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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers..... 4

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

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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

Tuesday, 19 May 2020

Anthony Grainger Inquiry Report

[HLWS238]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service (Kit Malthouse) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today the Government has published its formal response to the Anthony Grainger Public Inquiry and a copy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Anthony Grainger was shot dead on 3 March 2012 by an armed firearms officer of Greater Manchester Police as part of the covert investigation named Operation Shire. A public inquiry was announced by the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, in March 2016 to ascertain the circumstances surrounding Mr Grainger's death.

I would like to thank His Honour Judge Teague for publishing his report and for leading this important work, from which we have learnt valuable lessons for the future. The previous Home Secretary Sajid Javid committed to provide a formal response, once the Government had fully considered the report, and any recommendations therein and we are now in a position to do so.

The Government accepts the Inquiry's recommendation to the Home Office concerning the authorisation of new weapon systems. A revised Code of Practice for Armed Policing and Less Lethal Weapons was published by the College of Policing on 14 January 2020 making clear that all new less lethal weapons and specialist munitions for use by police forces in England and Wales, and all significant changes to these weapons, must be approved by the Home Secretary.

The majority of the AGI's recommendations related to operational policing and these are matters on which Chief Officers are independent of Government. Nonetheless my officials engaged with the National Police Chiefs Council and Greater Manchester Police to ensure that they have responded to the concerns raised by the Inquiry and understand their plans to improve the safety of armed policing operations. Their responses have reassured me that lessons have been learnt to improve the safety of armed policing operations in the seven years since the death of Anthony Grainger.

These included developing and maintaining a national register of recommendations and lessons from inquests, investigations and inquiries; reviewing and improving the collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence; and reviewing and improving the arrangements for the deployment of armed officers. I would like to thank the National Chiefs Police Council, Greater Manchester Police, HMICFRS and the College of Policing for their co-operation in responding to the Inquiry and the work that they have done to implement learning.

The police use of firearms, as with any use of force, must be necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances. It is essential that decisions by the police to use force of any kind are subject to proper scrutiny.

Our sympathy remains with Anthony Grainger's family who have lost a loved one.

The Response to the Anthony Grainger Inquiry will be available to view on Gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-the-anthony-grainger-public-inquiry>.

Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2012, No. 3118: Consultation

[HLWS240]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Rt. Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Housing (Christopher Pincher) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I wish to update the House on the publication of a consultation on changes to the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 (SI2012/3118).

The United Kingdom has set in law a target to bring its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 to help tackle climate change. Heating and powering buildings currently accounts for 40% of the UK's total energy usage. We must ensure that buildings are constructed to high standards of energy efficiency and that the regime for regulating the energy performance of buildings is robust.

This consultation seeks views on proposals to amend existing requirements for inspecting heating and air conditioning systems in order to improve the regime and contribute to carbon emission reductions and energy efficiency savings. The new requirements aim to strengthen the effectiveness of the regime by increasing the threshold for inspection to focus on larger systems. It further aims to improve the regime's impact by broadening the scope of inspection to include combined heating and ventilation systems and combined air conditioning and ventilation systems.

The Government proposes to retain its domestic arrangements (i.e. take the option of Alternative Measures). This means continuing to provide consumers with the advice necessary to make informed decisions on the energy efficiency of their heating systems and widening the scope to include combined heating and ventilation systems. The United Kingdom boiler market is the biggest in the world and has some of the most experienced manufacturers and installers. The United Kingdom's equivalence reports, which are required to demonstrate that the domestic policy achieves the aims intended by the changes to the regulations, have demonstrated that the carbon savings attributable to the UK's Alternative Measures were greater than those that would have been achieved through inspection. One of the key elements of the domestic regime is Boiler Plus whose standards are expected to help reduce carbon emissions by

up to 2 MtCO₂e[1] in Carbon Budget 4 (2023-2027)[2] and 3.2 MtCO₂e in Carbon Budget 5 (2028-2032)[3], whilst enabling consumers to heat homes at a lower cost.

The consultation also proposes to amend the inspection regime for air conditioning systems increasing the threshold and widening the scope to include combined air conditioning and ventilation systems, bringing with it the benefits of a stronger regime set out above.

These measures are only part of our journey towards a cleaner, greener built environment. The Government is determined that we will be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it and improving the energy performance of our buildings will be a key factor in tackling climate change, achieving clean growth and safeguarding our planet for the future.

This Written Ministerial Statement covers England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in relation to the inspection of heating systems. It covers England and Wales in respect of the proposed changes to air conditioning inspections. The devolved administrations are considering similar changes.

The consultation document can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/energy-performance-of-buildings-changes-to-the-energy-performance-of-buildings-regulations-2012-no-3118>

I am depositing a copy of the consultation in libraries of both the House of Commons and House of Lords.

[1] A metric measure used to compare the emissions from different greenhouse gases based upon their global warming potential (GWP).

[2] 4th carbon budget (2023 to 2027) 1,950 MtCO₂e

[3] 5th carbon budget (2028 to 2032) 1,725 MtCO₂e.

Future Relationship with the EU: Negotiations

[HLWS239]

Lord True: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Michael Gove) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Government has made a commitment to update Parliament on the progress of our future relationship negotiations with the EU. This statement provides an update on the third round of negotiations. It also notes that the UK's draft legal texts are being made public today.

Negotiators from the UK and the EU held discussions through video conferencing on 11 – 15 May 2020 for the third round of negotiations on the UK-EU future relationship. This was a full and constructive negotiating round, covering the full range of issues with both sides discussing full legal texts. The round was opened by the UK's Chief Negotiator, David Frost, and by the European Commission's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, in a plenary session on 11 May. There were then discussions across all the issues and the session closed with a further plenary on 15 May.⁴

Discussions covered all workstreams including:

- Trade in Goods – Market access and rules of origin, trade remedies, customs, technical barriers to trade and SPS.

- Trade in Services – Investment, temporary entry for business purposes, professional qualifications, professional and business services, financial services and digital.

- Fisheries – Discussion on control and enforcement, conservation and sustainable exploitation, and scientific evidence, all principally on the basis of the draft Fisheries Framework Agreement provided to the EU the previous week.

- Transport – Aviation and aviation safety, road haulage and passenger transport.

- Energy – Civil nuclear cooperation, gas and electricity trading, climate change and carbon pricing.

- Mobility and Social Security Coordination – Including the UK's legal text on social security coordination.

- Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice – UK presentation of the UK Law Enforcement Treaty with detailed discussions on operational capabilities.

- Thematic cooperation – Covering health security; asylum and illegal migration; unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; cyber security; and security of information.

- Participation in Union Programmes - General terms for UK participation in programmes, including provisions for financial contribution.

- “Level Playing Field” - Including subsidies, competition policy, and trade and sustainable development.

- Horizontal Issues - Governance arrangements, territorial scope.

Discussions showed that a standard Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, with other key agreements on issues like law enforcement, civil nuclear, and aviation alongside, all in line with the Political Declaration, could be agreed without major difficulties in the time available.

However, there remain some areas where we have significant differences of principle – notably fisheries, governance arrangements, and the so-called “level playing field”. It remains difficult to reach a mutually beneficial agreement while the EU maintains an ideological approach.

In order to facilitate discussions in the fourth Round and beyond, the Government is today making publicly available the draft legal texts we have shared with the Commission and which have formed the basis of our discussions, together of course with the EU's draft Agreement. The UK texts are fully in line with the Government's document “The Approach to the Future Negotiations” published on 27 February. Copies of the legal texts have been placed in the House Library and they are also available on GOV.UK.

This Government remains committed to a deal with a Free Trade Agreement at its core. We look forward to the fourth Round beginning on 1 June.

UK Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019

[HLWS241]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010 (TAFAs 2010), the Treasury is required to prepare a quarterly report regarding its exercise of the powers conferred on it by Part 1 of TAFAs 2010. This written statement satisfies that requirement for the period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

This report also covers the UK's implementation of the UN's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida asset freezing regime (ISIL-AQ), and the operation of the EU's asset freezing regime under EU Regulation (EC) 2580/2001 concerning external terrorist threats to the EU (also referred to as the CP 931 regime).

Under the ISIL-AQ asset freezing regime, the UN has responsibility for designations and the Treasury, through the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida (Asset-Freezing) Regulations 2011.

Under EU Regulation 2580/2001, the EU has responsibility for designations and OFSI has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under Part 1 of TAFAs 2010.

EU Regulation (2016/1686) was implemented on 22 September 2016. This permits the EU to make autonomous Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) listings.

The tables attached set out the key asset-freezing activity in the UK during the quarter.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime Q4 2019 [Asset freezing activity q4 2019.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-05-19/HLWS241/>

Written Answers

Tuesday, 19 May 2020

Apache AH-64 Helicopters

Asked by *Lord Moonie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assumed maintenance cost per flying hour for Apache AH-64E helicopters after they have come into service has been included in planning assumptions. [HL4243]

Baroness Goldie: The Apache AH64E support costs are subject to on-going commercial negotiations.

Aviation: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the aviation sector about the impact of the proposed 14 day quarantine period on that industry. [T] [HL4298]

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

The Department for Transport has kept an open dialogue with the aviation sector and put in place regular structured engagement on both Ministerial and official level. Recent discussions have included the impact of the proposed 14 day quarantine period. In addition, the International Aviation Taskforce has been established which aims to:

- ensure that COVID-19 secure guidelines are developed in line with the phased approach and public health directions, building on the existing guidance and providing intelligence and sector-specific expert input;
- agree and ensure alignment of all relevant sectoral guidance; and
- provide key sector stakeholders direct access to Ministers to shape the guidance.

Our transport systems are critical to support the restart of the wider economy and we continue to work closely with the aviation sector on these restart plans and the longer-term recovery of the sector.

Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Asked by *The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Bounce Back Loan Scheme is a replacement for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and, if so, whether the latter will be phased out; and what assessment they have made of how many applications they expect to be made to the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, and how many of these they expect to be successful. [HL3952]

Lord Callanan: The Bounce Back Loan Scheme will operate alongside the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS). Both are temporary schemes supporting small and medium-sized businesses during these unprecedented times.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme provides businesses with annual turnover of under £45m with access to working capital of up to £5m. It supports a wide range of business finance products, including term loans, overdrafts, invoice finance and asset finance facilities.

The Bounce Back Loan Scheme supports the smallest SMEs by providing loans from £2,000 up to 25% of the business' turnover, with a maximum loan size of £50,000. This Scheme launched on 4 May and requires businesses to complete a short, simple, online application form, meaning that applications can be processed rapidly.

A business is not able to take out a Bounce Back Loan Scheme facility if they have been approved for a CBILS facility, and vice versa. However, all accredited lenders who have approved CBILS loans so far will allow customers to refinance their loan into the Bounce Back Loan Scheme where appropriate.

More than 69,000 Bounce Back Loans worth over £2 billion have been approved during the first 24 hours of the scheme.

The Government continues to work with the British Business Bank, HM Treasury and lenders to assess how effectively these schemes are working.

Business: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that (1) firms observe social distancing guidelines, and (2) workers are adequately protected at work, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3842]

Lord Callanan: The Government has introduced important social distancing measures for all types of business to consider in order to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 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 increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 need to be particularly stringent about social distancing measures. Additionally, the Government guidance sets out that workers who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable should be supported by their employers as they follow the required social distancing and shielding measures.

If the business is not operating in line with 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 identified 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 works in the shielded category can follow NHS advice to self-isolate for the specified period – 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.

Children: ICT

Asked by Baroness Royall of Blaisdon

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the announcement on 19 April that they will provide laptops, tablets and 4G routers to vulnerable children across the UK, how many children at primary and secondary schools have received these items; and what percentage that number constitutes of the total number of those in need. [HL3907]

Baroness Berridge: The Government has committed over £100 million to support remote education, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G routers to vulnerable and disadvantaged children in England to access educational resources and social services.

We are providing laptops and tablets to disadvantaged children and families who would otherwise not have access and are receiving support from a social worker, including pre-school children and families; are a care leaver; or are preparing for examination in Year 10.

Where care leavers, children and families with a social worker at secondary school and children in Year 10 do not have internet connections, we will be providing 4G routers.

The Department has allocated devices to Responsible Bodies based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that do not have a device. Local authorities, academy trusts and other relevant organisations overseeing schools have been given guidance on how to request and order devices. We believe that local authorities and academy trusts are best placed to identify and prioritise children and young people who need devices.

We are working to provide these devices in the shortest possible timeframe.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many businesses have had a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan application (1) approved, and (2) rejected. [HL3838]

Lord Callanan: As of 6 May, in total over £5.5 billion worth of loans have been issued under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to 33,812

businesses. Lenders have received 62,674 completed applications.

