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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
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<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
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# Written Statements

Thursday, 18 June 2020

## Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS296]

**Lord Bethell:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock) has made the following written statement:

The Department of Health and Social Care's Vote on Account cash limit has been used in full between April 2020 and June 2020 to support the running costs of the department, NHS and Arm's Length Bodies, including expenditure on the Covid-19 pandemic. This application from the Contingencies Fund is to access the budgetary cover already included in the 2020/21 Main Supply Estimate, as set out below.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £24,250,000,000 and additional capital of £750,000,000 will be sought in a Main Estimate for Department of Health and Social Care. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £25,000,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

## Contingencies Fund Advances: Covid-19

[HLWS298]

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

I hereby give notice of the Department for Transport having drawn advances from the Contingencies Fund totalling £7,000,000,000 to enable expenditure on COVID-19 support packages for transport to be spent ahead of the passage of the Supply and Appropriation Act. The schemes include:

Emergency Measures Agreements with the Train Operating Companies; the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant; safeguarding critical ferry freight routes; and supporting regional transport networks such as Transport for London and light rail networks. Furthermore, the Department brought-forward the payment of local authority road maintenance grants announced in the Budget. Barnett Consequentials have already been applied in the usual way to any funding on top of the Department for Transport's current budgets.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £5,253,000,000 and additional capital of £603,000,000 and £1,144,000,000 of cash will be sought in a Main Estimate for the Department for Transport. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £7,000,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advance will be repaid upon receiving Royal assent of the Supply and Appropriation Bill.

## Pensions: Interim Guidance for Superfunds

[HLWS295]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** My honourable Friend, The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman MP) has made the following Written Statement.

The Pensions Regulator has today published an interim regulatory regime for Defined Benefit Pension "superfunds".

A superfund is a privately funded "for profit" consolidation vehicle, which takes over responsibility for Defined Benefit Pension Schemes liabilities from the sponsoring employer. To enter a superfund, sponsoring employers are required to pay a significant, upfront sum to improve the funding level of their scheme, in exchange for discharging their pensions liabilities.

This is an interim regime. The government will continue to develop the permanent regime before legislating, with full and proper parliamentary scrutiny in the usual way.

Operation of the interim regime will be kept under review by the government to ensure that it is properly protecting and advancing the interests of pension scheme members and the Pension Protection Fund.

The government will continue to develop a permanent regime for superfunds. This is an innovative area and market participants should not assume that the permanent regime will automatically replicate the interim regime. Alongside responses to the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme Consolidation Consultation, the government will be informed by experience gained during the interim regime when considering the features of the permanent regime, including those relating to capital adequacy. The permanent regime may include an alternative set of requirements, including more prudent requirements, compared to the interim regime, but we cannot pre-empt the parliamentary process.

The permanent regime will be designed to protect pension scheme members and the Pension Protection Fund, including by ensuring that superfunds have the necessary flexibility to continue contributing to a strong pensions ecosystem in which sponsoring companies and scheme trustees have a range of options open to them.

The government believes that superfunds have the potential to improve the likelihood of members getting their benefits in full whilst providing employers with a new, affordable option to manage their legacy pension liabilities. However, if at any point it appears that changes to the interim regime are required in order to protect and advance the interests of scheme members, the government and The Pensions Regulator will take prompt, robust action.

Today's publication will mean that The Pensions Regulator will have a much firmer basis to take action against a superfund should they deem it a necessary and proportionate step.

The guidance can be accessed at the following address:

<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/regulatory-guidance/db-superfunds>

## Youth Custody

[HLWS297]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** My right honourable friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland) has made the following Written Statement.

"Youth offending has fallen – to 38.4% in the latest youth justice statistics – thanks to successive governments' efforts to improve education, social care and mental health support. Clear guidance to the judiciary that custody should be an absolute last resort for children has also seen numbers fall by 78% between 2008 and 2019. There are now fewer than 700 children currently held in Young Offender Institutions, Secure Training Centres and Secure Children's Homes. This is an unprecedented low, and down from a peak of 3,200 in October 2002.

This is a success that as a society we should be incredibly proud of. These early interventions have meant that thousands of children each year avoid heading into adulthood as criminals, into a life of crime that is much harder to break once ingrained. This Government's efforts to support children and upgrade their life chances continue at pace – whether that be the additional funding being put into our schools or the extra support now available to children's mental health services.

