

Session 2019-21
No. 64



Tuesday
9 June 2020

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 9 June 2020

Annual Canvass

[HLWS274]

Lord True: My Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Chloe Smith) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I wish to update the House on the work that HM Government has been doing to address the risks presented by Covid-19 in relation to the next boundary review due to start in 2021, and to the annual canvass. This follows the introduction of the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill on 19 May, and its Second Reading on 2 June.

Boundary review and electoral data

Under current legislation, the next boundary review will be based on the number of registered electors as at 1 December 2020, following the annual canvass. This is in accordance with the normal, long-established position and that, as a general rule, the revised register that is produced following the annual canvass represents the most up-to-date, robust and transparent information source on which to base a boundary review.

The Government has introduced the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill, which will provide for boundary reviews based on a House of Commons with 650 seats.

As I set out during the Second Reading of the Bill on 2 June, in light of the potential impact of Covid-19 on the operation of ongoing electoral registration activities and the annual canvass, we have already been considering carefully the options for the next boundary review to be based on an alternative set of electoral data.

I am now in a position to update Parliament on the Government's plans, following my commitment to the House to do so during the Second Reading debate.

Having engaged with representatives of the parliamentary parties and electoral stakeholders, the Government has decided to bring forward an amendment to the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill at Committee stage to address this issue. This Government amendment will make provision for the next boundary review to be based, on a one-off basis, on the number of registered electors at 2 March 2020.

It is intended that this data will be supplied by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to the Office for National Statistics (in England and Wales) and National Records of Scotland (in Scotland), and that the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland will produce the data for Northern Ireland. ONS will collate and publish the data for all four constituent nations of the United Kingdom. This approach will provide the most up-to-date electoral registration data available from the point before the impacts of Covid-19 became widespread. It will capture the registrations that took place in the run-up to the 2019 General Election, subject to any monthly updates made to the register between the election and 2 March 2020.

We have engaged with the Parliamentary Parties Panel, other party representatives and electoral stakeholders on this issue in recent months. There is a consensus that, as a consequence of Covid-19, a different approach will be needed this year, and I hope this amendment will deliver that.

Annual canvass 2020

The Government intends shortly to lay before Parliament a draft of the Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) Regulations 2020.

Like many sectors, the work of Electoral Services teams have been affected by the current Covid-19 pandemic. This includes staff members having reduced access to office facilities; undertaking greater caring responsibilities whilst working from home; and being shielded or self-isolating, as well as some team members pivoting toward providing essential services within their local communities. At present, however, EROs in England, Scotland and Wales are legally obliged to publish the revised electoral register by 1 December 2020 or they will be liable for prosecution for failure to conduct their statutory duties under the Representation of the People Act 1983.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to provide additional flexibility to EROs in the conduct of this year's annual canvass, this legislation will delay the publication deadline for the final revised 2020 electoral register in Great Britain by two months from 1 December 2020 to 1 February 2021. This is in line with existing legislation which allows the final publication deadline to be delayed by the same period of time should an election be held in an ERO's area within the canvass period of 1 July and 1 December. This change in publication date will have no negative impact on the conduct of the May 2021 elections, indeed it will allow EROs the greatest possible preparation for their safe and effective conduct.

This greater flexibility for the date of publication for the revised registers complements the flexibility already provided by the newly reformed annual canvass, which will allow EROs to conduct safer and more responsive canvasses than ever before. EROs now have greater flexibility to use digital contact methods in place of paper forms, thereby reducing the amount of manual handling, and are able to use telephone contacts where possible in place of door knocking. The Electoral Commission has already issued guidance to EROs on carrying out a Covid-secure canvass and Government officials are monitoring the situation in order to provide further non-legislative support as needed.

In Northern Ireland the canvass is not conducted annually but must be held at least every 10 years. The last canvass was held in Northern Ireland in 2013 and the Coronavirus Act 2020 has postponed the canvass that was due to be held this year to 2021. Under the Northern Ireland system of continuous registration, the Chief Electoral Officer publishes a revised register on 1 December every year (as well as monthly updates) regardless of whether a canvass has been conducted. As boundary reviews are required to be based on electoral

data from the same date in all four nations, it is appropriate for the March 2020 data to be used for the next boundary review in Northern Ireland.