In order to minimise administrative burden and therefore facilitate the issuing of as many loans as possible, the British Business Bank's system only gathers data from lenders when loans are offered and drawn. Decisions on whether to capture information relating to rejected loans are at the discretion of the lender.

We are working with the British Business Bank, HM Treasury and the lenders on providing transparent and regular data publication going forward.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review the economic incentive for employers and agencies to furlough casual workers in cases where (1) employers and agencies do not have any contractual obligations to provide workers with work and no correlative duty to pay, and (2) employers may have potential future liability to pay casual workers with redundancy pay after undertaking a fair redundancy procedure. [HL3986]

Lord Callanan: The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is designed to help employers whose operations have been severely affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) to retain their employees and protect the UK economy. Employers can claim for employees on any type of employment contract, including full-time, part-time, agency, flexible or zero hours contracts.

In this unprecedented time, we would urge employers and agencies to take socially responsible decisions and listen to the concerns of their workforce. Employers and employees, including casual workers, should come to a pragmatic agreement about these arrangements. We have been clear that employers should carefully consider the guidance.

However, the scheme is not an employment right and it is up to the employer to decide who to furlough.

Normal redundancy rules and payments apply while an employee is furloughed. The employee will maintain rights to redundancy payments and against unfair dismissal during the period of furlough. Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grants cannot be used to substitute redundancy payments.

Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the policy that allows employees and workers paid via PAYE to be furloughed by more than one employer under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, why they have required 50 per cent of an individual's income to be from self-employment in order to be able to access 80 per cent profits under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme; and what assessment they have made of the potential merits of lowering the threshold of

income from self-employment from 50 per cent to 25 per cent. [HL3988]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) aims to provide financial support to those who rely on self-employment as their main source of income, so that it is targeted at those who need it most. Many individuals earn small amounts of income from self-employment in addition to income from employment and other sources.

These individuals may benefit from other support, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The SEISS supplements the significant support already announced for UK businesses, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Bounce Back Loans Scheme and the deferral of tax payments.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support calls for a global truce and ceasefire to support international cooperation in regard to COVID-19 and its impact on countries with no welfare systems and the urban poor. [HL4338]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK supports the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in armed conflicts. We are deeply concerned about the impact that Covid-19 will have on vulnerable countries, particularly those tackling extreme poverty. We continue to work within the UN Security Council to promote initiatives which will build on the global ceasefire and marshal support for UN efforts to take forward peace processes and mitigate risks of conflict escalation. To give a specific example, the UK and Germany are leading on negotiations in the Council to establish a new UN mission in Sudan which, within its support for ongoing political transition, will also have a mandate to support the peace process and implementation of any future peace agreement.

The UK is leading with partners and allies to support an effective and co-ordinated global health response led by the World Health Organisation, reinforce the resilience of vulnerable countries, pursue a vaccine and support the global economy. The UK is working together with international partners to achieve these objectives, including with the G7, G20, the UN and other multilateral institutions, in order to ensure a stronger global effort.

Cycling: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation took place to inform the new guidance on cycling during the COVID-19 pandemic; and how they intend to police that guidance. [T] [HL4296]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: This guidance has been fast-tracked without consultation because of the need to make sure the opportunity to improve cycling and walking facilities is not missed – the Government has only a few weeks in which action can be taken. The guidance will be reviewed after 3 months and local authorities and others will be involved in that process.

The guidance sets out our vision for ensuring active travel is embedded in local authorities' green restart plans. We expect them to be prioritising walking and cycling and considering how to make adjustments to their roads to enable social distancing. The Department is not responsible for policing what local authorities implement on their roads.

Debt Collection

Asked by Lord Best

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Centre for Social Justice Collecting Dust, published on 26 April, what assessment they have made of the ability of existing debt collection processes by public sector bodies to meet the equivalent standards expected of private sector firms regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. [HL4141]

Asked by Lord Best

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendation in the Centre for Social Justice report Collecting Dust, published on 26 April, for the introduction of a Debt Management Bill. [HL4142]

Lord True: We welcome the Centre for Social Justice's report, which highlights that excellent progress has been made in government debt management and suggests further areas for improvement. The Centre for Social Justice report notes the work of the government Fairness Group, the Breathing Space policy and reduction in the rate of benefit deductions as recent advances.

The Government Debt Management Function will be launching a Call for Evidence to gather views on the current debt management approach.

It is important to note that Fairness Principles are embedded in government debt management and are aligned to FCA principles for Treating Customers Fairly. I would encourage the Centre for Social Justice, along with other interested parties to submit evidence through the Call for Evidence.

Developing Countries: Nutrition

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to ensure (1) the continuation, and (2) the provision, of Nutrition for Growth funding at the start of 2021. [HL4100]

Baroness Sugg: Global commitments to nutrition made at the 2013 Nutrition for Growth Summit come to an end this year. Continued investment to prevent and treat malnutrition is important, particularly as countries face worsening levels of malnutrition in the face of COVID-19.

DFID is assessing options for the UK commitment now that both the Olympic pledging event and the main Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit have been postponed. The UK remains committed to preventing and treating malnutrition as part of our commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children. We will provide an update on our plans in due course.

Financial Services: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Baroness Andrews

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made towards negotiating each of their intended financial service equivalence regimes with the EU. [T] [HL4213]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Equivalence assessments are unilateral processes and thus not part of the ongoing negotiations on the future UK/EU partnership. The UK and EU are currently conducting their own assessments in line with their internal processes, collecting information from the corresponding authorities.

Food Poverty: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address food insecurity around the world exacerbated by COVID-19. [HL3900]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is repurposing programmes in agriculture, social protection and humanitarian assistance to tackle the factors driving COVID-19 induced food insecurity in developing countries. We are a major funder of existing multilateral programmes in these areas, including the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. We have committed £15m to the World Food Programme's recent urgent appeals. The recent £7.5m contribution to the Food and Agriculture Organisation will help fight the locust plague in East Africa. We are assessing potential trends in the COVID-19 exacerbated impacts on agriculture and food security, for example, through our bilateral Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness programme. We are learning the lessons from previous crises and are sharing the evidence for improved action. In all of this, we continue to put the poorest and most marginalised at the heart of our programmes to address the underlying causes of chronic hunger.

