Government upholds the fundamental tenet of judicial independence. Judges are free to engage with other judiciaries independently without interference or oversight from the Executive. Any oversight of such activities would be for the Lord Chief Justice.

Legal Aid Scheme: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received about the impact of COVID-19 on the (1) livelihoods, (2) retention, and (3) recruitment of lawyers who are dependent on the legal aid scheme; and what action they intend to take as a result of any such representations. [HL3753]

Lord Keen of Elie: The measures introduced by HM Treasury have provided some support to the profession. We are working closely with legal practitioners and other providers of legal support across the justice system at official and Ministerial level, to understand their concerns and the immediate and longer-term support needs to keep the justice system running during the crisis and beyond.

The Legal Aid Agency, which administers legal aid on behalf of the Lord Chancellor, has taken steps designed to help support legal aid provision during this period including making money available to draw down as interim payments and halting debt collection.

On 1 May, new hardship payment rules came into force for criminal practitioners allowing them 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.

We also recognise the impact of covid-19 on third sector advice organisations. This is why the Government announced that it is allocating £5.4 million in funding to specialist legal advice not for profit organisations, including Law Centres, in addition to the funding that the National Lottery Communities Fund is administering.

We will continue to work with practitioners to support a strong legal services sector, which includes consideration of recruitment and retention within the professions with the ultimate aim of ensuring that the most vulnerable in society are provided with the representation and support they need.

Libya: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current situation in Libya, further to the speech by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar on 27 April rejecting the 2015 UN-mediated Libyan Political Agreement and seeking to empower the General Command of the Arab Libyan Armed Force to take charge of that country's governing institutions. [HL4137]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is deeply concerned by the continuing fighting in Libya and actively engaged in international diplomatic efforts to bring it to an end. All the signs are that, despite calls for a humanitarian truce, hostilities are continuing on all sides. We are calling on all the parties, including Khalifa Haftar, to de-escalate, support a ceasefire, ensure humanitarian access, and return to UN-led political talks. The Libyan institutions set up by the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement remain central to that process.

Livestock: Hormone Treatments

Asked by **Lord Jopling**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 5 March (HL1872), why they have adopted the EU's legislation on the use of growth hormones in food production; and what caused the change in policy held by previous governments on that legislation within the Council of European Agricultural Ministers. [HL3775]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: As a Member State, the UK transposed EU Council Directive 96/22/EC (as amended) into domestic law 'Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) (England and Scotland) Regulations 2015', with similar legislation for Wales and Northern Ireland.

The law reflects UK Government policy on the use of growth hormones in food production and remains in force now we have left the EU.

The UK is committed to maintaining our current high food safety and animal welfare standards and these protections will continue now we have left the EU.

Lord Deighton

Asked by **Lord Adonis**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any conflicts of interest relating to Lord Deighton's appointment to a government position on 18 April 2020 and his commercial work, including his chairmanship of Heathrow Airport Ltd, and whether they intend to publish these assessments. [HL3574]

Asked by **Lord Adonis**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Commissioner for Public Appointments advised on the appointment of Lord Deighton to his government post on 18 April, and whether they will publish that advice. [HL3575]

Asked by **Lord Adonis**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to publish the letter of appointment, job description and correspondence with Heathrow Airport Ltd relating to Lord Deighton's government post announced on 18 April. [HL3577]

Lord Bethell: Lord Deighton has kindly agreed to be an unpaid advisor to help the Government with the COVID-19 response. He is leading the Government's efforts to secure sufficient critical personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure this gets to where it is needed. As part of this, he will drive forward coordination of the end-to-end process design and manufacture of new domestic PPE supplies.

Maternity Allowance

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government why maternity allowance is not treated the same way as statutory maternity pay for the purposes of calculating Universal Credit; what estimate they have made of (1) the cost of doing so, and (2) the number of women claiming maternity allowance who are affected by that disparity, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3620]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: It is a longstanding principle of the welfare system that benefits are not paid to claimants with income available from other sources to support themselves. Where claimants have income available to meet their everyday living costs, such as Maternity Allowance (MA), it is right that their entitlement to Universal Credit (UC) is adjusted accordingly. The general principle is that unearned income, which is provided to meet everyday living costs, is taken into account in the calculation of UC. Where claimants have income available to meet their everyday living costs, their benefit entitlement is adjusted accordingly. This is particularly the case where there would be double provision of social security benefits and the same approach is applied to Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance.