In developing our policy we have worked extensively with stakeholders, including the Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Scottish Assessors Association, who have all welcomed our proposals. We have also worked closely with the Scottish and Welsh Governments to agree a consistent policy of extending the publication deadline of revised registers across Great Britain, and they intend to bring forward separate, complementary legislation in relation to the local government registers in their respective nations.

COP26: New Date Announcement

[HLWS275]

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

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention the new date that has been announced for COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The COP Bureau of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), with the UK and its Italian partners have agreed new dates for the COP26 UN climate conference, which will now take place between 1 and 12 November 2021 in Glasgow.

The agreement followed consultation with UNFCCC members, delivery partners and other stakeholders. The conference was originally set to take place in November 2020, but had been postponed due to COVID-19.

In the run up to November 2021, the UK government as hosts will continue to work with all involved to increase climate action, build resilience and lower emissions. The new date will also allow the UK and our Italian partners to harness our incoming G7 and G20 presidencies in driving climate ambition.

For more information on this please go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-dates-agreed-for-cop26-united-nations-climate-change-conference>

Criminal Procedure Investigations Act Code of Practice: Attorney General's Guidelines

[HLWS272]

Lord Keen of Elie: My Right Honourable friend the Attorney General (Suella Braverman QC MP) has made the following statement today:

I wish to provide an update on the public consultation on the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure and the CPIA Code of Practice.

Extended Deadline

In February this year, as a result of the hard work undertaken by all involved in the disclosure review, the Lord Chancellor and I launched a public consultation on

the revised versions of the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure for investigators, prosecutors and defence practitioners ('the Guidelines') and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 ('CPIA') Code of Practice.

In order to show support to all those facing increasing Covid-19 related pressures, the Lord Chancellor and I decided to extend our consultation. We hope that this new deadline will provide enough time for legal professionals, criminal justice partners and those interested to put forward their views on the changes being made.

As it has not been possible to proactively engage with criminal justice partners as originally anticipated, we wanted to take the opportunity to ask you as Members of Parliament, to encourage those with whom you work who may have an interest in this area to provide feedback to our public consultation. This would help us to engage with key professionals and those with experience in disclosure to ensure that the changes we are proposing are as effective as possible.

The consultation will now close on 22 July 2020 and further details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-on-revisions-to-the-attorney-generals-guidelines-on-disclosure-and-the-cpia-code-of-practice>.

Disclosure

The disclosure of unused material in criminal cases remains a crucial part of ensuring a fair trial takes place and is essential in avoiding miscarriages of justice. Unfortunately, the failure to disclose material promptly has led to the collapse of a number of trials and has impacted the public's confidence in the administration of the criminal justice system.

It is a priority for this Government to continue to encourage improvements in the disclosure process and to achieve permanent change. It is essential that we ensure there are fair trials for all and that we increase confidence in the criminal justice system.

The Proposed Changes

In November 2018, the Government published a [Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Disclosure in the Criminal Justice System](#), which made a set of recommendations to improve disclosure performance and to address the key challenges of modern disclosure practice. The Review recommended that the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure required an update in order to truly reflect the challenges of today's disclosure regime.

The Guidelines provide a set of high level principles on the disclosure of unused material in criminal cases, aimed at assisting investigators, prosecutors and defence practitioners in England and Wales apply the disclosure regime contained in the CPIA Code of Practice.

The changes seek to provide a better representation of the challenges faced by the modern day investigator, prosecutor and defence practitioner. The updated Guidelines address the need for culture change, earlier performance of disclosure obligations, the use of

technology and balancing the right to privacy with the right to a fair trial.

This consultation is an opportunity to take a crucial step in the disclosure process, both to deal with issues that have been a long-standing concern and to provide practitioners with the tools they need to handle their disclosure obligations effectively.