Foreign Students: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to international students stranded in universities across the England due to the coronavirus crisis. [HL3659]

Baroness Berridge: We have been working closely with the higher education sector to ensure that it provides the additional support needed for international students who have decided to remain in the UK or who are unable to travel at present. Universities have an obligation to ensure that students have continued accommodation and access to essential services in the UK for the duration of their stay. Universities are also offering a range of support to students, including support for catering and cleaning, and providing support for mental health.

We have worked closely with the Office for Students to enable providers to draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and to support disadvantaged students – both domestic and international – 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 for the purchase of IT equipment and mental health support as well as to support providers' access and participation plans.

We 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 the student's home country – so that their teaching and assessment can proceed. Many providers are also bolstering their existing mental health services and adapting delivery to means other than face-to-face.

The government is also applying discretion under the current circumstances to ensure that international students are not negatively impacted if they find themselves in a position where they cannot comply with certain visa rules. The government has published bespoke Tier 4 visa guidance for students and sponsors who are 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.

Groceries Code Adjudicator

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish the outcome of the second Statutory Review of the role of the Groceries Code Adjudicator. [HL3901]

Lord Callanan: A report on the findings of the second Statutory Review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator will be published and laid before Parliament as soon as practicable.

Higher Education: Research

Asked by *Lord Blunkett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the research sustainability taskforce is expected to publish its recommendations; and what assessment that taskforce has made of the impact of any decrease in income from international students on the ability of higher education institutions to conduct research. [T] [[HL4217](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Taskforce was announced on 4 May. It was created to advise Government on the urgent decisions needed to ensure the university research sector emerges from the pandemic able to contribute to UK society and the economy in the recovery and beyond. It will not produce formal recommendations to government. It will advise government as it seeks to address challenges to the sustainability of university research and knowledge exchange arising from COVID-19 including loss of income from international students.

Homelessness: Children

Asked by *Baroness Sheehan*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, through the UN, to reinforce the need for formal registration documents for each child so that in times of crisis children with no fixed household can be identified. [[HL4038](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The Government is committed to supporting efforts to meet Sustainable Development Goal 16.9 which aims to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030. The Government continues to advocate for the issuance of civil documentation in specific post-conflict countries through UN mechanisms, including the Security Council Working Group for Children and Armed Conflict.

Last year DFID approved a four-year £15 million [Digital Identity as an Enabler for Development](#) programme to support the World Bank Group's Identification for Development initiative to implement trusted, secure, universal and inclusive digital Identification and civil registration systems from birth to death in over 40 countries.

[Children on the Move](#) is a DFID-funded 3-year programme (2017-2020) working with UNICEF to help children on the move in Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. In Somalia the work includes providing children with a legal identity, without which they are at a greater risk of family separation, trafficking and illegal adoption. In 2019, 101,300 children were provided with legal identity documents including a birth certificate.

As well as this, some of the £30 million which DFID is providing to the [Global Financing Facility \(GFF\)](#) supports birth registration in DRC, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda and Uganda.

Hospices: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional (1) funds, and (2) equipment, they intend to provide for the hospice movement to deal with the rising death rate during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL3772](#)]

Lord Bethell: To support the hospice movement in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 8 April 2020 additional funding of up to £200 million for hospices as part of a wider package of £750 million for the wider voluntary and charity sector. This funding is supporting hospices by securing capacity to relieve pressure on the National Health Service as the Government manages its response to COVID-19.

The Department is also actively taking steps to ensure that staff operating in the hospice sector have access to the proper equipment, including adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), to continue to provide palliative and end of life care during this challenging period.

To address continuity of supply concerns, central delivery points provided by hospices, including children's hospices, to the Department will get weekly drops of PPE until they can be added to the PPE e-commerce ordering portal. The Department will continue to work with the hospice sector to ensure they have the support they need during this challenging period.

Hospitals: Coronavirus

Asked by *Baroness Manzoor*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many BAME NHS staff are working directly on the COVID-19 frontline; whether such staff are provided with any specific safety information or guidance in addition to any guidance provided to all NHS staff working on the frontline; and if so, (1) what is that guidance, and (2) where such guidance is published. [[HL3833](#)]

Lord Bethell: Data on the number of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) National Health Service staff working directly on COVID-19 is not held centrally.

Guidance for all BAME colleagues working in the NHS has been published by NHS England and is available on the NHS England website. This is in addition to information from NHS Employers on COVID-19 and the prioritisation and management of risk, including ethnicity. NHS England is prioritising engagement with staff and staff networks and are looking to hear and learn from lived experience, to share guidance, and to hear views on what support is required nationally. NHS England has started a series of webinars with staff networks across organisations and disciplines using existing BAME, faith and other networks.

Hospitals: Staff

Asked by *Baroness Manzoor*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the (1) doctor, and (2) nurse, shortfall in NHS hospitals in (1) January, (2) February, and (3) March; how those positions were filled; and who took on those roles. [HL3830]

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

The Government has pledged to increase nurse numbers by 50,000 in England by 2025. As part of this commitment, eligible pre-registration nursing students enrolled on courses at English universities from September 2020 will receive a payment of at least £5,000 per academic year which they will not need to pay back. There will be up to £3,000 additional funding for some students to support with childcare costs, students studying specialist subjects or students studying in areas struggling to recruit.

An additional 1,500 undergraduate medical school places are being made available for domestic students in England - a 25% increase over three years by September 2020.

The interim NHS People Plan committed to re-balancing the supply of doctors across geographies and specialties. When the final NHS People Plan is published, scheduled to be later this year, it will explore options for growing the medical workforce.

House of Lords: Costs

Asked by *Baroness Doocey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the annual cost of employment for each member of the House of Lords salaried under the Ministerial and Other Salaries Act 1975, including (1) employer national insurance contributions, (2) employer pension contributions, and (3) any other costs. [HL4085]

Lord True: The information requested is not held centrally. The Ministerial and Other Salaries Act 1975 sets out the salary entitlements for different ministerial positions. Information on which ministers are paid a salary and data on the various salary levels are published on gov.uk. The Ministerial and other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991 provides for an allowance for ministerial and other office-holders in the House of Lords, as well provision for determining the Exchequer contribution to be paid into the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund. Information relating to national insurance contributions, employer pension contributions and any other costs, including allowances claimed, is not held centrally.

Humanitarian Aid: Conflict Resolution

Asked by *Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase coordination between humanitarian aid and development and peace building programmes. [HL3899]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: DFID is promoting collaboration between humanitarian, development, conflict and diplomatic teams through shared Country Development Diagnostics and joint country planning. DFID also promotes greater collaboration to link up humanitarian cash transfer initiatives with social protection systems. DFID is investing in financing instruments that can be accessed before or at the outset of a shock to reduce its impact. In 2017 the UK established the Centre for Disaster Protection, which offers impartial advice to help countries understand and manage risks such as droughts or hurricanes.

