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Wednesday
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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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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

Wednesday, 3 June 2020

Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS260]

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

HM Revenue and Customs will incur new expenditure in connection with the government's response to the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £10,000,000,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in the Main Estimate 2020-21 for HM Revenue and Customs. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £10,000,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Schemes

[HLWS262]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Following my announcement last week, today I am pleased to share more detail on the next steps for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

CJRS was launched to protect jobs and help employers through this unprecedented crisis. By midnight on 31 May more than 8 million jobs have been protected which would otherwise have been at risk. More than 1 million firms have benefitted from this support.

I announced on Tuesday 12 May that the CJRS would be extended until the end of October. This means the scheme will now be in place for a full eight months, giving businesses the vital support that they need during this unprecedented time. As we now begin to re-open the economy, it is right that state support is slowly reduced and the focus shifts to getting furloughed employees back to work.

From 1 July, employers will have the flexibility to bring back their furloughed employees for any amount of time and any shift pattern, giving businesses more flexibility to respond to demand as the economy reopens. Employers will be able to claim the furlough grant for the proportion of the employees' normal hours they are not working. Employers must pay their employees for the hours they are working, subject to their employment contract, and will be required to report data on hours worked by an employee and the usual hours an employee would be expected to work in a claim period under the scheme for furloughed employees.

As a result, from Wednesday 1 July, there will be no minimum furlough period; that is, no minimum amount of time that an employee can be on temporary leave. However, any furlough arrangement agreed between employer and employee and reported in a claim to HMRC must still cover a period of at least one week.

To enable this change on 1 July, the CJRS will be closed to new entrants on 30 June. This means employees furloughed for the first time must be placed on furlough on or before Wednesday 10 June in order to access flexible furlough, in order for the three week minimum period to have been completed by 30 June. All employers planning to claim a grant from 1 July must have completed their first claim (for the period ending 30 June) by Friday 31 July.

In June and July, nothing will change for employers and the government will continue to pay 80 per cent of people's salaries. From August, the level of the grant will be slowly reduced and employers will be required to top up the government payment to ensure employees receive 80 per cent of their normal pay, up to a monthly cap of £2,500, throughout. In August, employers will be asked to pay Employer NICs and pension contributions; in September employers will also pay 10 per cent of wages to make up 80 per cent total, up to a cap of £2,500; in October, employers' contribution will increase to Employer NICs and pension contributions and 20 per cent of wages, up to a cap of £2,500.

An early assessment of CJRS claims suggest that around 40 per cent of employers have not made a claim for Employer NICs costs or employer pension contributions and so will be unaffected by the change in August if their employment patterns do not change.

Detailed guidance on these changes will be published on Friday 12 June.

The SEISS opened on 13 May – days ahead of schedule – and eligible individuals will still be able to apply for the first grant until 13 July. By midnight on 31 May, 2.5 million self-employed individuals had already applied for grants, worth £7.2 billion in total.

The SEISS will be extended and eligible individuals could now qualify for a second and final grant.

The extension of the SEISS now means eligible individuals whose businesses are adversely affected by coronavirus will be able to claim a second and final taxable grant when the scheme reopens for applications in August. Individuals will be able to claim a taxable grant worth 70 per cent of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in another single instalment covering three months' worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total. This is in line with changes to the CJRS as the economy reopens and the eligibility criteria remain the same for this final grant.

An individual does not need to have claimed the first grant to receive the second grant: for example, they may only have been adversely affected by coronavirus in this later phase.

Further guidance will be published on Friday 12 June.

Covid-19: Human Fertilisation and Embryology

[HLWS258]

Lord Bethell: We are today laying a negative solution Statutory Instrument, which will extend the statutory storage period for embryos and gametes from 10 years to 12 years in certain circumstances.

To support wider changes to the health service in responding to the pandemic, fertility treatment in the UK across the NHS and private sector was temporarily suspended on 23 March. While this suspension was lifted from 11 May, there may still be delays for some patients in accessing their fertility treatment, as clinics need to meet robust safety criteria in order to restart treatment.

In recognition of the potential impact this may have on those wishing to start a family, the government committed to extending the current 10-year storage limit for embryos and gametes by two years, in certain circumstances, to enable sufficient time for all fertility treatment to resume and patients to make new arrangements without having to rush their decision-making.

The new Statutory Instrument allows anyone who currently has frozen their eggs, sperm and embryos to extend their storage for an additional two years, provided there is appropriate consent. Currently the storage period for embryos and gametes is limited to a maximum of 10 years, after which people must choose whether to undergo fertility treatment, or have their frozen eggs, sperm and embryos destroyed. People with medical conditions that have caused fertility problems can extend for longer, but this SI allows them two additional years before they need to provide supporting medical evidence.

The Government has recognised that how the suspension of fertility services has been extremely worrying for patients, the announcement of this SI provides them with some much-needed reassurance and most importantly gives more time to try for their much longed for family and was welcomed by patient stakeholder groups.

Earlier in the year the government launched a consultation for views on whether the current primary legislation to store their frozen eggs, sperm and embryos for 10 years should change. The consultation closed on 5 May. The Government will be making a separate set of decisions about the law in the light of the analysing the consultation responses and announcing those later in the year.

Covid-19: Rough Sleeping

[HLWS259]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Hon. Friend, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing (Luke Hall) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Government has worked closely with local authorities, charities and health providers to offer accommodation to as many rough sleepers as possible in order to help them stay safe during the pandemic.

We have asked all local authorities to provide information on the number of individuals they have accommodated. The information provided is management information, not official statistics, and local authorities continue to hold the most recent information.

This information submitted shows that since the start of the pandemic, local authorities have accommodated 14,610 people. This includes people coming in directly from the streets, people previously housed in shared night shelters and people who have become vulnerable to rough sleeping during the pandemic.

This is a truly remarkable achievement and has been possible because of an incredible effort by the Government, local authorities and charities.

In order to be transparent, we have today published the management information received from local authorities which provides a breakdown of this figure both inside and outside of London.

This number should not be compared to the official autumn annual snapshot of rough sleeping numbers because the data sets are not comparable. A significant proportion of the 15,000 people accommodated were not rough sleepers but have been housed in order to prevent any risk of them sleeping rough during the pandemic. The work local authorities have undertaken during the pandemic has assisted many who were sleeping rough or living in accommodation where they share sleeping spaces, for example in hostels or night shelters, where they wouldn't be able to fully self-isolate. Local authorities have also housed those at risk of rough sleeping, or who have presented to local authorities as at risk of sleeping rough throughout this pandemic.

The Government has supported this vital work with £3.2 million emergency funding as an initial first step, followed by funding totalling £3.2 billion to local authorities to allow them to meet local need during the pandemic, including protecting the most vulnerable and rough sleepers.

We have also announced a further £433m to provide 6,000 long-term, safe homes to support thousands of rough sleepers currently housed in emergency accommodation move on to more sustainable accommodation.

The Government is now supporting local authorities on their next steps plans to ensure accommodation arrangements can continue to be managed safely to protect the most vulnerable, assessing individuals' needs in order to ensure as few people as possible return to the streets. We have asked Dame Louise Casey to spearhead this work through a new Covid-19 Rough Sleeping Taskforce.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

[HLWS263]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement:

The United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is as follows:

Sir Roger Gale MP (Leader)

Full Representatives

Hannah Bardell MP
Richard Bacon MP
Duncan Baker MP
Stella Creasy MP
Earl of Dundee
Baroness Eccles of Moulton
Dame Cheryl Gillan MP
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
John Howell MP
Ruth Jones MP
Sir Edward Leigh MP
Ian Liddell-Grainger MP
Tony Lloyd MP
Baroness Massey of Darwen
Gagan Mohindra MP
Ian Paisley MP
Virendra Sharma MP

Substitute Members

Lord Adonis
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Lord Balfe
Saqib Bhatti MP
Lord Blencathra
Chris Bryant MP
Felicity Buchan MP
Sir Christopher Chope MP
Theo Clarke MP
Geraint Davies MP
Steve Double MP
Mark Fletcher MP
Lord Griffiths
Joy Morrissey MP
Kate Osamor MP
Lord Russell of Liverpool
Tommy Sheppard MP
Martin Vickers MP

Stamp Duty Land Tax: Refund Window

[HLWS261]

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

The past weeks have been an uncertain time for those buying and selling property. Since lockdown restrictions were implemented in March, more than 450,000 people have been unable to make progress with their plans to move house.