The difference in the treatment of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and MA in UC is not unintended and is a consequence of the simplification of the treatment of earned income in UC. One of the simplifications introduced by UC is for information on people's earned income to be collected automatically through revenue information which we receive from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. This enables a claimant's UC entitlement to be reassessed quickly in response to any changes in earnings.

As statutory benefits (such as SMP) are paid by employers, and are an earnings equivalent, they are treated as earned income. However, other benefits paid to meet living costs, such as MA will continue to be taken fully into account in the UC assessment, as they have been with other legacy benefits.

This simplification in the process of the treatment of earned income in UC is essential to make it responsive to changes in a claimant's circumstances, and has been key to the vital role it has played in supporting people through this pandemic to date.

The Department has made no estimate of (1) the cost, and (2) the number of women affected by the disparity, in the treatment of MA and SMP for the purposes of calculating UC, during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Medical Equipment: Africa

Asked by **Baroness Sheehan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what restrictions they have placed, or plan to put in place, on the export

of testing kits and requisite materials to countries in Africa. [HL4171]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: The Department for International Trade has not introduced any trade restrictions on the export of testing kits and requisite materials to countries in Africa.

Mexico: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the kidnapping of Pastor Aarón Méndez Ruiz and Alfredo Castillo de Luna by a criminal group in Mexico in August 2019 and reports that they have been denied access to water, electricity and other basic services in order to force them to renounce their faith; and what assessment they have made of the level of violence against religious leaders in Mexico since 1 September 2019. [HL3913]

Baroness Sugg: The British Embassy in Mexico City is aware of, and monitoring the cases of Pastor Aarón Méndez Ruiz and Alfredo Castillo de Luna. The UK Government continues to engage regularly with Mexican authorities at ministerial, official, and state levels to discuss human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), and to support a broad human rights agenda in Mexico. Most recently, the Minister for the Americas and Minister for Asia discussed human rights with the Mexican Deputy Foreign Minister when he visited London on 9 March. During the Foreign Secretary's visit to Mexico in August 2019, he raised human rights with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, who expressed his support for working with the UK both bilaterally and multilaterally to protect human rights. Additionally, Baroness Williams raised FoRB with the Mexican Interior Minister in September 2019.

While civil society organisations continue to report cases of FoRB violations in Mexico, assessment by the Mexican Government, the local UN Human Rights office, and local civil society organisations is that while there are cases of individuals being targeted because of their religion or beliefs, people are more often targeted for their work and activities in defence of human rights. At the UN Universal Periodic Review session in November 2018, the UK made recommendations regarding accountability for human rights violations, and addressing impunity for violence against human rights defenders.

Motor Vehicles: Taxation

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce taxation on cars to encourage recovery and re-employment following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4059]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government recognizes the challenges faced by households as a result of COVID-19. This is why the Government has announced unprecedented support for public services, business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency.

Budget 2020 announced Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) rates would be uprated in line with inflation only so VED liabilities have not increased in real terms since 2010.

In addition, Budget announced a freeze in fuel duty rates for the tenth successive year, which by April 2021, will have saved the average car driver £1,200 compared with pre-2010 plans.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions the Foreign Secretary has had with his counterpart in the government of Iran about the permanent release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe. [HL3862]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are relieved that Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe was temporarily released on March 17. While her further extension is a welcome step, we continue to urge the Iranian Government to immediately release her - and all UK dual nationals arbitrarily detained in Iran - to enable them to return to their families in the UK. The Foreign Secretary raised this with Foreign Minister Zarif on 16 March and Minister of State for the Middle East with the Iranian Ambassador on 26 March. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently raises all of our dual national detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NHS: Civil Proceedings

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to introducing emergency legislation to place a cap on litigation claims against the NHS. [HL3940]

Lord Bethell: The rising costs of clinical negligence are a major issue and something we are committed to tackling, given that National Health Service funds spent on clinical negligence are resources not available for front-line care. The Department is working intensively across Government, looking at a wide range of options to address the drivers of cost of clinical negligence claims. We will update Parliament in due course.

