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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**Written Statements .....1**

**Written Answers.....4**

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

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

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# Written Statements

*Monday, 8 June 2020*

## **Covice-19 Vaccines Programme: Contingencies Advance**

[HLWS270]

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

I hereby give notice of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's intention to seek an advance from the contingencies fund totalling £5,673,000 to enable expenditure on Covid-19 vaccines programme to be spent ahead of the passage of the Supply and Appropriation Act.

The funding is urgently required for HM Government to secure inventory which can be utilised for a number of vaccine, antibody and therapeutic candidates.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £5,673,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Main Estimate for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £5,673,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advances will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent on the Supply and Appropriation Bill.

## **Global Health Security Update**

[HLWS269]

**Baroness Sugg:** My Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development, has made the following statement:

The UK is leading the worldwide fightback against infectious diseases, including coronavirus.

That is why the Prime Minister hosted the Global Vaccine Summit last week to raise funding for vaccinations that will save millions of lives in the poorest countries and protect the world from future outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Bringing together world leaders and representatives from 62 countries, private sector organisations and civil society, the Global Vaccine Summit raised an historic \$8.8 billion for Gavi - exceeding our fundraising target of \$7.4 billion.

Just as the UK is the single biggest donor to the international effort to find a coronavirus vaccine, I am incredibly proud that we are the biggest donor to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The UK has pledged £1.65 billion over the next five years – which will vaccinate up to 75 million children from infectious diseases, saving almost 2 million lives.

The funding raised from 32 donors also included generous pledges from countries such as Germany, United

States, Saudi Arabia, France, Netherlands and Sweden, \$1.6 billion from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and \$61 million from the private sector.

In a great demonstration of global collaboration, the world has sufficiently invested in Gavi for the next five years. The Global Vaccine Summit is an example of what we can accomplish when we come together.

This support for Gavi will immunise 300 million more children in the world's poorest countries against diseases like measles, polio and diphtheria by the end of 2025, will save up to 8 million lives and prevent needless child deaths.

People who are vaccinated protect themselves and the rest of the population by lowering the spread and risk of infection. Gavi's work on routine immunisation is the strongest shield against outbreaks of infectious killer diseases.

It will also help ensure our global recovery from coronavirus. By vaccinating millions of children against other deadly diseases, we are protecting fragile healthcare systems in the world's poorest countries so they can cope with rising coronavirus cases.

This will ultimately help prevent future waves of infectious diseases spreading around the world, including to the UK.

Vaccines work and this funding matters. Generous support from the British people to Gavi has already helped immunise more than 760 million children in the world's poorest countries, saving over 13 million lives.

Gavi's market shaping efforts to make life-saving vaccines more accessible and affordable have seen a 21% price reduction for fully immunising a child with pentavalent, pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines – from \$20.01 in 2015 to \$15.90 in 2018. The UK can be proud of the part we've played in this price reduction.

The UK has also been a founding donor of the successful Advance Market Commitment which has so far protected the lives of over 700,000 children from deadly pneumonia infections. We welcome Gavi's leadership and offered our full support to their new coronavirus fund with a \$60 million commitment from the UK to help speed up access to a vaccine when it's ready.

But the Global Vaccine Summit was just the beginning - we can do so much more.

The World Health Organization estimates that 80 million children under one have had routine immunisation disrupted by the pandemic. The UK's support to Gavi will make sure that routine immunisation is not interrupted as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and that everyone has access to lifesaving vaccinations.

Gavi, with UK support, is also addressing the immediate needs triggered by coronavirus, including by providing essential medical supplies and helping to increase testing and surveillance of the disease.

To defeat coronavirus, we must focus our collective ingenuity on the search for a vaccine. And in the future, Gavi will have a crucial role in the delivery of a

coronavirus vaccine. It is already working hard with partners to make sure a safe and effective coronavirus vaccine would be affordable and delivered around the world.

No one is safe from coronavirus until we are all safe.

The UK has already committed up to £764 million for the global coronavirus response. Some of the most promising research into vaccines is happening here, supported by our Vaccine Taskforce. And we are pioneering the innovative collaborations that will be needed to manufacture and distribute a vaccine, once found, like the partnership between AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford.

But this demands a truly global effort.

As the Prime Minister said, the Global Vaccine Summit was a moment when the world came together to unite humanity in the fight against disease.

### **Immersive and Addictive Technologies: Government Response to DCMS Committee Inquiry**

[HLWS268]

**Baroness Barran:** My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden MP, has made the following Statement:

DCMS is today publishing the government response to the DCMS Select Committee's report on Immersive and Addictive Technologies. I would like to commend the Committee for a wide-ranging and detailed examination of many important issues.

The report called for improved research on the impact of video games and included extensive commentary on loot boxes (in-game purchases of virtual containers that award players with items to use in the game, based on chance).

To address the issues raised, and to ensure government policy is based on sound evidence, the government will set a framework for a programme of research into video games' impacts on behaviour. This process will be led by DCMS' Chief Scientific Advisor and will include a series of workshops with relevant Research Councils, academia and industry. These will be used to help determine the full range and detail of the questions that need to be addressed on the impacts of video games and make recommendations for a further programme of research.

We are not minded at this point to impose a levy on the games industry to pay for new research as we believe it would be likely to disproportionately impact the SMEs and microbusinesses that comprise the vast majority of games businesses in the UK. However, a range of funding approaches, including mechanisms to allow for in-game data to be used to support research, will be considered as part of this work.

The government will also launch a call for evidence on loot boxes to assess concerns around links to gambling-like behaviour and excessive in-game spending. This will

work alongside the framework for a programme of research into video games, and the wider review of the Gambling Act that includes a commitment to include a particular focus on loot boxes. In addition to a written call for evidence, we envisage holding a series of roundtables to discuss issues and solutions in detail, including the most effective approaches to protect users from any harms identified. The results from the call for evidence will be considered alongside the review of the Gambling Act. The government stands ready to take action should the outcomes of the call for evidence support taking a new approach to ensure users, and particularly young people, are protected.

The government recognises that immersive technologies and content offer great potential for economic, cultural and social benefits to the UK. Through increasingly compelling narratives and realistic visuals, immersive products can offer engaging experiences to audiences, not just with the aim of entertaining but with the scope to challenge, educate and inspire them.