Following the publication of updated regulations on 13 May 2020, some of the restrictions initially placed on the housing market have now been lifted. The Government's step by step plan is based on the latest guidance and is designed to ensure the safety and protection of everyone involved in the process of buying or selling a home.

The Government recognises, however, that as a result of the restrictions placed on the housing market, some people have been unable to sell a previous main residence within the three year window allowed in order to qualify for a refund of the three per cent higher rates of SDLT.

In the vast majority of cases, the existing three-year window provides sufficient time for people in a wide variety of personal circumstances to sell a previous residence, and the three-year window for most taxpayers will not be changing.

But, in certain specific cases, an extension to the three-year window can now be granted by HMRC once a property is sold if an affected taxpayer was not able to

make a sale within the three-year window due to exceptional circumstances outside their control.

Affected taxpayers must make a sale as soon as practicable once the exceptional impediment to sale ceases to apply, and this amendment applies to those whose refund window ended on or after 1 January 2020.

HMRC will set out operational guidance on the cases which will qualify for an extended refund window in due course. Taxpayers can write to HMRC setting out their individual circumstances and HMRC will make decisions to grant an extension on a case by case basis. HMRC will also closely monitor the number and type of applications for an extension, as a protection against cases of fraud and abuse.

Troubled Families: Annual Report

[HLWS257]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Hon. Friend, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing (Luke Hall) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

As required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, section 3(1), today my Department has published the fourth annual report, setting out how the Troubled Families Programme (2015-2020) has been supporting our most disadvantaged families who face multiple and complex problems. We are laying this report today and will place a copy in the House of Commons library. There has been a slight delay to the publication of the report, due on 31 March, as my Department focused on the emergency response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Troubled Families Programme has been at the heart of our ambition to strengthen families and improve their futures since 2015. This year's Annual Report details the Programme's performance for the period up to the end of March 2020, outlines the changes introduced for the 20/21 financial year to allow more families to be eligible for support, and clarifies how their progress towards outcomes will be measured. The report was drafted before the Covid 19 pandemic so does not reflect the ongoing response from local government to support families during this unprecedented time.

Improving families' lives: Fourth annual report of the Troubled Families Programme 2019-2020 details how the Programme is driving a profound shift in the way that local services respond to entrenched problems and support our most disadvantaged families. Assigning a single key worker to each family, backed by multi-agency partners and coordinated data, this joined up 'wrap-around' support works with whole families to tackle the range of issues they face.

Over the lifetime of the Programme, local authorities have supported 350,105 families to achieve successful outcomes, including 30,000 adults who were helped into sustained employment, although the Programme has worked with many more families. These families faced multiple and complex problems including a combination of crime, truancy, neglect, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, poor mental health, worklessness and financial

exclusion. Every successful family outcome represents a family's life changed for the better – a considerable achievement for the families and the local authorities supporting them.

Analysis to track family outcomes over time, and case study research, indicates that the Programme delivered successful outcomes by intervening early to prevent escalation to Children's Social Care. Analysis found that for every £1 spent on the Programme it delivers £2.28 of economic benefits (*includes economic, social and fiscal benefits*) and £1.51 of fiscal benefits (*only budgetary impacts on services*).

Analysis also suggests that the Programme is reducing the probability of future interaction with the criminal justice system, and the severity of offending, for adults and juveniles who had been convicted or given a custodial sentence before they joined the Programme.

The Troubled Families Programme has received new investment to extend the Programme for an additional year. The additional government funding of £165m will enable the current Programme to continue until the end of 2020-21.

The refreshed Financial Framework for 2020/21 was published on 14 May 2020 and sets out the expanded eligibility criteria and an explanation of the way in which local authorities should identify and support families using a range of indicators.

'Improving families' lives: Fourth annual report of the Troubled Families Programme 2019-2020 is accompanied by a range of publications that evaluate the Programme's progress which can be accessed at Gov.uk.

These are:

Analysis of national and local data sets: part five

Staff Surveys - Troubled Families Coordinators: part four

Staff Surveys - Troubled Families Keyworkers: part four

Staff Surveys - Troubled Families Employment Advisors: part four

Case Study Research: part four

Family Survey additional analysis.

Voting Rights Treaty with Poland

[HLWS256]

Baroness Sugg: My Honourable Friend, the Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas (Wendy Morton), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

I can confirm that the Government reached a bilateral agreement with Poland on 29 May that will secure the right to stand in local elections for UK Nationals living in Poland, and Polish citizens living in the UK. This agreement builds on our close ties and reinforces our commitment to the future relationship between our two nations.

Citizens continue to be our priority following our departure from the EU. The UK pushed hard in negotiations to protect the right to stand and vote in local elections for UK Nationals living in the EU, and EU citizens in the UK, but these rights were not included in the Withdrawal Agreement. Instead, we have secured bilateral arrangements with several individual Member States. In addition to Poland, we signed voting rights treaties in 2019 with Spain, Portugal, and Luxembourg.

UK Nationals will be able to continue to vote, and in some cases stand, in local elections in Member States where domestic legislation allows this, and where individuals meet the relevant requirements, for example on length of residency. These Member States include: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden.

I will be laying a copy of the latest agreement in both Houses.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 3 June 2020

Adoption

Asked by Lord Russell of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that harder-to-place children, previously matched through the statutory Adoption Register for England, are found adoptive families in a timely manner. [HL4709]

Baroness Berridge: Finding stable and loving permanent homes for vulnerable children is a priority for this government.

Children continue to be matched with families, with adoption agencies using a variety of systems where they need to seek inter-agency matches.

Two thirds of local authorities are now part of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), which aim to deliver more efficient recruitment of adopters and faster matching of children and families. The vast majority of remaining local authorities are on track to be in a live RAA by the end of 2020.

The government has also invested £1 million in adopter recruitment during 2020-21, which will focus on generating an increase in people of all backgrounds, coming forward to adopt children who have 'harder-to-place' characteristics.

Adoption and Foster Care: Registration

Asked by Lord Russell of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to improve fostering following the digital discovery phases undertaken by the Department for Education. [HL4707]

Asked by Lord Russell of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the evidence given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families to the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee on 14 May 2019, what progress they have made towards the creation of a combined national adoption and fostering register. [HL4708]

Baroness Berridge: In 2019, we conducted 2 digital discovery phases to better understand the problems experienced by children, foster carers, adopters and prospective adopters, social workers, placement officers and others in the fostering system, as identified in the 2017 independent review and Education Select Committee enquiry.

Through this work we have conducted some initial testing of possible digital approaches that could increase the flow of information between local data systems as

well as improving the quality and granularity of the data. The aim is to ensure that children will have a better understanding of their care journey, that carers have higher-quality information about the children they are caring for, and to explore how a national digital approach could support improved matching of children to carers.

The initial testing phase of potential approaches was completed in January 2020. Further testing is now needed to establish a preferred solution, or combination of solutions, to enable the right people to have access to the right information when they need to, in order to make the best decisions about placements for children. We have therefore allocated further funding for this work in the 2020/21 financial year. Given the potential benefits of a digital system for children and young people, we are committed to continuing to work with stakeholders to explore options and recommence active testing once social distancing restrictions have eased.

Africa: Coronavirus

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the COVID-19 pandemic is progressing in Africa at a slower rate than they expected; and if so, what assessment they have made of why that is the case. [HL4851]

Baroness Sugg: The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is currently increasing more rapidly in Africa today than many other regions in the world. Currently cases in Africa are growing by approximately 5% each day compared with 3% in Asia and 1% in Europe. Cases continue to rise in Africa and while overall it took 52 days to reach the first 10,000 cases, it took only 11 days to move from 30,000 to 50,000 cases, and Africa now has over 100,000 cases.

However, confirmed cases of COVID-19 are growing at a slower rate than was the case in Europe and Asia at the same stage of their epidemics. This slower growth in Africa may be explained by under-reporting due to low testing rates. For example, as of 7 May, an average of 69 tests were carried out in Africa per 100,000 people compared to over 30 times this rate in Europe. It is possible that the lower mortality to date could be as a result of Africa being the youngest continent demographically, with a lower proportion of older people who are at higher risk of death. It is important to remain vigilant for the potential increase in cases that Africa could see in the coming months. Africa is also likely to see disproportionate indirect impacts of COVID-19 on wider health, economic, and social outcomes, which will be important to mitigate.

So far, the UK has pledged £764 million of UK aid to help end this pandemic as quickly as possible. This includes support to Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to model the future trajectory of the pandemic in low- and middle-income countries. This will help understand how COVID-19 is progressing in Africa and help to inform

governments in the region on how best to respond to the pandemic.