NHS: Computer Software

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to incentivise the use of the NHS COVID-19 tracing application. [HL4151]

Lord Bethell: The National Health Service will be launching a major campaign to support the launch of the app.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to offer online tutorials to those with a learning disability on how to use the NHS COVID-19 contact tracing application. [HL4153]

Lord Bethell: We are working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to mitigate the impact of digital exclusion. We are committed to regular audits of the app by independent specialist assessors to conduct usability testing of the app, including dedicated research to solely focus on accessibility, as part of a wider strategy to ensure nobody is excluded. We have published an Accessibility Statement which will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much the NHS COVID-19 tracing application has cost (1) to develop, (2) to test, and (3) to make operational. [HL4170]

Lord Bethell: The Department has launched the first phase of a large-scale, integrated contact test and trace programme on the Isle of Wight. This phased approach will allow us to learn about and improve the service as it is rolled out across the United Kingdom. We intend to roll out the National Health Service COVID-19 app nationally in the coming weeks. As the app is still in development, testing phases final costs are not available, and we continue to work with NHSX and HM Treasury to identify and agree funding requirements for the roll out of the app.

NHS: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they are seeking to reward those working in the National Health Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3958]

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

Pay for over one million Agenda for Change (AfC) staff is already set for 2020/21 as part of the agreed three year pay and contract reform deal and for doctors and dentists in training following a four-year pay and contract reform deal agreed in June 2019 (2019/20 – 2022/23).

The Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration will make pay recommendations for 2020/21 as usual for consultants and speciality doctors. Next year it will be for the NHS Pay Review Body to make recommendations for the pay of staff on AfC contracts from April 2021.

We want to ensure that the NHS employment offer continues to attract, retain and reward staff and this offer continues to be kept under review.

Nigeria: Christianity

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported (1) arrest of Professor Richard Solomon Tarfa on 25 December 2019, (2) closure of the Du Merci Orphanage, and (3) demolition order addressed to the Du Merci Centre orphanage dated 29 April, in Nigeria. [HL4068]

Baroness Sugg: The British High Commission in Abuja has raised Professor Tarfa's case with the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria and the Kano State authorities. The UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Rehman Chishti MP, has also raised the case at a senior level within the Federal Government. We have stressed the need for the Nigerian Authorities to prioritise the welfare of the children involved. We have also underlined the importance of an open and transparent legal process for Mr Tarfa, in accordance with Nigerian law and international human rights standards.

North Africa: Security

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of current (1) terrorist, and (2) other security, threats in (1) Libya, (2) Tunisia, (3) Algeria, and (4) Morocco. [HL3800]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to monitor terrorist and security threats, especially to UK interests, across North Africa. We are deeply concerned by the continuing conflict in Libya, which has an impact beyond Libya's borders. We continue to urge all Libyan parties to observe a ceasefire and return to UN-led political talks. We work closely with the governments of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco to promote an end to the fighting in Libya and the wider security and development of the region. UK programming, through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund, supports these aims.

Nuclear Disarmament

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council about nuclear disarmament. [HL3948]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK works with the other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (or P5) to uphold the global security framework, and, in their character as Nuclear Weapon States recognised by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), on nuclear disarmament. In 2009, the UK initiated

the so-called 'P5 Process' of dialogue between the five on issues related to the NPT. In February 2020 the UK hosted the ninth Conference of this process in London, where the five Nuclear Weapons States considered progress on the three pillars of the NPT - disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy - and preparations for the next NPT Review Conference. During its coordination of the P5 process in 2019/20, the UK has prioritised P5 collective work on increasing confidence and transparency, as well as building our mutual understanding of strategic risk reduction concepts and our respective nuclear doctrines. In addition, with the other Nuclear Weapon States, the UK fully participates in the Conference of Disarmament and other international meetings, including the US-led 'Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament' initiative, to progress our collective commitment to eventual nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear Weapons: Security

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the resilience of the UK nuclear deterrent, particularly in relation to cyber threats. [HL3947]

Baroness Goldie: We continually assess the capability of the United Kingdom's nuclear submarine fleet to ensure its operational effectiveness and to maintain resilience and protection against both existing and emerging threats, including cyber threats. Her Majesty's Government has absolute confidence in the robust measures in place to keep the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent safe and secure.