Immersive technologies also allow the video games sector in the UK to build on already formidable strengths. Over half the UK population plays games, the vast majority engaging safely with content that allows them to enjoy fun, exciting play, find moments of relaxation, socialise and learn new skills. The video games sector, a key part of the UK's world-leading creative industries, is also a cutting edge creator and adopter of innovative new technologies, and a provider of highly skilled creative jobs.

The government is committed to build on these strengths by promoting inward investment, enabling the growth of exciting new games companies and encouraging innovation. Targeted support includes the Video Games Tax Relief which has supported more than 1,000 video games productions since it was introduced in 2014. Earlier this year, we also announced the extension of the UK Games Fund to 2021. Set up in 2015, the UK Games Fund targets games development talent with access to finance and business support, supporting 152 companies and 73 graduate teams to date. We are also helping to drive innovation, supporting ground-breaking projects such as the InGAME centre in Dundee. We will continue to consider further actions we can take to underpin the sector's vital contribution to the future prosperity of the UK.

However, whilst digital technologies are overwhelmingly a force for good, undoubtedly they also present new responsibilities to ensure that users - particularly children and vulnerable people - are not exposed to harm.

I believe the actions the government is announcing today are important steps towards ensuring we can support the further growth of an innovative and important industry while protecting users in a fast-changing space. Further details on these, and the other recommendations made by the Committee will be set out in the government response.

I am placing copies of the response in the libraries of the House, and it will also be available on gov.uk.

## **UK's Future Relationship with the EU: Negotiations**

[HLWS267]

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

The Government has made a commitment to update Parliament on the progress of our future relationship negotiations with the EU. This statement provides an update on the fourth round of negotiations.

Negotiators from the UK and the EU held discussions through video conferencing on 2 – 5 June 2020 for the fourth round of negotiations on the UK-EU future relationship. This round was shorter than usual owing to a Belgian public holiday. There was no opening plenary, but there were substantive discussions on many issues, and the week closed with a plenary on 5 June chaired by the UK's Chief Negotiator, David Frost, and by the European Commission's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier.

Discussions covered all work streams including:

- Trade in Goods – Market access, trade remedies, customs and SPS.
- Trade in Services –International Maritime Transport Services, temporary entry for business purposes, professional qualifications, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Geographical Indications (GIs).
- Fisheries – Objectives of the agreement, consultation and cooperation procedures, access and scope, and quota sharing.
- Transport – Aviation governance.
- Energy – Civil nuclear, gas and electricity trading, climate change and carbon pricing.
- Mobility and Social Security Coordination – Social security coordination arrangements.
- Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice – Human rights, extradition, the exchange of passenger name records (PNR) information, and Europol.
- Thematic cooperation – A possible security of information agreement, asylum and illegal migration including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Participation in Union Programmes – Discussions on the potential terms for UK participation in the following programmes Horizon Europe, Euratom, R&D, Copernicus and Erasmus+, and discussions on potential cooperation on the European Geostationary Navigation

Overlay Service and EU Space Surveillance and Tracking programmes.

- “Level Playing Field” – In particular, labour and environmental standards, and trade and sustainable development.
- Horizontal Issues - Governance arrangements, territorial scope.

Discussions were constructive and positive in tone, but there was no movement on the most difficult areas where differences of principle are at their most acute - notably fisheries, governance arrangements, and the so-called “level playing field”. Chief Negotiators are discussing the arrangements for the next rounds of negotiation and for the High Level Meeting required by the Political Declaration to take place in June.

## **Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee: Second Meeting**

[HLWS266]

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

The second meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee will take place on 12 June 2020 by video conference.

The meeting will be co-chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP and Vice President of the European Commission, Mr Maroš Šefčovič.

The agenda will include four items:

1. *Introduction and opening remarks from co-chairs*
  - 1.1 Welcome and opening remarks
  - 1.2 Stocktake of Specialised Committee meetings
2. *Implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement*
  - 2.1 Citizens' rights
  - 2.2 Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland
  - 2.3 Protocol on Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus
  - 2.4 Protocol on Gibraltar
  - 2.5 Financial provisions
3. *Decision on amendments to the Withdrawal Agreement*
4. *AOB*

The UK delegation will include:

- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP
- The Paymaster General, Rt Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP.

Representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive have also been invited to form part of the UK delegation.



## Written Answers

Monday, 8 June 2020

### Airports: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness McGregor-Smith**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to publish a summary of the advice and scientific evidence from Public Health England on the utility of health screening at airports during the current phase of the COVID-19 outbreak. [[HL3624](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Transparency, including on the evidence informing the views of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), is vital in helping to maintain the public's trust and grow our collective understanding of the disease, while also helping to explain how scientific advice to the Government is being formed. The Government is working to publish evidence documents and studies, including from Public Health England, which have formed the basis of SAGE's discussions and advice to Ministers, regularly, and will publish more evidence in the coming weeks.

### Armed Forces: Commonwealth

Asked by **Lord Tuhig**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Commonwealth citizens are currently serving in the UK Armed Forces. [[HL4874](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** As at 1 October 2019, there were 4,490 Commonwealth citizens in the trained and trade trained strength of the Regular Armed Forces and 240 in the Future Reserves 2020 population.

Notes:

- Figures for the Royal Navy/Royal Marines and Royal Air Force are for the Trained Regular population and Trained Future Reserve 2020 (FR20) population. Army figures are for Trade Trained Regular population, and Trained FR20 population.
- UK Regulars consist of Full-time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding FTRS personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service, Locally Engaged Personnel and Non-Regular Permanent Staff.
- FR20 includes Volunteer Reserves who are mobilised, High Readiness Reserves and those Volunteer Reserves serving on FTRS and Additional Duties Commitment. Sponsored Reserves who provide a most cost-effective solution than Volunteer Reserves are also included in the Army Reserve FR20 figures.
- Nationality is as reported on the Joint Personnel Administration system
- Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 in line with disclosure control policy.

### Armed Forces: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to restore the policy of publishing standalone Sustainable MOD annual reports to ensure that the records of all military greenhouse gas emissions each year are easily accessible. [[HL4814](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** Ministry of Defence greenhouse gas emissions and performance against targets are reported in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts.

### Armed Forces: Veterans

Asked by **Lord Tuhig**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the issue of Commonwealth-born UK Armed Forces veterans facing financial difficulties and deportation due to a lack of awareness about how to regularise their immigration status following discharge. [[HL4873](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** Commonwealth UK Armed Forces veterans are made aware of the process for regularising their immigration status on enlistment to the Armed Forces, during their service and again prior to discharge.