The Lord Chancellor and I thank all of those who have engaged with us during the process and we are grateful for the role that you have played in recognising the complex challenges that affect the proper performance of the duty of disclosure.

Local Authority Procurement: Fraud and Corruption Risk Review

[HLWS271]

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

Today I have published a review into the risks of fraud and corruption in local government procurement in England, in collaboration with the Government's Anti-Corruption Champion, the Hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (John Penrose). This report delivers on a commitment by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) in the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2022 and is an important part of the wider agenda to strengthen the UK's response to the risks posed by corruption. The findings highlight the importance of continued vigilance across the whole procurement lifecycle and is particularly relevant at this time of heightened activity by councils, as they are working hard to respond to the challenges posed by Covid-19.

Acknowledging and mitigating the risk of fraud and corruption is critical to sound financial management and ensuring that every pound spent by local councils supports the communities they serve. Activities to reduce vulnerability to the risks of fraud and corruption will also have the potential to improve efficiency and identify losses resulting from error, by highlighting weaker areas within systems and processes.

The potential benefits to both councils and the local taxpayer are significant. Under 'business as usual' circumstances councils in England spend around £55 billion a year on goods, works and services[1]. Estimates[2] of the losses to government expenditure caused by fraud and error range between 0.5% and 5%[3] (equating to between £275 million and £2.75 billion per year for local government procurement spend).

It is also important to emphasise that fraud and corruption are by their nature hidden, and a low level of reported cases does not necessarily indicate a lack of fraudulent or corrupt activity. Recent cross government reports demonstrate that detected fraud and corruption is only a proportion of the true scale of the problem[4]. Furthermore, of the 86 councils responding to the survey as part of this review, 23% reported having experienced

cases of fraud and corruption within procurement in the 2017-2018 financial year.

Although there is no silver bullet for tackling the issue of fraud and corruption within procurement, this review draws together a range of activities which collectively help identify and mitigate the risks faced by local councils. The report details anonymised examples of good practice already in place across England, providing excellent evidence of local authorities' innovation, commitment and collaborative approach.

The case studies of incidents of fraud and corruption and examples of best practice in prevention, illustrate how risks can materialise and what can be done to mitigate them. In addition, the report includes a risk matrix, which highlights possible measures that councils can use to strengthen their resilience to the risks of fraud and corruption. I hope the report will serve as a valuable resource for councils across the country to learn from. In addition to this report, I would also encourage councils to make best use of the National Fraud Initiative[5], CIPFA Counter Fraud resources[6] and the case studies from the Counter Fraud Fund pilots MHCLG funded in 2014[7], as well as the latest *Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally* Strategy[8].

Taking forward the findings of the Review

This report sets out suggested next steps for the public sector as a whole, for local councils and for MHCLG. Those for the public sector focus on putting in place standard definitions and measurement methodologies, ensuring there is a central place to record reports of fraud and corruption and strengthening whistleblowing arrangements.

MHCLG has a key role in supporting a culture of strong governance and robust accountability within the local government sector, and the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption agenda are important strands within this work.

At the level of individual councils, appropriate capacity is needed to prevent, detect and respond to incidents of fraud and corruption within the procurement lifecycle. This means having in place effective fraud and corruption risk management structures and risk assessments, effective due diligence and management of gifts and hospitality and conflicts of interest.

Capacity and capability within local authority contract management and commercial activities have been identified as areas for improvement and all those involved in procurement must understand their roles and responsibilities, whenever commissioning, procuring or purchasing on behalf of their council. Councils should consider how the risks of fraud and corruption are managed in their wider networks, including local authority companies, Arms-Length Management Organisations (ALMOS) and other special purpose vehicles.

Procurement is only one area where fraud and corruption risks are present for councils, and similar risks are present in other areas of council operations. Many of the recommendations in this report should support efforts

by councils to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and to hold perpetrators successfully to account.

[1]. National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2018, LGA, page 5

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11.122%20-%20National%20Procurement%20Strategy%202018_main%20report_V7.pdf

[2] See page 16,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764832/Cross-GovernmentFraudLandscapeAnnualReport2018.pdf.