Prisoners' Release: Care Homes

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to seek powers for the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme to apply to Secure Children's Homes, and if so, when. [HL3689]

Lord Keen of Elie: The safety and well-being of children in custody is of utmost importance. We are committed to containing the spread of COVID-19 within all secure settings, including in secure children's homes (SCHs) – all of which are abiding by the principles of physical distancing within revised regimes.

The End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) scheme does not currently apply to SCHs.

Although there are currently no children in SCHs who would meet the public or child protection criteria for ECTR, we will determine how to extend ECTR to SCHs should it become necessary i.e. a child is identified as potentially being or becoming in-scope.

Public Libraries

Asked by Lord Bird

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prioritise libraries for early re-opening as lockdown restrictions are lifted; and what discussions they have had with the Local Government Association on this issue. [HL3750]

Baroness Barran: Although physical library locations have closed, library services continue to provide and deliver services to its users. This includes online services such as access to e-books and e-audiobooks, where there has been a significant increase in demand, as well as developing innovative and exciting digital ways to provide services such as Rhyme Time and Storytimes, often reaching far more people than before.

Ministers and officials have held regular calls with public library stakeholders, including the Local Government Association (LGA) since the announcement on 23 March that libraries were to close. These now include discussions related to the re-opening of library services and how this can be achieved in a safe way for both staff and users.

DCMS is working with the library sector and the LGA to identify issues, and to develop guidance, around the measures that public libraries will need to take to enable physical library buildings to reopen and for services to begin to be restored in a phased manner in due course.

Repatriation: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent steps they have taken to repatriate (1) British citizens, and (2) UK residents, overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3861]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government is working with the airline industry and host governments across the world to help bring back British travellers to the UK as part of the plan announced by the Foreign Secretary on 30 March - with up to £75 million available for special charter flights from priority countries, focused on helping the most vulnerable travellers. We have now brought home nearly 31,000 people on 144 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 27 countries and territories.

To get as many people back as quickly as possible, we have encouraged and facilitated the use of commercial transport options where these exist. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work with airlines and foreign governments to keep vital routes open. Our effort is now focused on supporting the return as quickly and safely as possible of the tens of thousands British nationals remaining overseas and wishing to return.

Roads: Litter

Asked by *Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the amount of littering from vehicles has increased during the last 12 months and, if so, by how much. [HL3993]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government does not collect data on littering rates and has made no assessment of whether littering from vehicles has increased or decreased in the last 12 months.

Data on a range of indicators relating to litter in England is published annually on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/litter-and-littering-in-england-data-dashboard>

The most recently-published data indicated that around 9 in 10 sites in England met the required standards of cleanliness in 2017-18. Data for 2018-19 will be published later this year.

Data from Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) shows that 94% of main roads, 89% of rural roads, and 93% of 'other highways' met the required standards of cleanliness in 2017-18, based on an independent survey of 7,200 sites across 25 local authorities. This is broadly comparable with their results from a similar survey for 2014-15, although differences in the survey sample and methodology prevent direct comparisons. The full 2017-18 report from KBT can be found online at: <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org>

From April 2018, we have increased the powers available to councils to tackle littering from vehicles by giving councils in England and outside London new powers to issue civil penalties to the keeper of vehicles from which litter is thrown. Similar power are already held by councils in London.

Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment

Asked by *Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Saudi Arabia about the application of its royal decree to end the death penalty for crimes committed by minors; and what clarification they have sought as to whether that decree applies to all (1) children, and (2) adults whose alleged crimes were committed while they were children, who are currently on death row. [HL3703]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome the decision by Saudi Arabia to end the use of the death penalty as a discretionary punishment for minors, including those under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged crime. We will monitor the implementation of this decision.