Following discharge, Veterans UK's Veterans Welfare Service and Defence Transition Services provide the same level of support to Foreign and Commonwealth veterans as they do to any other veteran. They provide relevant advice, information and support, assisting veterans to access the appropriate range of services to meet their individual needs and requirements. This support continues for as long as required as part of our commitment to providing 'through-life support' to veterans.

### Arms Trade: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on (1) future UK arms sales, and (2) existing arms contracts. [[HL4815](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** It is not yet clear what the full impact will be of the Covid-19 outbreak on existing Ministry of Defence contracts, although it is inevitable that there will be some repercussions. We remain closely engaged with our strategic suppliers to monitor and understand the impact of Covid-19 on defence during this critical time.

The Department for International Trade's Defence and Security Organisation (DIT DSO) has not made a formal assessment on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on future UK arms sales or existing arms contracts. DIT DSO remains in close contact with industry and is actively monitoring the situation through its Industry Engagement Plan. DIT DSO will continue to support UK defence and security industries to export, post COVID-19.

## Asylum: Children

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have put in place to ensure that children can continue to be transferred to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4110]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for the UK of successful transfers of separated children from Greece to other countries in Europe under the European Commission's relocation scheme for transfers of unaccompanied children. [HL4111]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 committed the Government to transfer 480 unaccompanied children from Greece, Italy and France to the UK; 478 have now successfully transferred. We remain in contact with our counterparts in Italy to complete the transfer of the final two children as soon as it is safe to do so. We welcome the pledges made by other countries to support Greece and stand ready to offer advice and guidance to those developing their own schemes.

The UK remains fully committed to meeting our obligations under the Dublin Regulation. Despite covid-19 restrictions, the UK is ready to accept transfers under Dublin whenever Member States are in a position to make those arrangements. Following close collaboration with the Greek Government, 50 asylum seekers arrived in the UK from Greece on 11 May in order to unite with family members who were already lawfully present in the UK.

Protecting vulnerable children is a key priority for the Government. In 2019, the UK received more asylum applications from unaccompanied children than any country in the EU and accounted for approximately 20% of all reported UASC claims made in the UK and the 27 EU Member States.

## British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they are giving to UK citizens who are being repatriated to the UK as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic who do not have access to accommodation where they can self-isolate if necessary. [HL4468]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Where a person is unable to self-isolate, the Government will assist them in finding a facility in which to do so. If you cannot safely self-isolate in your own accommodation, you should tell a border force official as you arrive at the UK border who can direct you to the booking system.

The Government has made in excess of £3.2bn of funding available to local authorities in England to assist

them in managing the pressures arising out of the pandemic.

## Care Homes: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Birt*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which agency has the lead responsibility for supplying COVID-19 testing kits to care homes. [HL4382]

**Lord Bethell:** Public Health England (PHE) and the Department are working closely together to respond to outbreaks of COVID-19 in care homes.

PHE's health protection teams (HPTs) play a vital role locally in responding to any outbreak in care homes, providing tailored infection control advice to allow staff to protect themselves and their residents. From the outset, HPTs have been arranging testing for residents when an outbreak is reported at a particular care home.

The Department is offering a test to every staff member and resident in every care home in England, whether symptomatic or not. By 6 June, every care home for the over 65s will have been offered testing for residents and staff.

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have of the number of people discharged from NHS hospitals into care homes who had (1) not been tested, or (2) tested positive, for COVID-19. [T] [HL4545]

**Lord Bethell:** Information is not available in the format requested.

The attached table shows a count of the finished discharge episodes, with the number of diagnosis confirmed by test and diagnosis not confirmed by test for all discharges listed by destination for each month in 2020.

The data shows the number of completed episodes and not the number of people as some individuals may have been admitted and discharged on more than one occasion during the period.

The data is provisional and is subject to review.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL4545-Baroness Altmann-Supporting data.xlsx [HL4545-  
Baroness Altmann-Supporting data.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-18/HL4545>

*Asked by Lord Warner*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance about COVID-19 has been given to supported living facilities since 15 March to enable residents and staff of such facilities to be protected; and how many residents of such facilities have died or are suspected to have died of COVID-19 since the pandemic began. [HL4731]

**Lord Bethell:** Previously, Public Health England published guidance for supported living providers. This was withdrawn on 13 May and updated guidance for the sector is being developed.

Guidance on the provision of home care was published on 22 May and is available in an online only format at GOV.UK. This may also be relevant to supported living settings where domiciliary care is provided.

The Care Quality Commission advised that it is not possible to isolate death notifications where providers register for multiple service types. Therefore, they have analysed deaths reported by providers who are registered to provide supported living services only.

Between 10 April and 15 May 2020, there were 39 deaths notified - 18 of which have been COVID-19 related, whether suspected or confirmed. It is important to note that this may not offer a complete picture of all deaths in supported living settings.

### **China: START Treaty**

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to whether the government of China should be party to any future New START Treaty. [HL4880]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We recognise the contribution the New START Treaty has made to international security by increasing transparency and mutual confidence amongst the two largest Nuclear Weapons States. The Treaty has delivered a reduction of strategic nuclear arsenals, enhanced notably by its robust verification mechanism. We support its continued implementation and have encouraged the US to extend New START while negotiating any successor agreement. However, we are also clear that New START has limitations. It does not include new Russian systems. Nor does it place any limits on China's growing nuclear arsenal. We therefore support the US Government's trilateral strategic arms control initiative.

### **Civil Service and Public Sector: Disease Control**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they made of the preparedness of the Civil Service and public services to respond to a pandemic prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. [HL4865]

**Lord True:** The Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) is responsible for the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA). For all risks included in the NSRA there is an established departmental risk owner. It is the responsibility of each risk-owning department to oversee the management of their portfolio of risks, to ensure their own preparedness and that of their relevant sectors. Departments and agencies can draw upon a wide

range of stakeholder input, including Regulators and Local Resilience Forums to enact appropriate mitigation, response and recovery plans for their risks and sectors.

### **Confidence Building Measures**

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they have taken to try and establish confidence building measures between nuclear powers since the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. [HL4881]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** During our coordination of the P5 Process, the UK hosted a range of discussions between the five Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Nuclear Weapon States, including a dialogue aimed at increasing our mutual understanding of each other's nuclear doctrine, and hosting a conference of the five Nuclear Weapon States in London on 12-13 February 2020. At that meeting, all five states underlined the importance of reducing nuclear risk and promoting stability, and agreed that dialogue on strategic risk reduction should continue.