Internationally, the UK doubled last years contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund from £8 million to £16 million per year. The Fund brings together humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors to take forward vital conflict prevention efforts and build the capacity of UN country teams to address conflict drivers. Since 2018, 30% of UK core funding to UN agencies is performance based, dependent on the collective delivery of key reforms agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit. Targets include measures to improve collaboration, notably through joint and impartial needs assessments, scale up and coordinated cash transfers and enhanced engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

Humanitarian Aid: Crimes of Violence

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that gender-based violence will be a strategic priority in the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. [HL4114]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is deeply concerned about the surge in gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have consistently encouraged the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to prioritise GBV within the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) through bilateral channels and joint advocacy with other donors. Revising the GHRP to explicitly include a standalone objective on GBV will prove lifesaving for women and girls.

Whilst we are pleased to see improvements in how GBV is being addressed overall in the GHRP, the UK will continue to champion a standalone objective on GBV in future versions. All UN agencies and international actors

must demonstrate that the shadow pandemic of GBV is taken seriously in the global response to COVID-19 and be held accountable for addressing GBV.

Israeli Settlements

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the government of Israel about its planned annexation of parts of the West Bank. [HL3863]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We made clear our deep concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law. The Prime Minister reiterated our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during a call with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 6 February.

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the government of Israel in respect of Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank. [HL4255]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We made clear our deep concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 23 April. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law. The Prime Minister reiterated our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during a call with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 6 February.

Ministers: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) which Ministers are working from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and (2) whether they have taken a reduction in their salary as a result. [HL4041]

Lord True: The business of government continues, and Ministers continue to work full time; their associated officeholder status accordingly is unchanged. In line with prevailing Government guidance, Ministers are working from home where they are able to do so.

NHS: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many NHS staff had received a negative COVID-19 test result and returned to work by 27 April; and what impact this has had on planned delays to cancer surgeries. [HL3472]

Lord Bethell: We do not hold information on the number of National Health Service staff who have tested negative for COVID-19 and returned to work as a result of a negative test. If a member of staff tests negative, then they can return to work if they are well enough to do so and should discuss this with their employing organisation.

Essential and urgent cancer treatments are continuing. The NHS is adapting how it runs its cancer services to ensure the safety of both patients and staff – this includes establishing dedicated cancer hubs for urgent treatment and diagnosis.

Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide support to help address losses of livelihood in Africa and the Middle East caused by COVID-19. [HL3922]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is working in Africa and the Middle East to minimise the immediate risk to life from COVID-19, whilst protecting recent development gains.

We are directly supporting the most vulnerable, including women and girls, through adapting our existing programmes to address the primary impacts of COVID-19 (health and humanitarian programmes) and the secondary impacts (social protection, economic support and livelihoods). Our support is helping to keep goods and supply chains flowing to help minimise negative long-term economic impacts. As a last resort, and where necessary, we are also providing support to our own supply partners to ensure we maintain critical programmes delivering for vulnerable people.

We have so far pledged up to £744 million of UK aid in the COVID-19 response, including up to £150 million to the International Monetary Fund to support vulnerable economies. The UK is leading the way in responding to the economic impact of coronavirus by mitigating loss of livelihoods, higher prices and wider social impacts, and helping to build resilience.

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations around the world, including (1) women, (2) refugees and, (3) migrants. [HL3923]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: To date, the UK has committed £744 million in the international fight against COVID-19. We are a key contributor to the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan, which is supporting the most vulnerable, including women and girls, refugees and migrants.

New UK funding to the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) and other partners will help install hand-washing stations and isolation and treatment centres in refugee camps, provide protection and education services for forcibly displaced children, and increase access to clean water for displaced people living in areas of armed conflict.

The UK is also providing significant support to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to help make sure life-saving family planning, HIV drugs and equipment needed to care for the survivors of sexual assault can get to the most vulnerable in developing countries. Further support to UNICEF and the Education Cannot Wait initiative will ensure disadvantaged children do not get left behind and deliver protection services for children and women affected by violence.

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what increases they intend to make in funding to support international development responses to the potential secondary impacts of COVID-19. [HL3924]

Baroness Sugg: We are taking decisive and co-ordinated action based on the science and evidence, mitigating COVID-19's primary and secondary impacts, in support of the poorest and most vulnerable.

We are using UK aid and British expertise to provide leadership internationally. DFID has pledged up to £744 million of UK aid to support the global effort to combat COVID-19. This includes providing up to £150 million to the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust to support vulnerable economies. In addition, DFID is also adapting its programmes across its country network. This will support both the immediate response including secondary impacts, and in due course the longer-term recovery. The UK has also pledged £1.65 billion to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance to stop the spread of deadly infectious diseases by vaccinating up to 75 million children and strengthening health systems to help them deal with the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases.

We are also working closely with other international partners to support a holistic response. For example, the Secretary of State has been speaking regularly to other Development Ministers including those from G7 countries, the Nordics, Netherlands and Australia. She has established a series of ongoing informal meetings with them, jointly chaired with Canada, to work together on the challenges of COVID-19 to international development.

Asked by Baroness Manzoor

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition globally. [HL4099]

Baroness Sugg: Services to address food insecurity and malnutrition are part of DFID's immediate response to COVID-19 in many of the countries where we work.

We are supporting UNICEF to make sure life-saving supplies to treat acute malnutrition continue to reach children at most risk across the Sahel as well as in Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen. We are also using programmes in agriculture, social protection and humanitarian assistance to tackle the factors driving COVID-19 induced food insecurity. We are a major funder of existing multilateral programmes in these areas. We have also committed £15 million to the World Food Programme's recent urgent appeals.

In all cases we continue to put the poorest and most marginalised at the heart of our programmes to address the immediate and underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition, including in the face of COVID-19.

Overseas Aid: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Greengross

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Department for International Development prioritises non-communicable diseases through its Universal Health Coverage programs. [HL4002]

Baroness Sugg: DFID's approach to non-communicable diseases is focused on improving the provision of basic health services for the poorest by supporting health systems strengthening such as improving health worker capacity and access to essential medicines. This helps to increase coverage, equity, access and quality of health services to address all health problems including non-communicable diseases.