The Saudi authorities understand our position: we oppose the death penalty in all circumstances and especially in cases that involve child defendants. This position is in line with the minimum standards set out in

the 2008 EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty; the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and, the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

The former Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised our concerns about the death penalty with Deputy Justice Minister HE Abdullah Al Sulaimi on 11 February. The Foreign Secretary also raised our human rights concerns with Saudi Arabia during his visit in March this year.

We will continue to raise our concerns with the Government of Saudi Arabia to promote the protection of all child defendants against the death penalty regardless of the crime committed. We will encourage the authorities to review death penalty judgements for all minors, or individuals who were minors when the crime was committed.

Social Services: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Wheeler*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many local authorities have used the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to suspend or reduce (1) care assessments, (2) carer assessments, (3) financial assessments and (4) care reviews. [HL3971]

Lord Bethell: As of 6 May, seven local authorities have used the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Under the guidance for local authorities, there is no requirement to notify the Department about the details of the use of this provision. Recording by local authorities remains a priority and will help them to ensure accountability and provide evidence for the thought processes behind the decisions they will be making.

Social Services: Finance

Asked by *Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the announcement that the Welsh Government is giving additional payments to care workers, what consideration they have given to making similar payments. [HL4149]

Lord Bethell: The National Minimum Wage and Living Wage apply across social care and we expect local authorities to work with providers to determine a fair rate of pay.

Social Workers: Mental Health Services

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Newcastle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in place to provide mental health support for the social care workforce (1) during, and (2) after, the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3834]

Lord Bethell: The Government wants everybody working in social care to feel like they have somewhere to

turn, or someone to talk to, when they are finding things difficult.

Samaritans, Shout, Hospice UK and Mind have collaborated to launch 'Our Frontline' to provide information, emotional support and access to a crisis text service for frontline workers, including in social care. The Department has also launched an app that contains resources that focus on mental and physical wellbeing including access to wellbeing apps designed to provide support during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospice UK has also extended its bereavement and trauma line to provide dedicated support to social care staff and the Department is working with Samaritans to extend its dedicated listening service to the social care workforce as soon as possible.

South China Sea

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China about that government's naming of 80 reefs, seamounts, shoals and ridges and other geographical features in the South China Sea, 55 of those submerged at all states of the tide; and what assessment they have made of that government's claims to sovereignty on underwater features more than 12 nautical miles from Chinese land. [HL3883]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The position of Her Majesty's Government is to oppose any activity which raises tensions or seeks to alter the facts on the ground in the South China Sea. We take no position on sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea and encourage all parties to settle their disputes peacefully through the existing legal mechanisms, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We have frequent discussions with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and several other nations on the South China Sea, including as part of high-level political dialogues. Officials have raised our concerns about recent incidents in the South China Sea, including the creation of new administrative territories, with Chinese authorities.

China is a party to UNCLOS and ratified it in 1996. The UK challenges China where their interpretation differs from ours. For example, the UK has objected to China's claims based on "historic rights" in the South China Seas on the basis that such claims are not founded in law, insofar as it would be inconsistent with international law as reflected in UNCLOS.

The UK's position with regard to the classification of maritime features is that States may classify as islands those features which meet the definition of islands in Article 121(1) of UNCLOS. The UK's position is also that, as provided in Article 121(3) of UNCLOS, rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf. In addition, the UK's position is that under UNCLOS, low tide elevations which are situated

beyond the breadth of the territorial sea from the mainland or an island, are not entitled to a territorial sea, and cannot be appropriated by any State.

Speech and Language Therapy

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists about the use of aerosol generating procedures. [HL3211]

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to update the COVID-19 infection and control guidance, published on 6 April, to include all aerosol generating procedures carried out by speech and language therapists. [HL3212]

Lord Bethell: The evidence around aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) is being kept under review; the evidence review is led by Public Health Scotland.

Public Health England has not held discussions with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists about AGPs.