### **Coronavirus: Children**

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risks posed by any emergence of a Kawasaki-like disease in children who may have been exposed to COVID-19. [HL4696]

**Lord Bethell:** Since March 2020 surveillance of multisystem inflammatory syndrome, Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome has been underway in the United Kingdom. The British Paediatric Surveillance Unit and Public Health England have commenced a study which aims to understand the incidence, presenting features, laboratory features, management, clinical course and the outcome of this potentially new syndrome characterised by hyperinflammation which is temporally associated with COVID-19.

The study is scheduled to run until March 2021, or until sufficient case reports have been notified to allow data analysis.

### **Coronavirus: Death**

*Asked by Baroness Thornton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that COVID-19 related fatalities of (1) NHS staff, (2) social workers, and (3) care workers, are accurately reported. [HL4871]

**Lord Bethell:** On 29 April 2020 the Government introduced a new daily death reporting protocol which includes deaths that have occurred in all settings where there has been a positive COVID-19 test such as hospitals, care homes and the wider community.



The number of deaths of National Health Service healthcare workers is verified from direct reports from NHS employing and non-NHS organisations. This information is investigated and triangulated by NHS England to give a high level of confidence of validity.

The Office for National Statistics also publishes statistics on deaths involving COVID-19 by occupation, including rates and counts of deaths of social workers and care workers.

### Coronavirus: Disease Control

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their latest estimate of the positive effect of social distancing on decreasing the spread of COVID-19; and what estimate they have made of the possible negative effects as restrictions are gradually lifted. [[HL4409](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** On 26 March 2020 the Government introduced a series of social distancing measures based on scientific advice. These are strict measures, but they are measures that we must take in order to protect the National Health Service, slow the spread of the virus so the NHS would not be overwhelmed, and save lives. Helped by these measures, we have started to reduce the spread of the disease and ensured that the NHS was not overwhelmed.

On 16 April, the First Secretary of State (Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab MP) outlined, in line with scientific advice, five criteria that would be considered as part of assessing the necessity of the measures and whether they could be eased. These consider NHS capacity, death rates, transmission rates, availability of personal protective equipment, and avoidance of a second peak of the virus that overwhelms the NHS.

The Government will continue to review the measures, assessing them to ensure that they continue to be necessary and proportionate based on available scientific evidence.

### Coronavirus: Hydroxychloroquine

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of taking hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19; and what plans they have to supply hydroxychloroquine to members of the Cabinet. [[HL4687](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Clinical trials are currently under way in the United Kingdom and internationally to test whether existing medicines, including hydroxychloroquine, are safe and effective for treating COVID-19. An assessment of the effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine will be made following the conclusion of the trials.

There are no plans to supply hydroxychloroquine to members of the Cabinet.

### Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether wearing (1) non-surgical facemasks, and (2) glasses, alongside social distancing measures in closed public places, reduces the respiratory spread of COVID-19. [[HL3722](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** After careful consideration of the latest scientific evidence from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, the Government confirmed face coverings can help to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, in some circumstances. Evidence shows a face covering can help to reduce the spread of droplets and therefore the potential infection of others.

From 11 May 2020, the public were advised to consider covering their mouth and nose when in enclosed spaces, such as public transport or shops.

### Defence: Expenditure

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to maintain present planned levels of defence spending, as part of their commitment to NATO's deterrence and defence capability. [[HL4883](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** Her Majesty's Government is committed to spending at least 2% of GDP on Defence each year of this Parliament, as per the Defence Investment Pledge. The UK is one of only a handful of nations that meets, and in our case exceeds, the 2% target and remains the largest European Defence spender in NATO.

### Dental Services: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Crawley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the financial sustainability of NHS dental services. [[HL4289](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** NHS England is continuing to fund dentists for their National Health Service contracts while the requirement to deliver a given amount of treatment is suspended. As part of the agreement dental practices will provide remote urgent advice, redeploy staff to provide urgent face to face care in one of the 550 urgent dental centres and redeploy other staff to support the wider NHS on COVID-19.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced on 28 May that NHS dentistry outside urgent care centres will begin to restart from 8 June with the aim of increasing levels of service as fast as is compatible with maximising safety.

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the capability of dental practices to continue to operate after the COVID-19 pandemic; and what steps they intend to take to ensure that the public have access to full dental services when COVID-19 restrictive measures are relaxed to allow routine dental treatment to resume. [HL4505]

**Lord Bethell:** National Health Service dentistry was reorganised in late March along with other NHS primary care services to minimise face to face care to contain the spread of COVID-19 during the peak of the pandemic. Dentists were asked to suspend all routine treatment and instead to offer urgent advice and, where required, prescriptions for antibiotics by telephone. Urgent treatment was made available through urgent dental centres (UDCs) set up in each NHS region.

As of 25 May, there are currently over 550 UDCs open. Patients are triaged into UDCs by their own dentistry or through NHS 111. The UDCs are expected to provide, where urgently needed, the full range of dental treatment normally available on the NHS.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced on 28 May that NHS dentistry outside UDCs will begin to restart from 8 June with the aim of increasing levels of service as fast as is compatible with maximising safety.

*Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss with the Care Quality Commission the steps that need to be taken for dental surgeries to safely reopen for emergency dental care during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4662]

**Lord Bethell:** National Health Service dentistry was reorganised in late March along with other NHS primary care services to minimise face to face care to contain the spread of COVID-19 during the peak of the pandemic. Dentists were asked to suspend all routine treatment and instead to offer urgent advice and, where required, prescriptions for antibiotics by telephone. Urgent treatment was made available through urgent dental centres (UDCs) set up in each NHS region.

As of 25 May there are currently over 550 UDCs open. Patients are triaged into UDCs by their own dentistry or through NHS 111. The UDCs are expected to provide, where urgently needed, the full range of dental treatment normally available on the NHS.

NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Chief Dental Officer held two workshops in collaboration with the Care Quality Commission and dental sector, at how soon wider NHS dental services can safely reopen.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced on 28 May that NHS dentistry outside urgent care centres will begin to restart from 8 June with the aim of increasing levels of service as fast as is compatible with maximising safety. A copy of the letter is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Letter on resumption of dental services [Resumption of dental services letter 28 May.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-18/HL4662>

## Domestic Abuse: Finance

*Asked by Baroness Uddin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) national, and (2) local, measures are in place to monitor the availability of funding for women's organisation working with (a) victims, (b) survivors of, and (3) children affected by, domestic abuse. [HL4063]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government works inter-departmentally and with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and domestic abuse organisations to understand funding requirements for these organisations at the national level. Levels and types of funding provided from Government Departments to organisations is monitored by those respective Departments. Details of systems in place at local level, for example through local authorities, are not held centrally.

The Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner has agreed to undertake an in-depth exploration of the current community-based support landscape over 2020/21 which will inform our understanding of the availability of funding for domestic abuse organisations. The precise scope and timing of the review is a matter for the independent Commissioner. The review is expected to take some 12 months.

A ministerial-led National Steering Group will be established to monitor and evaluate delivery of the new duty on tier one local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse, and their children, within safe accommodation (as provided for in Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Bill). Tier one local authorities will be required to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies for the provision of such support.

The National Steering Group will include representatives from local government, Police and Crime Commissioners, health bodies, specialist domestic abuse service providers and housing associations. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner will also be a member.

## Exercise Cygnus

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took, following the conclusion of Exercise Cygnus, to review the level of additional pressure the voluntary sector could absorb from the social care sector during a pandemic. [HL4634]

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took, following the conclusion of Exercise Cygnus, to review the work needed to develop a method for (1)

mapping capacity of, and (2) providing strategic national direction to, voluntary resources during a pandemic. [HL4635]

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took, following the conclusion of Exercise Cygnus, to review the level of engagement in the voluntary sector in advance as well as the capacity of that sector to assist in the event of a pandemic. [HL4636]

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

### Exercise Cygnus: Voluntary Work

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took following the conclusion of Exercise Cygnus to ensure that the contribution of the voluntary sector was more apparent in pandemic plans and communications activities. [HL4780]

**Lord Bethell:** The lessons from Exercise Cygnus continue to inform our preparedness, including strengthening health, care and voluntary sector plans to surge and flex beyond normal capacity.

Government departments and agencies are working with organisations across the voluntary and charity sector to ensure the sector's valuable expertise contributes to better outcomes for people affected by the crisis.

### Fruit and Vegetables: Production

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the availability of a diverse range of UK-grown vegetables and fruit in areas local to their production. [HL4812]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Government recognises the crucial role the UK's horticulture industry plays in both feeding the country and in promoting people's health and wellbeing. The UK has the climate, the landscape, and entrepreneurial farmers and growers to enable us to produce world-class fruit and vegetables.

We are proud of our growing food reputation. Protected Geographical Indications (PGIs), whether they be for beef from Scotland, lamb from Wales or asparagus from the Vale of Evesham in England, play an important role as exemplars of our quality produce. We are committed to celebrating the success of these regional and traditional

products whose authenticity and origin can be guaranteed, along with driving further market access to make sure they are enjoyed here and around the world.

We will always champion our farmers and growers, supporting them to grow more of our great British food and to provide a reliable and sustainable food supply to the British public. This includes through using powers under our landmark Agriculture Bill, and through our work with the Food and Drink Sector Council, a formal industry partnership with the Government, helping to create a more productive and sustainable food and drink sector.

The UK has a high degree of food security, built on access to a range of sources including strong domestic production and imports from other countries. Half of the food we eat is produced in the UK. The rest of our food is imported, with 30% coming from the EU and 20% from other countries. The UK's current production to supply ratio is 75% for indigenous-type foods and 61% for all foods. We produce 61% - 75% of our food supply, but some of that is exported.

Under the current EU State Aid rules we have been unable to promote our home produced food and drink to the domestic market in Government sponsored campaigns nationally. However, we continue to work with regional food groups to showcase their top-quality produce locally; tying this up where we can with stakeholder initiatives (such as those of the AHDB), focussing on provenance and the UK's world-leading standards of food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection.

### Gender Recognition

*Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the clarity of the language relating to transgender issues in their publications and guidance; and what plans they have to take steps to clarify that language where issues have been identified. [HL4858]

**Baroness Berridge:** As part of our engagement on the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA), single-sex and separate-sex service providers were asked whether they felt confident interpreting the Equality Act 2010 with regards to providing services for transgender people. Many single-sex service providers reported that they felt confident doing so. We are also aware that others, including some campaign organisations, have highlighted a desire for greater clarity from the Government about the law and guidance in this area. We intend to say more on this when we publish our response to the GRA consultation.

### Gender Recognition: Discrimination

*Asked by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) amend the Equality Act 2010, and (2)

introduce new legislation, to ensure that there is a clear legal definition of transgender discrimination. [HL4857]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Equality Act 2010 includes a clear legal definition of transgender discrimination. Under the Act a person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if that person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. For the purposes of the Act, somebody with this protected characteristic is known as a transsexual person and in general cannot be treated differently for being transsexual.

The government will publish its response to the GRA consultation in due course, which will take into account any changes to legislation that may be necessary.

### Hospitals: Admissions

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide finer resolution data on hospital admission statistics in England to aid understanding of optimal (1) admission, (2) treatment, and (3) resource allocation, strategies. [HL5018]

**Lord Bethell:** Data on Hospital Episodes Statistics is published online by NHS Digital and the latest available data is for 2018/19. Annual data for 2019/20 is due to be published in October 2020.

### Immigrants: Domestic Abuse

*Asked by Baroness Uddin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in place to mitigate the impact of any increase in the incidence of domestic abuse on those women who have no recourse to public funds. [HL4065]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government is committed to supporting people, including those with no recourse to public funds, through this crisis. We are taking a compassionate and pragmatic approach and will continue to review the situation to consider if more can be done.

Following increases in calls to domestic abuse helplines and online services, the Home Secretary announced an additional £2m to bolster organisations' capacity on April 11. This is in addition to £28m of Government funding for domestic abuse charities to help survivors of domestic abuse and their children by providing more safe spaces, accommodation and access to support services during the coronavirus outbreak.

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

A £3.2 billion package of funding has been allocated to local authorities to help them respond to pressures across all the services they deliver and support any individual on the basis of any genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution. For example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases.

People granted leave under the family and human rights routes can also apply to have a no recourse to public funds condition lifted or for access to benefits if their financial circumstances change.