Air Pollution: Standards

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to bring forward amendments which would include the World Health Organisation's guideline air pollution limits in the Environment Bill. [HL4693]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Government is committed to tackling a diversity of pollutants which harm human health and the environment. We already have ambitious and statutory emission reduction ceilings in place for five key air pollutants, as well as legally binding concentration limits. However, the case for even more ambitious action on fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) is especially strong, as it is the pollutant that has the most significant impact on health.

The Environment Bill establishes a legally binding duty to set a target for PM_{2.5}, in addition to a long-term air quality target. We are committed to setting challenging targets and following an evidence-based process, seeking advice from a range of experts, in addition to giving consideration to the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines. The targets will be set in secondary legislation at the end of this process. It would not be an effective approach to commit in primary legislation to achieving a target, without giving due consideration to its achievability and the measures required to meet that target. Stakeholders, Parliament and the public will have the opportunity to comment on, and input into, the process of developing this target.

Apprentices: Standards

Asked by Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of the apprenticeship standards approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education have had fewer than 10 apprentices enrolled in any year since their approval; and for each of those apprenticeship standards, how many apprentices were signed up in each year since they were approved. [HL4732]

Baroness Berridge: The table attached shows the list of apprenticeship standards that have had fewer than 10 starts in any academic year since their approval, along with the associated number of starts in each academic year.

Please note that an apprenticeship standard may be approved at any point during the year, however, the starts data relate to apprenticeships that were started within an academic year (August to July), so a standard approved towards the end of the academic year will have fewer starts than if it was approved at the beginning of the year.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL4732_PDF [HL4732_apprenticeship_standards_starts_table (1).xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-19/HL4732>

Asylum: Immigration

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the open letter to the Prime Minister from a coalition of charities and church leaders asking that all migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees are given temporary leave to remain. [HL4094]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We have received the letter and will respond in due course.

The Government remains committed to an immigration policy which welcomes and celebrates people here legally but deters illegal immigration. The Immigration Rules already provide for undocumented migrants, who have not broken the law except for remaining here without lawful immigration status and who have been in the UK for a long time, to regularise their status. Migrants may make an application for leave to remain where there are grounds to do so.

If appropriate, in light of the situation in their country of origin, irregular migrants may claim asylum. The UK has a long and proud history of providing protection to those who need it and we will continue to uphold our obligations under the Refugee Convention during this time. Therefore, whilst ensuring that the Home Office is adhering to Public Health England's advice in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak, claims can still be made, and decisions are continuing to be served on asylum claims on a case by case basis where there is sufficient evidence for us to make an accurate and well-informed decision in-line with published policy.

Even if an application is refused, measures we have implemented guarantee that an individual can remain safely accommodated and able to follow public health guidance, whilst maintaining access to financial support and healthcare until the end of June, and this will be kept under review.

As a result of this, there are no plans to provide temporary leave to remain to all asylum claimants or those with insecure status.

Broadband: Local Government

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government which three local authority areas in England have the (1) fastest, and (2) slowest, current rates of broadband connectivity. [HL4320]

Baroness Barran: According to Thinkbroadband as of 1 June, the three local authority areas with the fastest median download speed are as follows:

- i) The London Borough of Southwark - 52.2Mbps
- ii) City of Kingston-upon-Hull - 49.6Mbps
- iii) Stevenage Borough Council - 42.7Mbps

The three local authority areas with the slowest median download speed are as follows:

- i) West Devon Borough Council - 16Mbps
- ii) Forest of Dean District Council - 16.5Mbps
- iii) Braintree District Council - 17.6Mbps

In regard to superfast broadband coverage, the highest performing local authority areas are as follows:

- i) Watford Borough Council - 99.9% superfast coverage
- ii) Epsom and Ewell Borough Council - 99.8% superfast coverage
- iii) Worthing Borough Council - 99.7% superfast coverage

The lowest performing local authority areas in terms of superfast broadband coverage are as follows:

- i) City of London Corporation - 57.2% superfast coverage
- ii) Eden District Council - 82.9% superfast coverage
- iii) Richmondshire District Council - 84.1% superfast coverage

Further details of speed and coverage statistics for local authorities across the UK can be found here: <http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/councils>.

Building Regulations

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government who is responsible for setting and changing building regulations. [HL4839]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Building Regulations 2010 (as amended) govern most building work (e.g. new builds, renovations, refurbishment and installation of controlled fittings and services) carried out in England. The Regulations provide minimum standards for building work and a system to assess the work. Section 14 of the Building Act 1984 provides that before making any building regulations containing substantive requirements, the Secretary of State shall consult the Building Regulations Advisory Committee [for England] and such other bodies as appear to him to be representative of the interests concerned. Establishing a new Building Safety Regulator is a key part of the building safety reforms; it will have oversight of the regulation and performance of all buildings, delivering specific interventions for buildings requiring enhanced safety measures.

The responsibility for building regulations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a devolved matter.

Buildings: Fire Prevention

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the total cost of remediating all buildings within the scope of the Building Safety Fund. [HL4835]

Lord Greenhalgh: The value of the Building Safety Fund has been assessed on the basis of the proportion of building owners that we expect to be eligible, given that Government expects those who are already remediating their buildings to continue to do so. Building owners should also explore every opportunity to fund this work via those originally responsible for the defects and warranty claims before seeking Government funding, or passing on costs to their leaseholders.

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the total number of buildings that are eligible for funding from the Building Safety Fund. [HL4836]

Lord Greenhalgh: The estimated 1,700 residential buildings over 18m in height with potentially unsafe non-ACM cladding is a working estimate produced by MHCLG officials to help with development of the Building Safety Fund.

The estimate is continuously under review as we receive further information from building owners and local authorities and housing associations. A refined estimate is due to be published in due course and will also be informed by the data we will gather from building owners following opening of registration for the Building Safety Fund on 1 June 2020.

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that care home operators have complained that COVID-19 testing in care homes has been a "complete system failure"; what steps they are taking in response to such reports; what assessment they have made of reports that Public Health England, the Care Quality Commission and the Department of Health and Social Care have stated that each are not responsible for the testing programme and referred care home operators to another of those organisations; and what plans they have to clarify (1) the operation of, and (2) who has responsibility for, the testing programme. [HL4373]

Lord Bethell: If a care home suspects a resident has symptoms, the care home manager should contact their local Public Health England Health Protection Team

(HPT). The HPT will arrange for testing of all symptomatic residents and provide tailored infection control advice.

For subsequent testing, including 'whole home testing', the Department is responsible and testing kits will be delivered directly to care homes by courier or via a mobile testing unit. Kits are requested by care home managers or Local Directors of Public Health via the new online portal. They will provide testing for all residents and asymptomatic staff.

Construction: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Fink

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the emergency loan fund established by the government of Scotland to support small and medium-sized housebuilders; and what plans they have to set up a similar fund for housebuilders in England. [HL4680]

Lord Greenhalgh: Continuing to build the homes the country needs is a priority for the Government and we have been supporting the sector through various measures to bolster confidence and retain capacity. In addition to the broader business support packages announced by the Chancellor, including the Bounce Back Loan and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan schemes, the £2.5 billion Home Building Fund (Short Term Fund), first launched in 2016, also remains open to new borrowers. The fund is targeted at small and medium builders that have been unable to access lending via the market and will help viable development schemes progress. We have also made available £1 billion of guarantee support to SMEs through the ENABLE Build scheme.

We will continue to engage regularly with all parts of the housing industry to understand and monitor the impact of Coronavirus.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many public sector workers have been furloughed with (1) full, and (2) reduced pay; and what is the total cost to the taxpayer of such furloughs. [HL4722]

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of private sector workers who have been furloughed with (1) full, and (2) reduced, pay; and what is the total cost to the taxpayer of such furloughs. [HL4723]

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many self-employed workers are on furlough with (1) full, and (2) reduced, pay; and what is the total cost to the taxpayer of such furloughs. [HL4724]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: It has not been possible to provide an answer to these questions as the figures requested are not readily available.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the figures for confirmed cases of COVID-19 that are announced each day are those cases that have been identified as a result of a test; and if not, in what other circumstances may a case be added to those figures. [HL4125]

Lord Bethell: All published positive cases are lab-confirmed cases resulting from testing for COVID-19.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, where the COVID-19 restrictions on the movement and activities of people differ in any of the countries of Great Britain, the rules applying to individuals living in the border regions will be those that apply to the country in which they (1) reside, (2) work, or (3) are present at a given moment. [HL4684]

Lord True: Where a matter is devolved, UK Government guidance available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) is clear that measures apply in England-only and should be considered alongside local public health requirements, guidance and legislation.