This guidance has been written and reviewed by all four United Kingdom public health bodies and informed by National Health Service infection prevention control experts. It is based on Health Protection Scotland evidence reviews and the evidence and reviews have been endorsed by New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG). A rapid evidence appraisal has been conducted by Health Protection Scotland to assess the risk of patient to healthcare worker infection transmission associated with a wide range of potentially aerosol generating medical procedures. An updated evidence review and the position on the presented evidence review from NERVTAG is awaited.

Students: Grants

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to offer emergency hardship grants to university students from low income households [HL3518]

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.

Higher education (HE) providers take their responsibilities seriously and are best placed to identify the needs of their student body, as well as how to develop the services needed to support it. HE providers need to consider how they support all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Many providers will have hardship funds to support students in times of need, including emergencies. The

expectation is that where any student requires additional support, providers will support them through their own hardship funds.

We have worked closely with the Office for Students to enable providers to draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19. As a result, providers will be able to use the funding, worth around £23 million per month for April and May, towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment, and mental health support, as well as to support providers' access and participation plans.

Students with a part-time employment contract should speak to their employer about the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#), which has been set up to help pay staff wages and keep people in employment.

Syria: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with overseas counterparts on a coherent international response to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic leading to further instability in Syria. [[HL4056](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK recognises the significant threat posed by COVID-19 in Syria. We are therefore speaking regularly to other countries and donors engaged in Syria as well as to the UN regarding the need to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Syria. In bilateral discussions we have also expressed our support for an immediate, nationwide ceasefire to enable complete focus on countering COVID-19. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa discussed this with Geir Pedersen, UN Special Envoy for Syria, on 1 April; President of the Syrian Negotiation Commission, Nasr al Hariri, on 14 April; the US Envoy for Syria, Ambassador Jeffrey, on 17 April; and the Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister on 27 April. We have also raised the risks posed by COVID-19 in Syria at the UN Security Council on 30 March and 29 April.

Travellers: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect public health in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3918](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government takes the welfare of all citizens seriously and we are working hard to ensure people get the support they need to look after themselves and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes enabling all communities to take the necessary measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs and Housing, Communities and Local Government (Lord Greenhalgh) wrote to councils outlining their responsibility to support

all communities, including Gypsy and Traveller communities, and to ensure they have access to water, sanitation and waste collections.

COVID-19 health guidance for members of Gypsy, Traveller and Boater communities is currently in development for dissemination in a range of formats.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have written to general practice reminding them of the importance of continuing to deliver appropriate care to their local population and the requirements on registration of patients, including those with no fixed address.

Universal Credit: Housing

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many applicants for the housing component of universal credit who have applied since 1 March will be subject to the spare room subsidy; and what percentage this is of the total applicants for the housing component since that date. [[HL4346](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Data for claimants on Universal Credit with a Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy deduction is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Yemen: Politics and Government

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current situation in southern Yemen, following the declaration on 25 April by Aydarous al-Zubaidi of the establishment of self-rule in Aden and other southern provinces in that country. [[HL4135](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The announcement of self-rule by the Southern Transitional Council is a dangerous move which risks prolonging the conflict. The UK supports the Saudi-brokered Riyadh Agreement between the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council. The Riyadh Agreement is the best means of restoring security and stability to Southern Yemen and the UK urges the parties to resume their efforts towards implementation. We are encouraging the parties to refrain from unconstructive acts and statements, and we are working with them to agree a way forward. This is more important than ever after the heavy flooding in the South and the recent confirmation of deaths in Yemen from COVID-19.

Zero Hours Contracts: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the benefits being made available to employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are available to those who were on zero-hours contracts and whose employment has ceased. [[HL3717](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government is committed to supporting people through this unprecedented time. We have introduced a number of measures, including the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), as well as ensuring Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is payable from day 1, to ensure people are supported.

Unemployed people who are not eligible for SSP or CJRS, may be able to claim Universal Credit (UC), 'new style' Jobseeker's Allowance, or 'new style' Employment

and Support Allowance, and this will include those people who are self-isolating in accordance with government guidelines.

People on zero hour contracts who are already claiming UC do not need to take any actions, as UC will auto adjust to represent the income received within that assessment period.

More information about the support available during the Covid-19 outbreak is available at: www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

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