[3] The Fraud Measurement and Assurance Oversight Board concluded that there is an upper and lower range of likely losses: 0.5% to 5%. See page 31,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764832/Cross-GovernmentFraudLandscapeAnnualReport2018.pdf.

[4] Page 15, Cross-Government Fraud Landscape Annual Report 2018,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764832/Cross-GovernmentFraudLandscapeAnnualReport2018.pdf.

[5]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-fraud-initiative>.

[6] <https://www.cipfa.org/services/counter-fraud-centre>

[7] <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/efficiency-and-income-generation/counter-fraud-hub-outcomes-counter-fraud-fund-0>.

[8] <https://www.cifas.org.uk/insight/public-affairs-policy/fighting-fraud-corruption-local-authorities>.

Workplace Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse

[HLWS273]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention the details of a review into support in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse.

The Government is committed to supporting victims of domestic abuse and is currently taking its Domestic Abuse Bill through Parliament. The Bill and wider package of non-legislative measures underpinning it focus on raising awareness and increasing understanding of domestic abuse, further improving the effectiveness of the justice system in protecting victims of domestic abuse and their children, bringing perpetrators to justice and strengthening the support available for victims by statutory agencies.

Domestic abuse affects every aspect of a victim's life, so it should come as no surprise that domestic abuse also affects a victim's work. It strips people of their independence, can reduce their productivity, and ultimately denies them the opportunity to flourish and develop in their chosen career.

There is already a lot of support which employers can, and do, provide to domestic abuse victims. A number of organisations have developed best practice guidance and model policies to help employers to improve the support available to employees affected by domestic abuse, such as Equality and Human Rights Commission, Business in the Community and the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse.

The review is an opportunity to draw together the various existing strands of activity and consider whether there is more that can be done to support victims of domestic abuse in the workplace. It will start with a call for evidence and will investigate:

- What practical circumstances arise in relation to domestic abuse and work?
- What support can be offered in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse?
- What is possible within the existing statutory framework?
- What does current best practice look like, in the UK and elsewhere?
- What is the potential to do more?

The review will report by the end of the year.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 9 June 2020

5G: Huawei

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to review the involvement of Huawei in developing the UK's 5G infrastructure. [HL5039]

Baroness Barran: The final conclusions of the Government's Telecoms Supply Chain Review in relation to high risk vendors were announced on 28 January. The Government has been clear, however, that as risks, threats and technology changes we need to keep the position under review. On the 15th May the US Department of Commerce announced that they were taking further action against Huawei. The National Cyber Security Centre is considering what the impact of the US sanctions might be.

Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill 2019–21 sponsored by the Member of Parliament for West Dorset. [HL5072]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government is supporting the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill as it makes its way through Parliament. The Bill will increase the maximum custodial penalty for animal cruelty from 6 months' imprisonment to 5 years' imprisonment.

The new maximum penalty of five years is in line with campaigns by key stakeholders such as Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, Dogs Trust and the RSPCA. This is a positive step forward in improving animal welfare and will act as a serious deterrent against cruelty and neglect. Northern Ireland has already set the maximum penalty for animal cruelty offences at five years' imprisonment, and the Scottish Government introduced the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Bill on 30 September 2019. The Welsh Government have confirmed that the new maximum penalty being proposed should apply in Wales.

The increase to five years' imprisonment will provide one of the toughest sanctions in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare. This builds on recent positive action the Government has taken to improve animal welfare standards, such as a requirement for CCTV in all slaughterhouses and implementing one of the world's toughest ivory bans. For companion animals, we have introduced new updated minimum welfare standards for pet selling, dog breeding, riding schools, animal boarding and exhibiting animals; as well as a ban on the commercial third-party sale of puppies and kittens.

George Floyd

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the death of George Floyd. [HL5122]

Baroness Sugg: The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have been clear that the death of George Floyd was appalling, inexcusable and deeply distressing. We are aware that a suspect has been charged and there is a federal review underway. We would hope and expect justice to be done.