The UK Government continues to work with the devolved administrations to take a coordinated approach to decisions and guidance related to the current measures.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the research by Dr Rajiv Chowdhury et al., Dynamic interventions to control COVID-19 pandemic: a multivariate prediction modelling study comparing 16 worldwide countries, published on 19 May, which found that a cycle of a 50-day lock down followed by a 30-day relaxation may reduce new infections and deaths; and what impact they estimate that such a policy would have on (1) the UK's COVID-19 infection rate, and (2) the UK's public finances. [HL4782]

Lord Bethell: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies provides Ministers and officials with evidence-based scientific advice in emergencies based on a range of sources.

We have published the statements and the accompanying evidence to demonstrate how our understanding of COVID-19 has continued to evolve as new data emerges. At all times, we have been consistently guided by scientific and medical advice to ensure that we do the right thing at the right time.

The work of the Joint Biosecurity Centre will support the wider Test and Trace system to identify outbreaks of COVID-19 infections and help decision makers respond rapidly to any outbreak.

Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Asked by **Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies Are some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others?, published on 1 May; and what comparison they have made of the findings of that report and their own analysis of COVID-19 and the incidence and impact of that virus within BAME communities. [HL4030]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England (PHE) led a review to better understand how different factors such as ethnicity, deprivation, age, sex (male and female) and obesity can impact on how people are affected by COVID-19. PHE's report *Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19* was published on 2 June 2020 and is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Disparities_review [disparities_review.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL4030>

Asked by **Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the accuracy of the measurement of the differential incidence of COVID-19 within BAME communities. [HL4031]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England led a rapid review to better understand how different factors such as ethnicity, deprivation, age, sex (male and female) and obesity can impact on how people are affected by COVID-19.

The review found that people from Black ethnic groups were most likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19. Also, death rates from COVID-19 were highest among people of Black and Asian ethnic groups.

These findings did not account for the effect of occupation or comorbidities. These are important factors because they are associated with the risk of acquiring COVID-19, the risk of dying, or both.

A copy of *Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19* is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Disparities_review [disparities_review.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL4031>

Coronavirus: Schools

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of schools reopening on the circulation of COVID-19. [HL4716]

Baroness Berridge: The Children's Task and Finish Working Group, established by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), provided consolidated scientific health advice to Government. Advice from this group was used, alongside other sources of information, to inform decision making on the wider opening of schools.

Papers from SAGE meetings are being published in tranches, including those on the Task and Finish Group's findings. The list of papers which have been released by SAGE are available by following the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>.

An explanatory note on SAGE's paper assessing the potential impact of more children returning to school on the transmission of COVID-19 is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/departments-for-education-explanatory-note-on-sage-modelling>.

The Department has issued guidance on implementing a range of protective measures that together create a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, will create an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is reduced. This includes making sure that pupils do not attend if they or a member of their household has COVID-19 symptoms, as well as promoting high standards of hand and respiratory hygiene, cleaning touched surfaces more frequently, and reducing contact and mixing.

As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, set out in his announcement on 11 May 2020, progress on infection rates will be monitored every day. SAGE provides regular estimates of R, which will continue to be monitored both before and after schools open more widely. We will continue to receive advice from the Government Chief Scientific Adviser, the Chief Medical Officer and SAGE.

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by **Baroness Andrews**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many laboratories in the UK are capable of processing the Roche Elecsys Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody test; and what is the distribution of these laboratories across the country. [HL4548]

Lord Bethell: The Government does not hold specific information on the instrumentation available in United Kingdom laboratories. Plans for the roll out of laboratory-based tests are being developed and, among other things, will consider the ability and capacity of National Health

Service laboratories to process commercially available tests.

*Asked by **Baroness Andrews***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their testing prioritisation plan for COVID-19 antibody tests; and how does this plan compare to the strategy for COVID-19 real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests. [[HL4549](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government has announced the start of its national antibody testing programme, with initial plans to provide antibody tests for National Health Service and care staff, as well as hospital patients and care residents on the basis of clinical advice, in England from the end of May. The United Kingdom Government has purchased tests on behalf of the devolved administrations, and each devolved nation is deciding how to use its test allocation. This strategy, in which NHS patients and staff will be amongst the first to benefit from testing, is similar to the approach taken to roll out RT-PCR tests.

*Asked by **Baroness Andrews***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how (1) assumptions about future immunity to COVID-19 from past infection, and (2) existing COVID-19 test results, are informing their strategy for antibody testing; and what plans they have to use antibody testing as an epidemiological survey tool to (a) evaluate past infection of particular individuals, or (b) inform future policy making. [[HL4550](#)]

Lord Bethell: A positive antibody test demonstrates that someone has COVID-19 antibodies. The presence of COVID-19 antibodies signals that the body has staged an immune response to COVID-19. COVID-19 is a new disease, and our understanding of the body's immune response to it is limited. We do not know, for example, how long an antibody response lasts, nor whether having antibodies means a person cannot transmit the virus to others. Our understanding of the virus will grow as new scientific evidence and studies emerge.

We are conducting some of the biggest surveys in the world, using lab-based tests to find out what proportion of the population have already had the virus. This work includes four major surveillance studies with Public Health England, the Office for National Statistics, IPSOS MORI and UK Biobank, designed to understand the current and future prevalence of COVID-19 in the wider population. We will be able to share further details of the results of these studies in due course. Information on levels of infection will inform our future plans for rolling out antibody tests.

*Asked by **Baroness Andrews***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the capacity of UK laboratories to (1) conduct, and (2) process Roche Elecsys Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody tests; what plans they have to use unpaid volunteers as swab testers as part of their testing

strategy; and what steps they will take, if any, to prohibit the sale of antibody tests by private companies which have not been approved by Public Health England. [[HL4552](#)]

Lord Bethell: The Government does not hold specific information on the instrumentation available in United Kingdom laboratories. Plans for the roll out of laboratory-based tests are being developed and, among other things, will consider the ability and capacity of National Health Service laboratories to process commercially available tests.

The Chief Medical Officer discourages in the strongest terms organisations from buying their own unvalidated antibody tests. Professor John Newton has also warned that unapproved tests could be misleading, by providing inaccurate or inconsistent results, potentially putting those tested and those around them at risk. He has therefore advised organisations both in the public and private sector against the use of antibody tests that have not been verified in a laboratory setting.

A RT-PCR or 'antigen' test is used to find out if a person currently has the virus. These tests are different to antibody tests, which are used to detect antibodies to the COVID-19 virus as a marker of past infection.

The Department is working in partnership with several organisations to ensure the Lighthouse Laboratories, who are conducting antigen testing, have the workforce required to maintain capacity. Individuals can apply to work in the Lighthouse Laboratories directly through Reed recruitment agency or at an organisational level. During screening, individuals can determine whether they wish to be paid or volunteer.

*Asked by **Baroness Brinton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have placed a bulk order for the Roche Elecsys Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody tests; and if so, (1) how many tests were ordered and at what cost, and (2) the quantities expected to arrive in the UK by (a) the end of May (b) mid June and (c) the end of June. [[HL4564](#)]

Lord Bethell: We have signed contracts to supply over 10 million tests from Roche and Abbott in the coming months. We have agreed these contracts with two suppliers whose assays have been evaluated by Public Health England and continue to engage with other companies to establish further agreements to meet our testing strategy. These contracts will secure a significant volume to meet the United Kingdom's testing plans. Further details are commercially sensitive.

*Asked by **Baroness Brinton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they first became aware of the Roche Elecsys Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody test; what discussions they held with the European Medicines Agency and stakeholders in Germany about their trials and approval processes; and why they decided to run their own separate trials and approval process. [[HL4565](#)]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England (PHE) were asked to review all major suppliers of assays for National Health Service use, including the Roche Elecsys Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody test, in order to limit the amount of on-site evaluation each facility has to perform.

PHE is familiar with the processes involved in European Medicine Agency registration. No discussions have been held with stakeholders in Germany about their trial and approvals processes.

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 20 May (HL3589), what criteria they used to determine the type of testing to offer at each Regional Test Site; on average, what percentage of people choose the self-test option at sites which operate a hybrid model; what is the average waiting time at (1) assisted, (2) self-administration, and (3) hybrid, testing sites; and whether there is a maximum waiting time embedded in contractual agreements with test providers. [HL4817]

Lord Bethell: We do not collect or publish data in the form requested. We are working to increase access to both assisted and self-administered testing, but it is important to note that the range of testing routes are designed to be complementary and reach the right people at the right time. We are providing a range of options to be as accessible as possible to people wherever they live and whatever their circumstances.