As part of these efforts the UK Government continues to champion universal health coverage (UHC) to ensure access to quality essential services for all. UHC includes ensuring that no one is impoverished through paying for health services and reducing financial barriers for essential services, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable.

Pakistan: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Pakistan about releasing from prison Saeed Waraich, Professor Mohammad Ismail, Junaid Hafeez and Waqar Ahmad, in the light of the threat of COVID-19 to detainees in prisons in Pakistan. [HL4378]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In February, I raised concerns about the situation for prisoners in detention

under trial in Pakistan, particularly for blasphemy cases including that of Junaid Hafeez, as well as the UK's opposition to the death penalty with Dr Shireen Mazari, Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights. The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Christian Turner CMG, raised the UK Government's concerns about the death penalty and misuse of blasphemy legislation with Dr Mazari in January.

Since then we have discussed the impact of COVID-19 in Pakistan regularly with senior stakeholders. We have not raised the issue of release of prisoners in light of COVID-19.

Palestinians: Recognition of States

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise Palestine as a state. [HL3850]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are clear that we want to see the creation of a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian state - living in peace and security, side by side with Israel. The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace.

Postgraduate Education

*Asked by **Lord Bassam of Brighton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what process they will use to decide the lengths of extension given to doctoral students funded by UK Research and Innovation; and how that process will take into account the level of uncertainty about the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic when determining the lengths of extension granted. [T] [HL4215]

Lord Callanan: The Government is aware of the consequent pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic on doctoral students and their ability to complete work. This is a difficult time for all post graduate students, academic staff and researchers.

UKRI is continuing to engage with the higher education sector and have made sure that all doctoral students funded by UKRI will continue to be paid their stipend. On 9 April it was announced that it will offer a costed extension of up to six months for UKRI PhD students due to complete by 31 March 2021 whose study has been impacted by the pandemic. Those students not in their final year may be granted extensions on a case by case basis.

On 24 April, UKRI issued detailed guidance to universities on how the policy should be implemented. UKRI has outlined that universities must put in place processes that are based upon the principles of ensuring all UKRI doctoral students are supported to complete their projects and that they should be treated fairly, generously and sympathetically given the disruptions caused to research programmes and individual's personal circumstances.

UKRI will continue to engage with the wider sector about the implementation of the extension and to identify and understand future impact. The extension will be reviewed in four months' time to ensure that any further impacts to doctoral training are taken into account.

Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Patel of Bradford***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following their decision to release low-risk prisoners during the COVID-19 pandemic, how many such prisoners have been released so far; and, what steps they are taking (1) to widen the criteria to include more prisoners convicted of non-violent and petty crimes, (2) to consider temporary release alongside early release, (3) to suspend the imposition of sentences under six months, and (4) to consider the release of elderly prisoners who do not pose a serious risk to the public. [HL3905]

Lord Keen of Elie: As of 11 May, 78 prisoners have been released early; 52 were released as part of the End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) scheme, and 26 were released on compassionate grounds.

The ECTR scheme is aimed at low-risk offenders approaching the end of their sentence and therefore will include prisoners convicted of some, but not all, non-violent and petty crimes. The eligible offences have been chosen to strike the right balance between protecting the public and reducing transmission in prisons.

Releases are just one part of a wider strategy to create headroom, including by increasing the capacity of the existing prison estate. Modelling suggests that the headroom reduction required to implement compartmentalisation of prisons as a control on the spread of the virus is around 5,500. We are on track to achieving this target.

We have no plans to end short term prison sentences. Sentencing is a matter for our independent courts, taking into account the circumstances of each case and following any relevant sentencing guidelines issued by the Sentencing Council. A custodial sentence should always be a last resort.

Elderly and acutely medically vulnerable prisoners who have been thoroughly risk-assessed are in scope for early release on compassionate grounds.

*Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners have been released under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme, and what assessment have they made of the number of prisoners that need to be released in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the prison population. [HL4013]

Lord Keen of Elie: As of 11 May, 78 prisoners have been released early; 52 were released as part of the End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) scheme, and 26 were released on compassionate grounds.

We are working hard to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the prison system as part of the national plan to protect the NHS and save lives. Modelling has provided an early indication that our COVID-19 strategy in prisons is having a positive impact on limiting deaths and the transmission of the virus within the estate.

Releases are just one part of a wider strategy to create headroom, including by increasing the capacity of the existing prison estate. Modelling suggests that the headroom required to fully implement compartmentalisation of prisons as a control on the spread of the virus is around 5,500. We are on track to achieving this target.

Remand in Custody: Pregnancy

Asked by Lord Hunt of Chesterton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many pregnant women are on remand, awaiting trial, in England and Wales. [HL3955]

Lord Keen of Elie: The number of pregnant women on remand is not centrally monitored. Information on pregnancy is monitored locally by prison Governors/Directors to ensure the appropriate supportive provisions can be put in place.

I am however, able to confirm that an ad hoc data collection exercise was undertaken last year, which found that at 15:00hrs on 28 October 2019, 47 women in prison self-declared as pregnant, including those on remand and who had been sentenced.

In July 2019 the Government began a review of pregnancy, Mother and Baby Units (MBUs), and Mothers separated from children (under two years of age) who are in prisons, which includes a strand of work on improving data collection. The review is due for completion later this year, and a report will be published in due course.

Section 5 of the Bail Act 1976 sets out the reasoning for refusing bail where:

- there are previous convictions of a similar nature against the same victim(s) with similar characteristics;
- there is evidence of undue influence over the victim, or evidence of ongoing violence or threats of violence to victim or his / her family;
- any potential bail conditions would not be adequate to remove the risk of failure to surrender, commission of a further offence or interfere with any witnesses;
- it is necessary for his / her protection;
- the defendant is already in custody on other matters e.g. recall or a serving prisoner; or
- the nature of the offence committed could lead to a risk of offending if released on bail e.g. where the defendant knows the victim or witness.

While there was an increase of 8% (520 to 559) in the number of women on remand in the year to March 2020,

this figure is comparable with the 564 women on remand at 31 March 2018.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, NPS are currently running a bail information service in the 136 courts that currently remain open, with a particular focus on those with 'protected characteristics' which include women. This service looks to ensure the identification of defendants who might be eligible for bail, and to provide sufficient information to the courts to enable them to make fully informed decisions in each individual case. As of 11 May 2020, 121 bail assessments have been completed by NPS Bail Information Officers, a proportion of which will apply to women.