### Immigrants: Health Services

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the net financial benefit to the NHS from the immigration health surcharge in each year since the surcharge was introduced; and what proportion of total annual income from the immigration health surcharge comes from foreign nationals working in the health and care sector. [HL4811]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office does not collate or publish the breakdown of Immigration Health Surcharge income collected from foreign nationals working in the health and social care sector.

Income data for the Immigration Health Surcharge is published annually in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts.

Please see page 137 of the Home Office 2018-19 Annual Report and Accounts for the most recent disclosure of Immigration Health Surcharge income:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/807126/6.5571\\_HO\\_Annual\\_Report\\_201920\\_WEB.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807126/6.5571_HO_Annual_Report_201920_WEB.PDF)

### Ministers of State: Conduct

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they estimate that the results of the investigation into the conduct of the Home Secretary will be published. [HL4863]

**Lord True:** The Prime Minister asked the Cabinet Office to establish the facts and that work is ongoing. The Prime Minister will make any decision on the matter public once the work has concluded.

### Ministry of Defence: Procurement

*Asked by Lord Touthig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote sustainability in the supply chain during Ministry of Defence procurement. [HL4877]

**Baroness Goldie:** The Ministry of Defence (MOD) takes environmental and sustainability issues into account throughout its acquisition process. Our investment



approvals policy includes a requirement to take sustainability into account in all initial business cases, and the use of an environmental management system is mandated for all acquisition projects.

This helps to ensure that our activities are compliant with Government sustainable development and environmental protection policy requirements. Where relevant, sustainability and environmental requirements are also defined in defence contracts, evaluated in the tender process and monitored and managed through the life of the contract to ensure MOD requirements are being met.

We also expect defence industry suppliers to play a key role in improving their own processes and supply chain education. Where sub-contractors are engaged, the prime contractor remains responsible for ensuring adherence to all obligations, including those relating to sustainability and environmental issues.

We expect our suppliers to abide by the Government's Supplier Code of Conduct, which requires suppliers to understand and reduce their impact on the environment. Underpinning this, the MOD has published a Defence Standard for assurance that contractors are operating suitable environmental management systems.

We also continue to work through the Sustainable Procurement Working Group to share good practice and maintain a dialogue with industry partners on this important issue.

More information on how the MOD manages sustainable procurement can be found on the Knowledge in Defence website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-in-defence-kid>.

### Ministry of Defence: Renewable Energy

*Asked by Lord Touthig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what change there has been in the proportion of energy used by the Ministry of Defence that is drawn from renewable sources since 2010. [HL4875]

**Baroness Goldie:** Data on renewable energy consumed by the Defence Estate is not held centrally. The proportion of electricity used by the Department, drawn through the GB National Grid, from renewable sources has increased from 2.97% in 2010 to 32% in 2020.

The Department recognises its contribution is vital in the UK's response to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. As such, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has launched a Climate Change and Sustainability Review. The Review is currently at the scoping stage; setting the ambition, refreshing the baseline and establishing the MOD's route to net zero. The Review aims to have a clear response plan in place by the end of 2020.

### North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Hoyle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many ambulance drivers employed by the North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust have (1) died, and (2) been placed in intensive care, due to COVID-19. [HL3604]

**Lord Bethell:** Data on the numbers of ambulance drivers who have died and been placed in intensive care due to COVID-19 is not held centrally.

### Offences against Children

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their response to the petition Release the Home Office's Grooming Gang Review in full, published on 24 April, how many victims of grooming gangs they estimate there have been in the UK since 1998; how much financial support they are providing to each victim per annum; which Minister was responsible for clearing the wording of that response; what plans they have to hold a debate to consider that petition in Parliament; whether they intend to publish any research into such gangs; and if not, why not. [HL4140]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** There is no official definition of 'grooming gang' offending and no means of delineating data on offending that might be described in this way from other forms of child sexual exploitation. The Government has estimated that there were approximately 6,850 victims of organised child sexual exploitation in the UK in 2015. This estimate includes all forms of child sexual exploitation and does not distinguish between rape and other sexual offences. It includes organised child sexual exploitation committed by groups and gangs within a range of contexts.

We are determined that all victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, whether they are a child or an adult, can access the specialist support they need. In 2019/20 the government through a number of funding streams provided over £7m for non-statutory organisations providing support to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse across the country. Victims and survivors can access these services throughout their lifetime to help them cope with and, as far as possible, recover from the abuse they have suffered.

We are increasing funding. For example, last month the Ministry of Justice and Home Office launched the Support for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Fund, doubling the value of last year's fund and providing £2.4m over two years to voluntary sector organisations providing direct support to victims and survivors at a national level. Home Office will also shortly be launching a new £2.8m transformation fund to promote and embed best practice in child sexual abuse victim support.



On 19 May, the Home Office announced its plans to publish a paper on group-based child sexual exploitation later this year. The paper, which will be published following engagement with subject matter experts, will bring together the insights gained from the Home Office's work and set the direction for future policy and research. In announcing these plans the Home Secretary said 'What happened to these children remains one of the biggest stains on our country's conscience. It is shameful. I am determined to deliver justice for victims and ensure something like this can never happen again'.

The Home Office's response to the petition was cleared by the Home Secretary. It has now been revised and re-issued to reflect this decision.

It is for the Petitions Committee to decide whether a petition should be put forward for debate.

### Office for Tackling Injustices

*Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to establish the Office for Tackling Injustices, created in July 2019; and what are that Office's priorities. [HL4845]

**Lord True:** We are considering how best to take forward the work of the Office for Tackling Injustices in the light of the Government's domestic priorities.

### Physical Education

*Asked by **Lord Addington***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in place to provide structured physical education for any children returning to school before the 2020 summer break. [HL4810]

**Baroness Berridge:** We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as possible 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.

We are working to ensure that schools are fully supported when they open more widely. Schools are free to organise and deliver a PE curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils whilst following COVID-19 government guidelines. Our latest guidance for schools can be found here:

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

We want every child to be able to do the 60 minutes a day of physical activity recommended by the UK Chief Medical Officers. This is important for their physical and mental wellbeing and will be especially important for children who have had restricted opportunity to exercise while at home. The government is working closely with

nurseries, schools, physical activity experts and sport providers to ensure that there is advice and resources to support everyone to participate in regular exercise. We are advising schools to use outside space for exercise where possible and encourage activities such as supervised non-touch running games.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, working alongside Sport England, launched a £195 million package to help the sport and physical activity sector through the COVID-19 outbreak, with more recent guidance published on the phased return of grassroots sport and recreation:

<https://www.sportengland.org/news/195-million-package-help-sport-and-physical-activity-through-coronavirus>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>.