Coronavirus: South Korea

*Asked by **Lord Mawson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the approach taken by the government of South Korea to tackling COVID-19; in particular, of the impact of multiple localised interventions and the importance of the quality of local relationships in delivering effective interventions. [HL3421]

Lord Bethell: The Government is monitoring the development of the COVID-19 outbreak around the world, including South Korea. International evidence has been considered alongside a wide range of other evidence to inform the United Kingdom response. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), which provides scientific advice to support UK decision-makers during emergencies, monitors the approaches taken by other countries and how it can be useful for the Government. SAGE has published its report of the *Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand*. A copy is attached.

In recognition of the importance of transparency in these unprecedented times, SAGE has been publishing the statements and the accompanying evidence it has reviewed on GOV.UK to demonstrate how the scientific understanding of COVID-19 has continued to evolve as

new data emerges, and how SAGE's advice has quickly adapted to new findings that reflect a changing situation. This list can be found by searching online for 'Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE): Coronavirus (COVID-19) response'. It will be updated as SAGE releases papers from recent and future meetings.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Imperial_College_COVID19_Report [HL3421 - Imperial College COVID19-Report-9.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-23/HL3421>

Customs Officers

*Asked by **Lord Jones of Cheltenham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many additional customs officials they plan to hire after the end of the UK-EU transition period [HL4144]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Border Force has delivered a largescale recruitment and training exercise, which has seen an uplift of permanent staff, bringing the number of full-time equivalent Border Force staff to over 8,700 from 7,700 in March 2018. This includes a brand-new multi-disciplinary Readiness Task Force (RTF) of c.300 officers, which is available to deploy across the UK at short notice to deal with emerging issues and peaks in demand. We are continuing to build a pipeline of resource to flexibly respond to future requirements and are committed to ensuring we have the necessary staff in place to keep our borders secure.

The latest published staffing and finance figures for Border Force can be found in the Home Office Annual Report for 2018-2019 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019>

HM Revenue and Customs has overall responsibility for customs policy. HMRC is collaborating with partners across Whitehall to explore a range of mitigating actions to ensure continued preparations for the end of the transition period whilst maintaining core front line services and supporting the government response to Covid-19 and will be well staffed for the end of the transition period.

Developing Countries: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the £744 million in aid they have committed to address COVID-19 has been allocated to provide frontline assistance to less economically developed countries. [HL4800]

Baroness Sugg: We have committed up to £764 million of UK aid funding to date, to support global efforts to combat COVID-19.

This includes up to £296 million to support and enhance resilience in vulnerable countries, encompassing:

- £145 million for UN appeals including: £75 million for the WHO; £20 million for UNICEF, £5 million for Education Cannot Wait, £20 million for the UN Refugee Agency; £15 million for the World Food Programme; and £10 million to UNFPA to provide lifesaving SRHR and gender based violence prevention.
- £55 million to International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement appeals to provide medical supplies and equipment to hospitals and clinics and the building of quarantine areas and disinfection facilities.
- £20 million for international NGO's including UK charities using British expertise and experience to tackle COVID-19.
- £50 million DFID funding matched with Unilever, advising one billion people about the importance of hygiene and the distribution of over 20 million products.
- £6 million for medical and humanitarian expertise including the deployment of medical specialists from the UK Emergency Medical Team to vulnerable African countries.
- Up to £20 million in the African Union's new COVID-19 Response Fund to tackle the virus and save lives.

We have also provided up to £150 million of UK aid funding to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust to help developing countries meet their debt repayments so that they can focus their available resources on tackling COVID-19.

*Asked by **Baroness Sheehan***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to support less economically developed countries to remove all financial barriers to healthcare to deliver free testing and treatment for COVID-19. [HL4801]

Baroness Sugg: The UK champions universal health coverage (UHC) as vital to ensuring access to quality essential health services for all and helping to protect everyone from infectious diseases, including COVID-19. UHC includes ensuring that no one is impoverished through paying for health services and reducing financial barriers to access especially for the poorest and most vulnerable. Our programmes help poor and vulnerable people to meet food and other basic needs including direct and indirect costs of health care, such as transport so they can access essential health services.

The UK has, so far, pledged £764 million of UK aid to help end the COVID-19 pandemic, in support of the coordinated international response through the international financing institutions, multilaterals and global health initiatives, and DFID programmes. This is to meet the urgent health, humanitarian and economic needs of vulnerable people in developing countries. This

funding includes up to £40 million to the Wellcome Therapeutics Accelerator and up to £23 million to the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, both of which are central to efforts to accelerate development and access to new COVID-19 treatments and tests.

District Councils: Finance

*Asked by **Lord Greaves***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ability of district councils to withstand significant losses of income from business rates, council tax, and fees and charges for services including planning charges, parking charges and those for leisure services; and (1) how many, and (2) which, district councils they have assessed as being in danger of being unable to continue to discharge their statutory functions. [HL4681]

Lord Greenhalgh: We announced, on 18 April, an additional £1.6 billion of funding to support councils delivering essential frontline services, taking the total to over £3.2 billion of additional funding. This funding means that almost 70% of district councils will have received £1 million or more in support to manage Covid-19 income pressures.

We are now focused on gathering the best possible information and data from councils on income and expenditure figures. We are doing this through our ongoing local authority Covid-19 financial monitoring survey.

The returns collected will refine our assessment of income losses across the sector. We are also engaging with councils and their representatives, local Leaders and Chief Executives, and organisations including the District Councils Network.

We will continue to work with local government, including district councils, over the coming weeks to ensure they are managing as the pandemic progresses.

Driving: Licensing

*Asked by **Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the over-70s are struggling to renew their driving licences due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions; and what steps they are taking to improve the service of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to support over-70s. [HL4669]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) currently has a limited number of staff who are focused on dealing with applications from those who are directly involved in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence is to use the DVLA's online service. We are aware that

some drivers may face difficulties using that service and those customers should submit a paper application in the normal way. However, paper applications will take longer to process in the current circumstances. The DVLA is considering options to help drivers stay mobile and more information will be made available at the appropriate time.

Electric Vehicles

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what source of energy (1) is, and (2) is planned to be, used to power electric (a) buses, and (b) cars; and what estimate they have made of the sustainability of those sources of energy. [[HL4702](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy produce annual statistics and future projections of UK energy demand currently up to 2035. Of electricity generated in 2019, low carbon electricity's share of generation amounted to 54.2 per cent. This comprised 36.9 per cent renewables and 17.4 per cent from nuclear generation. Fossil fuel's share of generation was 43.4 per cent, of which 40.9 per cent was from gas, 2.1 per cent coal and 0.3 per cent oil. The remaining 2.4 per cent generation share came from pumped storage and other fuels including the non-renewable component of waste. It is not possible to identify accurately what proportion of energy is used to recharge electric buses and other electric vehicles.

Employment: Mental Health

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what elements of Thriving at Work: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers, published in October 2017, have been implemented. [[HL4746](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers, published in October 2017 set out recommendations for how employers can better support the mental health needs of all those in employment. The recommendations included some for the Government to implement and some that required leadership from outside government. The recommendations were accepted in full in November 2017 and progress is being overseen by the Work and Health Unit.

Our assessment is that of those that the Government is responsible for all are complete or progressing satisfactorily, subject to legislative or IT solutions.

Of those recommendations that sit outside Government, the Leadership Council, made up of key employer representatives was set up to take ownership for driving implementation by employers. We continue to actively work with them to support them in their progress.

Food Supply and Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Pendry***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the increased demand for emergency food parcels from low-income families; and what plans they have to suspend (1) the two-child limit on benefits, and (2) the benefits cap. [[HL4704](#)]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: No assessment has been made of the number of emergency food parcels issued.

The Government has recently announced up to £16 million to provide food for those who are struggling as a result of coronavirus. The programme will provide over 20 million meals over the next 12 weeks and be delivered through non-profit organisations including FareShare and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme).

The Government has quickly and effectively introduced over £6.5 billion of measures that benefit those facing the most financial disruption, including an increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance by £86.67 per month (equivalent to £20 per week) on top of the planned annual uprating. This additional increase means claimants will be up to £1040 better off.

Currently there are no plans to change either the benefit cap or the two child policies.

Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government why school meal vouchers can only be used in certain shops and cannot be used in all supermarkets and convenience stores. [[HL4692](#)]

Baroness Berridge: During this period of partial school closures, we are asking schools to support children who are at home and eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We know that many schools are successfully delivering food parcels or arranging food collections for eligible children, and we encourage this approach where it is possible. However, we recognise that providing meals and food parcels is not a practicable option for all schools. That is why on 31 March we launched a national voucher scheme as an alternative option, with costs covered by the department.