Remote Working: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they are seeking to encourage remote working in the public sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL3897]

Lord True: The Government has been clear that people should work from home wherever possible. This applies to all workers, including those in the public sector, whilst recognising that many public sector workers continue to risk their lives in the service of their communities.

In the Civil Service, departments have been issued with working from home guidance as well as a practical working from home toolkit. This includes information on the safe and secure use of technology and data as well as advice on wellbeing, mental health and staying connected. Departments are creating their own guidance packages specific to their employees and are encouraging employees, their line managers and teams to have regular conversations during this period.

NHS England wrote to Chief Executives of all NHS trusts and providers of health services in March and April, asking that they continue to make adjustments, including allowing remote working where appropriate. All NHS secondary care providers now have access to video consultation technology to deliver some clinical care without the need for in-person contact. General practice has moved from carrying out around 90% of consultations as face-to-face appointments to managing more than 85% of consultations remotely.

To support the hard work of schools in delivering remote education, the Oak National Academy launched on 20 April - a brand-new enterprise created by 40 teachers from some of the leading schools across England, backed by government grant funding.

Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to issue further guidance on the process and deadlines for applying to the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. [HL3925]

Lord Callanan: Detailed guidance for businesses about the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund is published on GOV.UK setting out the process, eligibility and deadlines for applying to the scheme. This guidance is updated regularly to include additional information where necessary.

Rohingya: Contraceptives and Maternity Services

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the provision of sexual and reproductive health and rights services in the Rohingya refugee camps. [HL3847]

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the supply of contraceptive and maternity services in the Rohingya refugee camps. [HL3848]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Rohingya refugee camps, however, the humanitarian response has had time to prepare to the extent possible for an outbreak. Health facilities remain open, delivering comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, stocked with contraceptive options; and staff providing these critical services are accessing the camps. With the support of the UK, the UN Populations Fund has adapted its regular activities to better respond to COVID-19. They are working to ensure infection prevention and control measures are in place at all health facilities, including 22 DFID-supported health facilities. Isolation units are being equipped with maternity units and safe transport will be provided for infected pregnant mothers and women of reproductive age. However, fear and uncertainty about COVID-19 have seen a significant reduction in people visiting health facilities. The UK is working with all our humanitarian partners to ensure the specific needs of women and girls are taken into account in the COVID-19 response.

Russia and USA: Arms Control

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the governments of Russia and the United States about extending the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which is due to expire in February 2021. [HL3949]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We recognise the contribution the New START Treaty has made to international security by increasing transparency and mutual confidence amongst the two largest Nuclear Weapons States. The Treaty has delivered a reduction of

strategic nuclear arsenals, enhanced notably by its robust verification mechanism. We support its continued implementation and have encouraged the US to extend New START while negotiating any successor agreement.

However, we are also clear that New START has limitations. It does not include new Russian systems. Nor does it place any limits on China's growing nuclear arsenal. We therefore see real advantage in President Trump's call for a new strategic arms control agreement including China. We urge both Russia and China to engage seriously with the US on this initiative.

The UK regularly discusses these issues with the US and Russia. We recently had discussions on strategic arms control at a meeting of the five Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nuclear weapon states, or "P5", which took place in London on 12-13 February. At that meeting, all five states, including the US and Russia, underlined the importance of reducing nuclear risk and promoting stability, and agreed that dialogue on strategic risk reduction should continue.

Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies: Codes of Practice

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies is bound by the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees. [HL3939]

Lord Callanan: SAGE is a scientific advisory committee and as such follows the Science Advisory Committee guidance.

Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies: Devolution

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the advice given by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies is shared, on a routine basis, with the devolved administrations. [HL3937]

Lord Callanan: The Devolved Administrations are core participants of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). They therefore routinely receive all evidence papers and advice that SAGE provides.

Shipping: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that up to 2,000 UK seafarers have been stranded on ships. [T] [HL4268]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government reaffirmed its commitment to welfare for all seafarers to the ILO and IMO at the start of this crisis, which we will continue to uphold.

According to DfT data, the number of British crew members currently working on cruise vessels around the globe is closer to 1,400 rather than 2,000.

We recognise this is a worrying time for British crew on board cruise ships around the world. It is primarily the responsibility of their employers – the cruise ship operators – to ensure the welfare and safety of their staff. However, the Government continues to monitor the welfare of all UK seafarers and is working to support employers in their repatriation efforts for all non-essential staff.

South Africa: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Foakes

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they make of the number of UK nationals in South Africa awaiting repatriation; and what travel arrangements they have in hand to enable those nationals to return; and on what dates any flights for such purposes are due to occur. [HL3921]

Baroness Sugg: We are working closely with the Government of South Africa and airlines to ensure British nationals can return home from South Africa. To date, 2058 British travellers have returned home on ten special charter flights organised by the UK government. South African airspace is currently closed to commercial airlines as part of efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19. It is not yet clear when commercial flights will be permitted to operate again. The FCO does not have a central registration system for flights and British nationals will only be asked to register for flights with Corporate Travel Management (CTM) when charters have been announced for a country. We are looking at all options to help those stranded and the British High Commission is working hard to ensure that British nationals who remain in South Africa are safe and getting the support they need.

Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to make the position of UK Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief a permanent position; and, if so, whether the role will always be filled by a member of the House of Commons or House of Lords. [HL4380]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Bishop of Truro's independent Review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Support for Persecuted Christians recommended that the FCO "establish[es] permanently, and in perpetuity, the role of Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief". The choice of Special Envoy is a decision for the Prime Minister. I was honoured to be appointed in 2018 as the UK's first ever envoy, an appointment reconfirmed by the current Prime Minister in July 2019. Rehman Chishti MP succeeded me as Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in

September 2019, but I continue to champion FoRB as Minister of State with responsibility for Human Rights.

Students: Housing

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many students are currently living in on-campus accommodation at (1) colleges and (2) universities; of these, how many are (a) UK students (b) EU students, and (c) non-EU international students; how many are minors; and whether those students are housed in adequately maintained conditions and have access to the basic facilities they require. [HL3590]

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.

Statistics on the numbers of further and higher education (HE) students resident in on-campus accommodation following 23 March's lockdown are not held centrally.

However, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data show that approximately 360,000 students at UK higher education institutions in 2018/19 were resident in provider-maintained property, including some 117,000 international students, of which 31,000 were from the EU.