The violence we have seen is clearly very alarming. People must be allowed to protest peacefully - peaceful protest remains a vital part of a democratic society and we understand the strength of feeling around this issue.

Immigrants: Detainees

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester

Her Majesty's Government how many residents of immigration removal centres (1) have displayed, or (2) are currently displaying, symptoms of COVID-19; and of those, how many have been tested. [T] [HL4966]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The safety and health of people in the detention estate are of the utmost importance. We are following all Public Health England guidance and have robust contingency plans in place.

All immigration removal centres have dedicated health facilities run by doctors and nurses which are managed by the NHS or appropriate providers. The Home Office, its suppliers and NHS England healthcare providers in immigration removal centres are following PHE guidelines for the management of COVID-19. Universal testing is not currently recommended under these guidelines for those in detention or those being released. Testing of individuals in immigration detention will be dependent on individual circumstances.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 in IRCs, all centres are following a reverse cohorting process which commenced on 20 April 2020. This requires new arrivals to be isolated from the main population for a period of 14 days to verify that each individual is asymptomatic. If a detainee shows symptoms during this time, they are moved to protective isolation for seven days.

As of 3 June 2020, there are no cases of COVID-19 in immigration removal centres.

There have been two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in detainees, a third individual was identified but after his release from detention had been agreed.

Local management information indicates that for the period 9 March to 31 May 2020, fifty-seven detainees have been placed in protective isolation for displaying COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms. There is currently one detainee in protective isolation after showing symptoms of COVID-19. Historic information on the number of COVID-19 tests conducted in IRCs is not held.

Iran: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew

Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conduct of the government of Iran following the arrest of students Ali Younesi, Amir Hossein Moradi and 18 other individuals who expressed their objection to the policies of that government; and what representations they intend to make to the government of Iran about human rights breaches. [HL4926]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Iran's human rights record continues to be of serious concern to the UK. We remain deeply concerned by Iran's failure to uphold its international legal obligations. Many citizens have been arrested on unclear charges, arbitrarily detained and denied due process, all contrary to international human rights law.

We regularly express our human rights concerns to the Iranian authorities and we continue to take action both bilaterally and with the international community, to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record.

Israel: Geneva Conventions

Asked by Baroness Tonge

Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage the government of Israel to ensure that it meets the obligations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. [HL5130]

Asked by Baroness Tonge

Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the government of Israel meets the obligations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. [HL5131]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conditions any Palestinian children who are being detained in Israel without a conviction are living in during the COVID-19 pandemic; and what steps they are taking to ensure that any such children are treated in line with international law and agreements. [HL5132]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain concerned by the impact that COVID-19 could have on Palestinian detainees, including children. We continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities to take steps which will reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in

prisons whilst simultaneously respecting fundamental human rights.

Music: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether live music venues that cannot comply with physical distancing and therefore have no income will continue to be supported for the duration of physical distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL4317]

Baroness Barran: We continue to work closely with the live music sector to understand the impact of Covid-19 on their activities and provide the necessary support.

We have announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency. Support packages have been improved upon and further have been introduced as a result of continued sector engagement with Government, including: the introduction of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, which has benefited businesses unable to access CBILS; the removal of a rateable value link for business rates relief for all eligible properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector; and the extension of the CBILS so that all viable small businesses affected by COVID-19, and not just those unable to secure regular commercial financing, will now be eligible should they need finance to keep operating during this difficult time.

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Asked by Baroness Tonge

Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 19 May (HL3850), what (1) conditions they require to have been met before they recognise Palestine as a state; and (2) what steps they are taking to support Palestine to meet those conditions. [HL5129]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As I made clear in my answer of 19 May 2020 (HL3850), the UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue. The UK will continue to support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

Prisoners: Coronavirus

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Rochester

Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners (1) have displayed, or (2) are currently displaying, symptoms of COVID-19; and of those, (a) how many, and (b) what proportion, have been tested. [T] [HL5097]

Lord Keen of Elie: As of Friday, 29 May our management information shows that there were 162 prisoners currently showing symptoms of Covid-19. Of

those, 85 (52%) had been tested. Our records show that a further 3450 prisoners had previously displayed symptoms of Covid-19 where cases are now closed. Of those, 1447 (or 42%) had been tested.