Through the national voucher scheme, schools and families could initially access e-gift cards for Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Waitrose and Marks & Spencer. On Monday 27 April, we added Aldi to this list and on Wednesday 29 April, we added McColl's. We recognise that it may not be convenient or possible for some families to visit one of these supermarkets and we have been working to see if additional supermarkets can be added to this list. Any additional supermarkets would

need to have the right infrastructure to deliver e-gift cards across their network of stores.

If schools are unable to provide meals or food parcels and none of the supermarkets participating in the national voucher scheme are suitable for families, schools can purchase vouchers for alternative shops and claim costs back, up to a certain limit.

Guidance on providing free school meals during the coronavirus outbreak is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

Further guidance on financial support is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020>.

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

G20: National Income

Asked by **Lord Blencathra**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the value of Gross Domestic Product for each of the G20 countries in pounds sterling; and for each such country, what proportion of the combined GDP of the G20 this represents. [HL4671]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Table 1 below details the answers to your questions.

Table 1: G20 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

	2018 GDP current prices (£bn)	% of G20 total GDP
Argentina	389.2	0.7
Australia	1063.8	1.9
Brazil	1399.2	2.5
Canada	1282.9	2.3
China	10014.3	18.2
France	2082.7	3.8
Germany	2960	5.4
India	2036.7	3.7
Indonesia	765.9	1.4
Italy	1555.1	2.8
Japan	3724.5	6.8
Mexico	915.5	1.7
Russia	1241.5	2.3
Saudi Arabia	589.2	1.1
South Africa	275.8	0.5
South Korea	1288.9	2.3

	2018 GDP current prices (£bn)	% of G20 total GDP
Turkey	577.8	1.1
UK	2119.1	3.9
USA	15417.1	28
EU excluding France, Germany, Italy and UK	5319.3	9.7
Total	55018.4	100

Source: IMF WEO October 2019, Thomson Reuters Eikon

Galileo System

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what classified output from the EU's Galileo satellite system will be made available to the Five Eyes intelligence community. [HL4737]

Lord Callanan: It is possible under EU rules for third countries, including the Five Eyes intelligence community, to request access to the Galileo secure navigation signal, known as the Public Regulated Service (PRS), from the EU. The EU has excluded the UK from the security-related sensitive aspects of Galileo, including the PRS, since January 2018. This led to the UK stating that we do not intend to use the Galileo PRS for defence or security as we are unable to assure ourselves of the system because of this exclusion from the security-related elements.

Global Navigation Satellite Systems

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the classified output from their proposed UK satellite navigation system would be shared with the Five Eyes intelligence community. [HL4735]

Lord Callanan: Five Eyes partners are aware of proposals for a UK Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). The Programme is currently in its Engineering, Design and Development Phase to research and understand what would best suit the UK's positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) requirements. The services that a system would offer and their potential users are being determined as part of that work.

Government Departments: Equality

Asked by **Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place in (1) Government departments, and (2) Government-funded institutions, to ensure that no person is discriminated against on the grounds of (a) age, (b) disability, (c) marriage and civil partnership, (d) pregnancy and maternity, (e) race, (f) religion or belief, (g) sex, and (h) sexual orientation. [HL4854]

*Asked by **Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they provide to (1) Government departments, and (2) Government-funded institutions, about providing services for those who (1) self-identify their gender, and (2) are protected under the characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 that are not related to gender transition. [HL4855]

Baroness Berridge: The Equality Act 2010, which applies to all employers and providers of services and functions including Government departments and Government funded institutions, proscribes discrimination on the grounds of each of the protected characteristics listed in the Question.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced statutory codes to support understanding of the Equality Act 2010, including on Employment and Services, Public Functions and Associations.

In addition, under the Public Sector Equality Duty, set out in the Equality Act 2010, all public authorities and those delivering public functions must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The protected characteristics covered by the duty include all those listed in the Question.

In 2015, GEO published a guide on 'Providing services for transgender customers', which was applicable, but not limited, to the public sector. There are many examples of Government produced guidance to help with the provision of services that take protected characteristics into account, such as the Inclusive Transport Strategy and www.gov.uk guidance on disability and pregnancy.

High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the numbers of high-rise buildings both in the private and public sector with serious fire safety defects relating to compartmentation and fire stopping failures. [HL4838]

Lord Greenhalgh: Work is ongoing to establish a robust estimate that can be published in due course of the numbers of high-rise buildings with serious fire safety defects relating to compartmentation and fire stopping failures.

The Government has published guidance (attached) which makes it clear that building safety is the responsibility of building owners. The Independent Expert Panel's advice has highlighted the importance of internal fire safety measures, including considering whether adequate compartmentation is in place. The consolidated advice note available at the following recommends that

building owners to seek professional advice where there is any doubt:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869532/Building_safety_advice_for_building_owners_including_fire_doors_January_2020.pdf

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Building safety advice for building owners [200603
Building_safety_advice_for_building_owners_including_fire_door
s_January_2020 - HL4838.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-21/HL4838>

High Rise Flats: Insulation

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proposals they have to deal with buildings with cladding made from unsafe non-aluminium composite materials which are less than 18 metres in height. [HL4837]

Lord Greenhalgh: Government's decision to place the scope of the Building Safety Fund at buildings over 18m reflects the exceptional fire risk that certain cladding products pose at that height, as previously noted by the Independent Expert Advisory Panel and Dame Judith Hackitt.

It remains building owners' responsibility to address unsafe cladding on buildings of all heights. We have provided advice from the Expert Panel on the measures building owners should take to ensure their buildings are safe. This can be found (attached) at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-advice-for-building-owners-including-fire-doors>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Building safety advice for building owners [200601
Building_safety_advice_for_building_owners_including_fire_door
s_January_2020 - HL4837.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-21/HL4837>

High Speed 2 Railway Line

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the progress of HS2 is regularly reported to Parliament in particular with regard to (1) the expenditure, and (2) the estimated total cost, of that project. [HL4783]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: A full-time dedicated HS2 minister has now been appointed, who will provide twice-yearly updates to Parliament on progress, including data on expenditure and estimated costs, allowing proper scrutiny of the project to take place.

High Speed Two: Accounting Officers

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what are the respective responsibilities of (a) the permanent secretary at the Department for Transport, and (b) the chief executive of HS2 Ltd, as accounting officers for HS2, and (2) on what occasions, if any, either accounting officer has sought a direction from ministers to deviate from approved budgets. [HL4670]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Permanent Secretary of the Department for Transport is the Department's principal accounting officer. The responsibilities of accounting officers are set out in Chapter 3 of Managing Public Money.

The Chief Executive Officer of HS2 Ltd has been designated as the company's accounting officer. Additional information on responsibilities with respect to HS2 can be found in the HS2 Ltd Framework Document.

No Ministerial Directions have been sought by either accounting officer with respect to HS2.

Homelessness: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that no homeless person taken off the streets during the COVID-19 returns to living on the streets. [HL4700]

Lord Greenhalgh: The latest figures show that nearly 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation, including hotels, since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown period. This includes people coming in directly from the streets, people previously housed in shared night shelters and people who have become vulnerable to rough sleeping during the pandemic. To support councils across England with these efforts, the Government provided £3.2 billion in funding. This is in addition to providing £3.2 million in emergency funding for local authorities to support vulnerable rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Building on the considerable success so far, we announced that Dame Louise Casey will spearhead a taskforce to lead the next phase of the Government's support for rough sleepers during the pandemic.

The taskforce will work hand-in-hand with councils across the country on plans to ensure rough sleepers can move into long-term, safe accommodation once the immediate crisis is over – ensuring as few people as possible return to life on the streets. It will also seek to ensure the thousands of rough sleepers now in accommodation continue to receive the physical and mental health support they need.

On 24 May, we also announced plans for thousands of long-term, safe homes to support many of the vulnerable rough sleepers who have been supported during the

Covid-19 pandemic. Here, vulnerable rough sleepers taken off the streets during the pandemic can get the specialist support they need to rebuild their lives.

This unprecedented commitment – the biggest of its kind since the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative began – will be backed by £160 million in 2020 to 2021 to inject 3,300 new units of accommodation this year, part of 6,000 in total.

This means in 2020-2021, we are providing £606 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This marks a £238 million, or 65% increase, in funding from the previous year.