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

### Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Bradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the number of releases from prison over the next 12 months of the Parole Board's decision to postpone face-to-face hearings due to COVID-19. [HL4820]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Parole Board take a detailed and sophisticated approach to assessing whether the statutory release test, set by Parliament, is met to ensure the protection of the public. In the temporary absence of face-to-face hearings, the Board has introduced measures to ensure as many parole hearings continue through the use of an intensive paper review process and by telephone and video technology to determine whether it is safe for the protection of the public for an offender to be released. Through these measures, the Board reports it is successfully managing to progress and make decisions without compromising the quality or integrity of the risk assessment process. If that is sustained, the Board does not envisage any significant impact on the number of release decisions it makes.

### Prisoners: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord German***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners have been tested for COVID-19 (1) in each of the last five weeks, and (2) in total up to 20 May. [HL4823]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** NHS England and Improvement is responsible for commissioning healthcare in prisons and are, therefore, responsible for testing for Covid-19. As such, we do not hold this data on prisoner testing.

Covid-19 testing is ongoing in prisons and is being conducted by internal or external healthcare practitioners on symptomatic prisoners on site. The testing capacity is dependent on local commissioning services, therefore the numbers of those tested varies by establishment. Prisoners that require hospital care are being transferred to hospital and may also be tested there.

### Public Lavatories: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Greengross*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that public toilets reopen after the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4831]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The government has published guidance (attached) on safer public spaces. It includes advice, information and examples of the potential interventions that can be used in public places to facilitate social distancing in areas of higher footfall such as in parks (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19>). Owners and operators are advised to implement cleaning protocols to limit coronavirus transmission in public places. It is advised that touch points (e.g. handrails and gates) should be particular areas of focus for increased cleaning.

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to: configuration of toilet facilities to ensure they are kept clean, with social distancing achieved as far as possible and with best practice handwashing followed; where possible, providing hand towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities; signs at public toilets for queuing, social distancing and automatic sanitising; using signs and messages to build awareness of good handwashing technique and other respiratory hygiene behaviours, e.g. around coughing and sneezing in public places; where possible, providing hand towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities; and queue marking indicators at main entrance, popular park destinations and toilets.

We have now made £3.2 billion available to local authorities through an unringfenced grant so they can address pressures they are facing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The package recognises the additional costs and pressures on finances councils are facing as a result of the current crisis. It demonstrates the Government's commitment to making sure councils, including upper and lower tier authorities, have the resources they need to support their communities through this challenging time.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Safer public places guidance [200605  
Guidance\_Safer\_Public\_Places\_During\_Covid - HL4831.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-21/HL4831>

### Reading Prison: Change of Use

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review their decision to reject Reading Council's bid to convert HM Prison Reading into an art centre; and what consideration they gave to the preservation of the building as an arts venue. [HL4848]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Marketing of the former prison at Reading has completed and a preferred bidder selected. We have no plans to review our decision not to progress with any of the other bids for the site. A range of factors were considered in assessing which bid represented the best value for the department and the taxpayer.

### Refugees: Children

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to participate in discussions with UNHCR about the relocation of unaccompanied refugee children now in Europe, in particular those in Greece; and if not, why not. [HL4832]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK maintains an ongoing dialogue with UNHCR and has a strong and constructive relationship across a range of asylum and resettlement issues.

In 2016 Parliament agreed a one-off commitment to relocate 480 unaccompanied children from Europe to the UK under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 ('the Dubs amendment'). 478 children from Greece, Italy and France have now successfully transferred to the UK under this scheme and we remain committed to completing the final two transfers as soon as it is safe to do so.

Under the Dublin III Regulation, the UK will also continue to transfer children from Greece if they have family in the UK until the end of the transition period. The UK remains fully committed to meeting our obligations under the Dublin Regulation. Despite covid-19 restrictions, the UK is ready to accept transfers under Dublin whenever Member States are in a position to make those arrangements. Following close collaboration with the Greek Government, 50 asylum seekers arrived in the UK from Greece on 11 May in order to unite with family members who were already lawfully present in the UK.

Protecting vulnerable children is a key priority for the Government. In 2019, the UK received more asylum applications from unaccompanied children than any country in the EU and accounted for approximately 20% of all reported UASC claims made in the UK and the 27 EU Member States.

### Social Distancing

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to modify social distancing measures. [HL4793]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government published its roadmap which set out its plan to return life to as near normal, and as quickly and fairly as possible in order to safeguard livelihoods and protect the National Health Service. To do that it has set out a plan for recovery and a timetable for lifting restrictions. A copy of *Our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy* is attached.

The Government amended the social distancing regulation on 1 June. The amendments include spending time outdoors, including private gardens in groups of up to six people from different households, following social distance guidelines and visiting and car showrooms and outdoor markets.

The Government will continue to review the measures and will make amendments to ensure that they continue to be necessary and proportionate. 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 Answer includes the following attached material:

Our Plan to Rebuild  
[Our\_plan\_to\_rebuild\_The\_UK\_Government\_s\_COVID-19\_recovery\_strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-20/HL4793>

## Social Services: Learning Disability

*Asked by Baroness Jolly*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) adults with a learning disability living in a care setting, (2) people over the age of 70 living in a care setting, and (3) people over the age of 70 not in a care setting, were issued a shielding letter in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4239]

**Lord Bethell:** Those identified as extremely clinically vulnerable are put on the Shielded Patient List (SPL), based on a set of specific conditions set out by the Chief Medical Officer. The SPL has been developed based on national data and local clinical judgement.

We only hold sufficient information on the SPL to allow us to identify those people who are clinically extremely vulnerable, to ensure that they have the right guidance and support to help them shield. We do not have additional data on whether that are currently in care settings or not. This means we are unable to identify adults with a learning disability in a care setting from the SPL, nor split the over 70s on the SPL between those in care settings and those not.

The SPL does include date of birth, so as of 7 May we know that 944,134 people aged 70 and over were on the SPL, and therefore should have received a shielding letter.

## Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Addington*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to carry out exploratory assessments into whether those children classed as vulnerable who did not physically attend schools during the COVID-19 lockdown had a recognised category of special educational needs and particularly those of the neuro-diverse types including (1) dyslexia, (2) autism, (3) dyspraxia, and (4) Attention Deficit Disorder. [HL4809]

**Baroness Berridge:** There are no plans to assess the special educational needs categorisation of children classed as vulnerable who have not attended school during partial closures.