Levels of current occupancy of accommodation vary widely between different institutions with those students still resident likely to include care leavers, students estranged from their families and international students for whom there is no alternative accommodation easily available or who are not able to get home because of travel restrictions.

HE providers have been asked to aim to ensure staff (catering, cleaning and laundry staff, for instance) are available to support on halls management. Counselling staff should also be available to support on isolating students' mental health. This support could be provided virtually.

We have worked to improve joint continuity planning between HE providers and Local Resilience Forums to consider how to ensure availability of supply of food and medicines.

College campus accommodation where children are resident is inspected by Ofsted against national minimum standards. The inspections are conducted on an age basis and include international students.

Ofsted holds a record of ratings for further education accommodation.

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their plans to assist A-level and university students who are at risk of homelessness due to their on-campus accommodation contracts being terminated, and how they will ensure these students are neither rendered homeless nor forced into debt. [HL3591]

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

My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has written to all higher education (HE) providers to explain the importance of HE institutions operating a non- eviction policy so that no student is required to leave halls if their contract has ended, if their rental agreement does not cover holiday periods or if they are unable to pay their rent. This is particularly important in the case of international students, care leavers and students estranged from their families.

In her letters, my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, also emphasised the need for HE providers to consider practical support to ensure that students who remain on campus can access sufficient food, medical and cleaning supplies, along with mental health support.

Students will continue to receive scheduled payments of loans towards their living costs for the remainder of the current 2019/20 academic year.

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.

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. This can be accessed from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>.

We have also asked that HE providers pay particular attention to the additional financial hardships that are being faced by student staff who have been reliant on income from campus-based jobs at this time.

The government encourages universities and private hall providers to be fair in their decisions about rent charges for this period.

Sustainable Development: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 on reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 both in the UK and globally. [HL4113]

Baroness Sugg: COVID-19 is the biggest crisis of a generation and has a wide range of primary and secondary impacts, as set out in a recent UN report on the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

The crisis is ongoing and therefore a full assessment of its impacts on the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) both domestically and globally is not possible at this stage. The COVID-19 crisis poses real risks for eroding progress on the SDGs, and the associated economic slowdown will increase the challenge of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in light of the challenges highlighted prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in the UN SDGs Report 2019.

The UK remains committed to the achieving the SDGs both domestically and globally. The SDGs will play a key role in post-COVID-19 recovery, recognising the connection between healthy lives, healthy societies and a healthy environment. It is more important than ever that we work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Turkey: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Turnberg

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, or plan to have, with the government of Turkey about providing personal protective equipment to refugee camps on the Turkish-Syrian border. [HL3929]

Baroness Sugg: We are speaking regularly to Turkey about our shared concerns relating to the significant risks posed by COVID-19 in Syria, including in camps for internally displaced persons. We are supporting our UN and NGO partners to lead the response in camps and across Syria. This support includes personal protective equipment for health workers, as well as provision of IPC (infection prevention and control) supplies, cleaning supplies and hand sanitiser. This is part of the UK's global efforts to combat the outbreak of COVID-19 and help the most vulnerable. This includes a global contribution of £65 million to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

UK Research and Innovation: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require UK Research and Innovation to extend the term of grants for those projects which have been interrupted or delayed by the impact of coronavirus. [HL4014]

Lord Callanan: The Government is aware of the consequent pressures of the coronavirus on businesses, universities, and research institutions.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is already offering no-cost extensions to all grants.

UKRI has also confirmed it will offer a costed extension of up to six months for those UKRI funded PhD students due to complete by 31 March 2021 and whose study has been impacted by the pandemic. Where a student's doctoral research project has been repurposed towards COVID-19 related research, a costed extension to cover the time needed to adapt the research could be considered and covered in the same way as other case-by-

case extensions. More information is available on the UKRI website.

We are in discussion with UKRI and wider stakeholders about what else may be required to best support the research and innovation system.

USA: Coronavirus

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States about the absence of United States representation at the virtual Coronavirus Global Response International Pledging Conference on 4 May 2020; whether the

Prime Minister has personally spoken to the President of the United States on this issue; whether the United States will be represented at the Global Vaccine Summit on 4 June; and if so, by whom. [\[HL4136\]](#)

Baroness Sugg: The UK is in regular contact at the highest levels with our US partners on our joint response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work with all of our international partners - including the US - ahead of the Global Vaccine Summit on 4 June, to ensure new vaccines, treatments and tests will be accessible to everyone, as quickly as possible, to end this pandemic

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
Anthony Grainger Inquiry Report 1	
Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2012, No. 3118: Consultation..... 1	
Future Relationship with the EU: Negotiations....2	
UK Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019..... 3	
Written Answers.....4	
Apache AH-64 Helicopters 4	
Aviation: Coronavirus 4	
Bounce Back Loan Scheme..... 4	
Business: Coronavirus 4	
Children: ICT 5	
Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme 5	
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme..... 5	
Coronavirus: Disease Control..... 6	
Cycling: Coronavirus..... 6	
Debt Collection..... 6	
Developing Countries: Nutrition 6	
Financial Services: UK Trade with EU 7	
Food Poverty: Coronavirus..... 7	
Foreign Students: Coronavirus 7	
Groceries Code Adjudicator 7	
Higher Education: Research 8	
Homelessness: Children 8	
Hospices: Coronavirus..... 8	
Hospitals: Coronavirus 8	
Hospitals: Staff..... 9	
House of Lords: Costs 9	
Humanitarian Aid: Conflict Resolution..... 9	
Humanitarian Aid: Crimes of Violence..... 9	
Israeli Settlements 10	
Ministers: Coronavirus 10	
NHS: Coronavirus 10	
Overseas Aid: Coronavirus..... 10	
Overseas Aid: Health Services 11	
	Pakistan: Coronavirus..... 11
	Palestinians: Recognition of States..... 12
	Postgraduate Education 12
	Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus..... 12
	Remand in Custody: Pregnancy..... 13
	Remote Working: Coronavirus..... 13
	Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund..... 13
	Rohingya: Contraceptives and Maternity Services 14
	Russia and USA: Arms Control..... 14
	Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies: Codes of Practice 14
	Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies: Devolution 14
	Shipping: Coronavirus..... 14
	South Africa: Coronavirus..... 15
	Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief 15
	Students: Housing..... 15
	Sustainable Development: Coronavirus 16
	Turkey: Coronavirus..... 16
	UK Research and Innovation: Coronavirus 16
	USA: Coronavirus 17