Hospices: Children

Asked by Baroness Morgan of Cotes

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish their standard operating procedure for children's hospices and community-provided children's palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4524]

Lord Bethell: Working with key stakeholders, NHS England and NHS improvement have developed a standard operating procedure (SOP), for palliative care for children and young people in community and hospice settings during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is due to be published shortly.

The SOP is aimed at supporting staff who are providing care or supporting children and young people, and their families, who have palliative and/or end of life care needs in the community, including home and hospice care. Palliative care will include some children and young people who have life-limiting long-term conditions and complex health needs. It encourages all providers of children's palliative care (statutory and voluntary sector) to work collaboratively and flexibly across health settings to support this group of children and young people and keep them safe during the pandemic.

Hospitals: Gender

Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the Equality Act 2010 to require hospitals to provide single-sex services. [HL3143]

Baroness Berridge: The government is committed to maintaining protections for single-sex services. Hospitals are already able, under Paragraph 27 (5)(a) of Schedule 3 of the Equality Act 2010, to provide such services and the NHS's guidance on [Delivering Same Sex Accommodation](#), published in September 2019, is very clear that hospitals must provide such services, with very few exceptions.

We have no plans to change the Equality Act 2010 to require hospitals to provide single-sex services.

Immigration: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review their policy on immigration fees. [HL4062]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Border, Immigration and Citizenship System (BICS) is predominately funded by the user and we think it is right that those who use it contribute to its cost, thereby reducing the burden on the UK taxpayer.

We keep our fees for immigration and nationality applications under regular review and ensure they are within the parameters agreed with HM Treasury and Parliament, as set out in Section 68 (9) of the Immigration Act 2014.

International Transport: Health

Asked by Baroness McGregor-Smith

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions Ministers have had with their European counterparts and the European Commission on agreeing a common baseline for health measures in international travel by air, sea and train. [HL3625]

Lord Bethell: The United Kingdom is engaging with a number of key international organisations, including the European Civil Aviation Conference, and we are working with our international partners to drive forward a shared agenda on public health measures for international travel. The Department for Transport is working with industry to explore potential public health measures for the sector, including those proposed by our European partners.

Parole Board: Training

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what training on the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 is required for Parole Board members. [HL4674]

Lord Keen of Elie: As an independent statutory body with court-like functions, the Parole Board is responsible for deciding on appropriate training requirements for its members. Mental health considerations are incorporated into its learning and development events, including compulsory induction training for members. A number of members already have backgrounds in mental health and some also sit on First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health) and Mental Health Review Tribunal Wales.

In cases where capacity of the offender may be an issue the Parole Board would normally appoint one of its specialist members (either a psychologist or psychiatrist) onto the panel. In the alternative, the panel can consult a specialist member on a specific issue. Panels can direct a capacity assessment be carried out in such cases, and, where a prisoner is found to lack capacity, the Parole

Board rules provide a person to be appointed to act on their behalf.

Prison Service: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the average quantity of personal protective equipment required on a daily basis by the prison service, broken down by type of equipment; and if they have not made such an assessment, why not. [HL4612]

Lord Keen of Elie: The supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required by the prison service is kept under regular review by the department. These requirements will fluctuate according to the changing situation in individual prisons and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Typical PPE items for tasks involving a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19 include fluid resistant surgical masks; aprons; gloves; hand sanitisers; and eye protection.

Public Health: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Rosser

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have broadcast advertisements to warn the public, in particular those who are vulnerable, of scams related to the COVID-19 pandemic; if not, why not; and what plans they have to provide advice about how to avoid becoming a victim of such scams. [HL3998]

Baroness Barran: The government has not broadcast advertisements to specifically raise awareness of scams related to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are a number of initiatives and public information campaigns aimed at tackling scams and disinformation connected with the pandemic.

The Rapid Response Unit, operating from within the Cabinet Office and No10, is tackling a range of harmful narratives online - from purported 'experts' issuing dangerous misinformation to criminal fraudsters running phishing scams. Up to 70 incidents a week, often false narratives containing multiple misleading claims, are being identified and resolved. The successful 'Don't Feed the Beast' public information campaign has also relaunched, to empower people to question what they read online.

HMG believes the best way to ensure the public's safety is to make sure that they know how to protect themselves - which is why we have been communicating both through our own channels, and using partner organisations like Trading Standards, the Financial Conduct Authority and working with all the major banks, so that the public know how to spot a scam and protect themselves from them. We have recently launched a GOV.UK page on coronavirus related fraud and cybercrime including easy-to-follow steps for people to

better protect themselves as well as signposting all relevant advice and tips. This page can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>.

In order to avoid falling victim to misinformation, we encourage the public to continue to check GOV.UK, where up to date guidance can be found, as well as watch the daily briefings on the government's response to COVID-19, which are broadcast live.

Public Sector Debt

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) department, (2) executive agency, (3) board, (4) court, or (5) other body, is responsible for ensuring that the Bank of England's independence is not compromised through the financing of UK Government debt. [HL4853]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Bank of England (the Bank) has statutory responsibilities for monetary policy and financial stability, and independence from the government to carry out these responsibilities as enshrined in the Bank of England Act (1998). The Bank is accountable to both the public and to Parliament, through scrutiny by the Treasury Committee.

The remit of the independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is set by the Chancellor, and is reaffirmed annually through an exchange of open letters with the Governor of the Bank.

The separation of monetary and fiscal policy is a key pillar of the government's macroeconomic framework. As such, the responsibility for financing the government's needs was transferred from the Bank to the UK's Debt Management Office (DMO), an executive agency of HM Treasury, in 1998. The Treasury sets the DMO's objective for debt management independently of monetary policy.

Public Sector: Gender Recognition

Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of public sector workers who have lost their jobs due to their views on the rights of people to self-identify their gender. [HL4856]

Baroness Berridge: This information is not collected centrally, but we are not aware of any case of this sort.

Public Transport: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 20 May (HL4129), whether their plans include the return of public transport services, following the eventual ending of restrictions on movement, broadly to levels that existed before the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4830]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Department is working to increase services to pre-COVID levels as quickly as possible. However, capacity will remain limited for as long as social distancing is in place.

Railways: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that train operators speed up refunds for the portions of season tickets unused because of the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic; and whether they will allow commuters to set the amount of any refunds they are due against the cost of the purchase of new season tickets. [HL4705]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We are monitoring train operators' processing times closely to ensure that refunds are paid as quickly as possible. Train operators have allocated additional resources to process the unprecedented number of refund requests, so the majority are being paid within the industry standard processing time of one month. We have asked train operators to provide accurate estimates on their websites of the expected claim processing time, so passengers know when they will receive their refund and are reassured that the time taken to process their claim will not affect the amount refunded.

The Department has no plans to put in place a system where a refund that is due is offset against the cost of purchasing a new season ticket; however since 17 March over 120,000 season ticket holders have received refunds totalling over £190 million in response to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Rents: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Pickles

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a pre-action protocol for councils which would encourage the negotiation of affordable rent payment plans with tenants before seeking bailiff enforcement action following the end of the current moratorium on new evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4860]

Lord Greenhalgh: The existing Pre-Action Protocol for social landlords (attached) <https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil/protocol/pre-action-protocol-for-possession-claims-by-social-landlords> encourages landlords and tenants to try to agree affordable sums for the tenant to pay towards rent arrears based on the tenant's income and expenditure. Landlords are encouraged to do this as soon as possible and to postpone commencing court proceedings for as long as the tenant keeps to such agreement, or to adjourn proceedings if an agreement is reached after proceedings are begun. The failure of a

landlord to comply with the protocol may be taken into account by the court in deciding what orders to make.

There are currently no plans to revise this protocol.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Pre-action protocol possession claims by Land Lord [200601Pre-Action Protocol for Possession Claims by Social Landlords - HL4860.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-21/HL4860>

Retail Trade: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Smith of Basildon

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 5 May 2020 (HL3080), how many (1) premises have been visited, (2) fixed penalty notices issued, and (3) prohibition orders issued, under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020 [HL4711]

Lord Greenhalgh: Everyone is required to comply with the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020 issued by the Government, in order to protect both themselves and others.

The latest data published by the National Police Chiefs' Council shows that between 27 March and 11 May, a total of 13,445 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in England. With businesses in particular, local authorities enforcement officers made 82,490 visits or interactions between 27 March and 16 May, issuing 655 prohibition notices and 48 fixed penalty notices to business premises.