The department will continue to ask schools to report on attendance overall, as well as attendance by vulnerable pupils, including those with education, health and care plans and social workers, beyond 1 June, when schools began welcoming back more children.

The department carries out analysis on the regional attendance trends which is used to support decision-making and to inform conversations with special educational needs and disabilities leads in local authorities.

## Syria: Armed Conflict

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Amnesty International Syria: 'Nowhere Is Safe For Us': Unlawful Attacks And Mass Displacement In North-West Syria, published on 11 May, which states that Russia and Syria have deliberately hit hospitals on the UN 'do not target' list and that there is "strong evidence of Russia's direct involvement in unlawful air strike". [HL4850]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We assess that Amnesty International's report provides useful further evidence of unlawful attacks by the Assad regime and Russia on civilian targets in Idlib. It therefore complements recent reports by the UN Commission of Inquiry and the UN Board of Inquiry. It is inexcusable that hospitals have been attacked despite their coordinates being provided to Russia and others by the UN deconfliction mechanism. The UK continues to call for accountability for these crimes and for all parties, including the Assad regime and Russia, to respect the ceasefire in Idlib and to abide by International Humanitarian Law. We also continue to support those displaced by the recent offensive, as documented in the Amnesty International report.

## Teachers: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether disciplinary measures (1) can, and (2) will, be instigated

against teachers who refuse to return to work on the grounds that they fear contracting COVID-19. [HL4659]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department's guidance on implementing protective measures explains who should and should not attend nurseries and schools, and sets out the measures that should be followed for staff that are either clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable, or who live with someone in either of these groups. This guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

Whilst other staff should be able to come into school, it is natural that some staff will be worried about doing so even if the risks for them are very low. In agreeing the best approach for their schools, headteachers and school leaders should work closely with employees and unions, where appropriate. School leaders will be in the best position, knowing their staff and school circumstances, to decide how to proceed in individual cases.

### Universal Credit

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the rationale for applying the benefit cap to Universal Credit claimants who have been furloughed, or whose working hours have reduced, but who do not qualify for the grace period when those in a similar situation but claiming working tax credit are still able to receive their full entitlement. [HL4842]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Universal Credit is fundamentally different to legacy benefits and claims cannot be compared like for like.

Claimants can approach their Local Authority for a Discretionary Housing Payment if they need additional help to meet rental costs. Exemptions will also continue to apply for the most vulnerable claimants that are entitled to disability benefits and carer benefits.

### USA: START Treaty

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States about the possible renewal of the New START Treaty next year. [HL4879]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We recognise the contribution the New START Treaty has made to international security by increasing transparency and mutual confidence amongst the two largest Nuclear Weapons States. The Treaty has delivered a reduction of strategic nuclear arsenals, enhanced notably by its robust verification mechanism. However, we are also clear that New START has limitations. It does not include new Russian systems. Nor does it place any limits on China's growing nuclear arsenal. We therefore support the US Government's trilateral strategic arms control initiative.

We have regular discussions with the Government of the United States on these issues and have made clear that we support the continued implementation of New START. We have also encouraged the US to extend the Treaty while negotiating any successor agreement.

### Windrush Generation: Compensation

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people who have made claims under the Windrush Compensation Scheme have so far received payment; and how much money they have allocated to be used by that scheme. [HL4706]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Information on the total number of applications made to the Windrush Compensation Scheme that have so far received payment is available to view on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-february-2020>. Updated data will be published shortly. Information relating to estimated costs including compensation payments are referred to in the Home Office's Impact Assessment No: HO 0329 – dated 29/01/2020, available to view at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/864199/Windrush\\_compensation\\_policy\\_Impact\\_Assessment.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/864199/Windrush_compensation_policy_Impact_Assessment.pdf)

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Windrush Compensation Policy Impact Assessment  
[Windrush\_compensation\_policy\_Impact\_Assessment.pdf]

Windrush Compensation Scheme - Feb 2020  
[Windrush\_Compensation\_Scheme\_Q4\_2019.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-19/HL4706>

## Index to Statements and Answers

<b>Written Statements.....1</b>	Immigrants: Domestic Abuse ..... 10
Covice-19 Vaccines Programme: Contingencies Advance.....1	Immigrants: Health Services..... 10
Global Health Security Update.....1	Ministers of State: Conduct ..... 10
Immersive and Addictive Technologies: Government Response to DCMS Committee Inquiry .....2	Ministry of Defence: Procurement ..... 10
UK's Future Relationship with the EU: Negotiations.....3	Ministry of Defence: Renewable Energy ..... 11
Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee: Second Meeting.....3	North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust: Coronavirus ..... 11
<b>Written Answers.....4</b>	Offences against Children..... 11
Airports: Coronavirus .....4	Office for Tackling Injustices..... 12
Armed Forces: Commonwealth.....4	Physical Education ..... 12
Armed Forces: Greenhouse Gas Emissions.....4	Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus..... 12
Armed Forces: Veterans .....4	Prisoners: Coronavirus ..... 12
Arms Trade: Coronavirus .....4	Public Lavatories: Coronavirus ..... 13
Asylum: Children .....5	Reading Prison: Change of Use..... 13
British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus .....5	Refugees: Children ..... 13
Care Homes: Coronavirus .....5	Social Distancing ..... 13
China: START Treaty .....6	Social Services: Learning Disability ..... 14
Civil Service and Public Sector: Disease Control 6	Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus..... 14
Confidence Building Measures .....6	Syria: Armed Conflict ..... 14
Coronavirus: Children .....6	Teachers: Coronavirus..... 14
Coronavirus: Death.....6	Universal Credit..... 15
Coronavirus: Disease Control.....7	USA: START Treaty ..... 15
Coronavirus: Hydroxychloroquine.....7	Windrush Generation: Compensation..... 15
Coronavirus: Protective Clothing .....7	
Defence: Expenditure .....7	
Dental Services: Coronavirus .....7	
Domestic Abuse: Finance.....8	
Exercise Cygnus .....8	
Exercise Cygnus: Voluntary Work.....9	
Fruit and Vegetables: Production .....9	
Gender Recognition.....9	
Gender Recognition: Discrimination.....9	
Hospitals: Admissions .....10	