Tests are conducted on symptomatic prisoners on site, as directed and advised by PHE. The testing capacity and availability is dependent on local commissioning services, therefore the numbers of those tested varies by establishment. This means that the total number of cases at any establishment can include clinically diagnosed but untested cases, as well as those who have a confirmed COVID-19 positive result.

Property Development: Isle of Dogs

Asked by Lord Adonis

Her Majesty's Government whether the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was made aware that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government met Richard Desmond in November 2019 prior to the Department's decisions in respect of the Northern and Shell Corporation's planning application for the development of Westferry Printworks. [T] [HL4885]

Asked by Lord Adonis

Her Majesty's Government whether the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government informed the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of his previous contacts with (1) Richard Desmond, and (2) executives of the Northern and Shell Corporation, prior to the Department's decisions in respect of the Northern and Shell Corporation in the past year; and if so, what action was taken in response. [HL4890]

Lord Greenhalgh: Planning Ministers act in accordance with the MHCLG Guidance on Planning Proprietary Issues. This guidance is published (attached) on gov.uk and is available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5998/2091742.pdf

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Guidance on Planning Proprietary [200609 Guidance on Planning Propriety Issues.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-02/HL4885>

Pupils: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Judd

Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils attending illegal, unregistered schools. [HL5015]

Baroness Berridge: Ofsted continues to investigate potential illegal schools including consideration of new intelligence. Where appropriate, Ofsted have liaised with local authorities and other statutory bodies to consider whether there is appropriate action that should be taken, for example, to close settings where people are gathering illegally during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Swimming Pools: Safety

Asked by Lord Storey

Her Majesty's Government what measures will need to be put in place before swimming pool operators can provide a safe environment to reopen. [HL5109]

Baroness Barran: Swimming plays a crucial role in supporting people to be active and the Government is committed to reopening facilities, including swimming pools, as soon as it is safe to do so.

We are holding regular discussions with representatives from the leisure sector to develop guidance for swimming pool operators, as well as other facility operators, to support them to open their facilities in a timely and safe manner once lockdown measures are eased.

As with all aspects of the Government's response to Covid-19, we will be guided by the science to ensure that as restrictions are eased people can return to activity safely.

Theatres: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge

Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide support to the theatre sector following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5070]

Baroness Barran: The Government will continue to support theatres through the unprecedented financial measures we have announced. DCMS has also worked closely with its arm's-length bodies to deliver tailored support packages at speed, including the £160m Emergency Funding Package announced by Arts Council England, made possible by Government funding.

Alongside this, DCMS continues to engage with the sector extensively in order to best understand the challenges faced. We are working closely with the Arts Council to consider the additional support that may be needed to support the long-term recovery of the cultural sector, including theatres.

Video Conferencing: Offences Against Children

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Zoom about protecting children and young people from incidents of video calls being interrupted by anonymous users to display images of child abuse. [HL4803]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There has been a sharp increase in the use of online conferencing tools during the pandemic. The Government is aware of incidents of ‘zoombombing’. This is the unauthorised intrusion of individual/s into Zoom calls, on occasions accompanied by the sharing of explicit material and perpetrated by those taking advantage of meetings that are either not secured via a password or where the password has been widely shared.

There is an ongoing criminal investigation and we are working to ensure best practice on how to configure these applications is shared as widely as possible.

NCSC has published advice and encourages the public to use passcodes and only share them privately, to ensure online meetings are safe.

West Bank: Agriculture and Water

Asked by Baroness Tonge

Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the destruction of livestock pens and waterlines belonging to the al-Ras al-Ahmar and al-Baq'a Bedouin communities in the northern Jordan Valley. [[HL5133](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made representations on these reports, we urge both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process.

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