On 13 May, the Government introduced higher fines for those who do not comply with the Regulations 2020, to reflect the increased risk to others of breaking the rules. Further information can be found (attached) online: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/500/made>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

legislation [200602 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 - HL4711.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-19/HL4711>

Schools: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the physical and operational requirements for the safe return of all students to schools at the start of the autumn term; and what discussions they have had with (1) school authorities, and (2) school staff, (3) trade unions representing teachers and other staff, (4) local authorities, (5) representatives of academies and academy chains, and

(6) representatives of independent schools, about those requirements. [HL4682]

Baroness Berridge: The department's approach to facilitating the safe return of all students at the start of the new 2020-21 academic year is underpinned by the government's assessment of the latest scientific advice that indicates a need to take a phased approach to their return. This is why we have limited numbers of children returning before the summer break into nurseries and schools, with numbers only to increase as the science permits.

To help support nurseries and schools to plan and prepare for the return of their children, the department has recently published a range of detailed guidance for each type of setting on how to implement protective measures. This includes effective infection protection and control for direct and indirect transmission as well as a list of actions for settings to complete before reopening, in addition to guidance on actions for childcare and educational settings to prepare for wider opening. All of the department's COVID-19 guidance for nurseries and schools, including that on implementing protective measures and preparing settings to reopen, can be found in one place on GOV.UK at:

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

We continue to keep this guidance under review so any operational issues arising in nurseries and schools are addressed, key lessons to be learnt are captured and acted on, and best practice is actively shared.

Leading up to and since the commencement of the wider opening of nurseries and schools on 1 June (the latter to children in Reception and, years 1 and 6), and in preparation for the return of years 10 and 12 students to secondary schools with effect from 15 June, the department's Regional Education and Children's Teams (REACTs) have been, and remain, in regular contact with local authorities (Directors of Children's Services and/or their representatives) and academy trusts in England to discuss local plans and issues, and to offer them support.

The department also continues to engage with education unions, professional associations and those other national representative bodies who represent headteachers and college principals, teachers and lecturers, school and other education setting support staff, school and college governors and local authority chief officers.

Additionally, the Independent Schools Council and the Boarding Schools Association have been, and remain, actively involved in discussions with both Department for Education officials and with ministers on the opening up of their members' schools to more students.

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the implications of resetting the last academic year so that the 2019-20 curriculum starts again at the start of the autumn term this year, in the

event of most students in schools not being able to return until that time or later; and whether any advance planning for such a reset is taking place. [HL4683]

Baroness Berridge: From the week commencing 1 June 2020, we have asked primary schools to welcome back children in nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups (vulnerable children and children of critical workers). This is the first step in a cautious and phased approach to fully reopening schools.

We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their peers, carers and teachers.

The department has issued guidance on remote education during the COVID-19 outbreak and has supported The Oak National Academy, an initiative led by 40 teachers who have assembled video lessons and online resources to be used by any teacher in the country for every year group from Reception to year 10. Additionally, the BBC has developed resources as part of a comprehensive new education package available on TV via the red button, on iPlayer and online.

The department continues to work with the education sector on how best to make up for time spent out of school. We are not, however, expecting children and young people to have to restart the academic year in the autumn term.

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) primary, and (2) secondary, schools will re-open on 1 June. [HL4714]

Baroness Berridge: The department has asked primary schools to welcome back children in nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups (vulnerable children and children of critical workers), from 1 June. From 23 March to 1 June, education and childcare settings remained open to priority groups.

We recognise that some primary schools may not be able to open to additional children from 1 June for a number of practical reasons. We will be working with local authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners across the country to identify and understand any local issues. If a school is facing particular challenges then we stand ready to support them to ensure they can open more widely as soon as possible.

From 15 June, secondary schools can invite year 10 and 12 pupils (years 10 and 11 for alternative provision schools) back into school for some face-to-face support with their teachers, to supplement their remote education, which will remain the predominant mode of education for these pupils this term. Priority groups can continue to attend full-time.

Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce a new income support cash benefit for low-income families for which the job retention scheme and universal credit are not sufficient to prevent them from falling into poverty. [HL4703]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: In response to COVID-19, the Government has announced an unprecedented package of measures to protect millions of people's jobs and incomes. This includes over £6.5 billion of extra support through the welfare system. It is one of the most generous business and welfare packages by any government so far in response to COVID-19.

This includes widening the scope of Statutory Sick Pay and making accessing benefits easier for those affected by COVID-19.

The Government has introduced further measures to support those on low-incomes, including:

- a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element which will be in place for one year;
- a temporary relaxation of earnings rules (the Minimum Income Floor) for self-employed Universal Credit claimants; and
- an increase in the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants to the 30th percentile of market rents, benefitting over one million households who will gain on average an additional £600 per year.

Social Services: Older People

Asked by Baroness Jolly

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people over the age of 70 live in a care setting. [HL4240]

Lord Bethell: The Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, formerly the Personal Social Services Research Unit, provide long term demand projections for adult social care, based on current service use and trends in disability rates. They estimate that in 2020 there are 330,000 care home residents aged 65 and over in care homes in England. These estimates are not broken down any further by age.

Supermarkets: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have put in place for blind and partially sighted people to have priority for supermarket online delivery slots. [HL4691]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government has been working closely with local authorities, retailers, food businesses and charities to ensure that blind and partially sighted people have access to the food and essential goods that they need.

We have published guidance online that explains what steps people can take if they are unable to access food. This guidance has been shared with local authorities, retailers and charities to help them respond to enquiries from those seeking help. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-accessing-food-and-essential-supplies>.

Various sight loss charities are working directly with some of the major supermarkets to take forward some practical initiatives to help people with sight loss to access supermarkets.

This crisis has seen a surge in community spirit not seen in many decades, with grassroots support networks springing up all over the country. There are many local community groups who can help, as well as local shops which may be able to provide orders for delivery (by phone or by email). Many local authorities are now publicising such initiatives on their Covid-19 websites and through their Covid-19 helplines.

In addition, over 600,000 people are now registered as NHS Volunteer Responders. Verified volunteer responders can receive tasks to help those in their communities, including through shopping for vulnerable people for food and essential supplies. Health and care professionals and approved charities (including Citizens Advice and Age UK) are now able to refer vulnerable individuals into the system to receive support from volunteers.

Further, it is now possible for individuals to self-refer for assistance from the NHS Volunteer Responders, if they consider themselves to be vulnerable and in need of support.

Tourists: Greece

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the offer from the government of Greece to waive the 14-day quarantine for British tourists; and what discussions they have had with airlines about this offer. [\[HL4688\]](#)

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On Wednesday 20th May, Greek PM Mitsotakis announced that Greece envisions a two-stage relaxing of measures for travellers wishing to enter Greece. Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials have been in regular contact with the Greek government throughout the COVID-19 crisis including about future arrangements and those talks will continue.

Department for Transport officials continue to work closely with their international counterparts, and the

aviation sector, as they respond to the crisis and discuss all aspects of restart and recovery.

Tunnels: West Yorkshire

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 20 May (HL4128), whether the work by Highways England on planned safety work on the Queensbury Tunnel will protect the tunnel for possible future use as a cycleway. [\[HL4825\]](#)

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The current phase of safety works by Highways England contractors at Queensbury Tunnel are being delivered to ensure their safe access to the high-risk zone. This phase of works would not be prejudicial to any future reopening of the tunnel.

The subsequent phase of safety works, scheduled for early July 2020, will involve the creation of a concrete plug below shaft 3 to strengthen the base of the shaft and prevent collapse and is essential to protect the public. These works would make it more difficult to reopen the tunnel in future, but conditions around the base of shaft 3 represent a high-risk environment to contractors due to water levels in excess of 3.5 meters and active deterioration of the tunnel lining in that area.

World Health Organisation: USA

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the United States about its decision to de-fund the World Health Organisation and the resulting effect on the international efforts to combat COVID-19. [\[HL4605\]](#)

Asked by Lord Chidgey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the United States about its decision to reduce funding to the World Health Organisation and the effects such reductions would have on the international efforts to combat COVID-19. [\[HL4677\]](#)

Lord Bethell: The United States has since made a further announcement regarding their funding to and relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO). The Department is regularly in discussions with other countries on a wide range of issues relating to the international response to COVID-19 including the United States. The United States continues to play an important role on global health, and we will continue to work with the United States and other international partners to tackle the current crisis. The United Kingdom has a strong and committed relationship with the WHO and, as the second

largest Member State donor, continues to work closely with the WHO. The UK has already contributed £75 million to help the WHO lead international efforts to stop the spread of the virus and end the pandemic and the UK

has no plans to stop funding the WHO, which has an important role to play in leading the global health response to COVID-19.

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