But we know there is far more still to do, particularly for those who still enter custody – a much more concentrated mix of children with complex issues, over 50% of whom have convictions for serious violence. We are spending £5 million putting each prison officer who works in the youth custody estate through a specialist degree programme, giving them a greater understanding of child and adolescent development. We have also increased the number of staff in young offender institutions by a third in the last four years.

We are investing in the development of Enhanced Support Units (ESUs) to provide specialist psychological support and services for children with the most complex needs, with ESUs now at Feltham and Wetherby YOIs. We are also working with NHS England on a new integrated approach to strengthen the provision of health care and support ('SECURE STAIRS') which is rolling out across the youth secure estate.

But there are elements of practice in youth custody which, frankly, have not been good enough. Today I have published two reports on the use of restraint and separation in the secure youth justice estate.

Staff in the youth estate are trained to use behaviour management and de-escalation techniques and only resort to physical restraint when there is no alternative and either their safety or that of children is at further risk.

However, keen to ensure those prison officers working with children were receiving adequate training and were

using such techniques appropriately, the Government commissioned Charlie Taylor, then the Chair of the Youth Justice Board, to carry out an independent review into the use of pain-inducing restraint.

In his report, Charlie Taylor references a number of incidents in which he believes the use of a pain-inducing restraint potentially saved a child's life. He is therefore clear that staff must retain the ability to intervene safely when there is a clear and imminent risk of serious harm to a child, themselves or another member of staff. However, he also found instances where it was used inappropriately and, now, I want to ensure the use of such restraint is proportionate and reasonable and only used when there is no other alternative.

That is why the Government has accepted all fifteen recommendations in Charlie Taylor's report, and the Youth Custody Service has developed a programme of work which will implement them. Techniques that cause pain, albeit in order to prevent further serious harm, will no longer be taught alongside other methods to manage behaviour, to make it even clearer that these are a last resort designed only to protect children or staff from further injury. This will ensure that such techniques are only used when there is no alternative in order to prevent serious harm and therefore protect children and staff from trauma wherever possible. A panel will also be established to carefully scrutinise incidents in which a pain-inducing restraint has been used to ensure they are being used appropriately and that the welfare of children and staff is a key consideration.

The second report I have published today builds on our initial response to the thematic report on separation in Young Offender Institutions, which HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) published in January.

The findings in the report made for some challenging reading at the time and I was pleased with the exceptional effort from the Youth Custody Service in acting so swiftly to address the regime provided for separated children.

It is extremely unfortunate that at the point at which we were starting to see improvements for separated children we went into a period, that because of coronavirus, has forced us into a situation where all children in custody have unfortunately had to spend more time behind their doors than we would wish.

I accepted the overarching recommendation for a new system of separation to be implemented, which was called for by HMIP in their thematic report. As we look to restart aspects of daily life for children in custody I am determined that we do not return to the practices of old. This new, child-centred policy will draw on best practice from other establishments to ensure consistency across the youth estate.

Inappropriate use of these techniques must not happen again. Our response to these findings will help to ensure all children in custody have all the support they need to turn their lives around.

I will place a copy of both reports in the library of both Houses."

# Written Answers

Thursday, 18 June 2020

## Asylum: Hotels

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which hotels have accommodated asylum seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic; and how many asylum seekers are in each such hotel. [[HL5324](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Hotel usage is permitted under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts as contingency accommodation.

As a result of the Covid-19 crisis a higher proportion of asylum seekers than usual are being accommodated in full-board hostels and hotels. The Home Office does not publish the total amount of service users accommodated in hotels, or the whereabouts of the vulnerable people we support.

## Asylum: Housing

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with hotels and guest houses about the accommodation of asylum seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL5323](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** All asylum accommodation is sourced and provided by our accommodation providers. Our providers are in regular dialogue with hotels/guest houses before and throughout any usage during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Asylum: Nutrition

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 20 May (HL4160), whether a (1) breakfast of one slice of white bread with a small serving of butter and jam, and (2) dinner of chips, a slice of pizza without vegetables and a small serving of lettuce and half a tomato, reportedly served at Urban House Initial Accommodation Centre in Wakefield, meets the NHS Eatwell guidelines; and if so, what plans they have to review those guidelines. [[HL5279](#)]

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of meals for those with specific diet requirements, in particular for those who (1) are pregnant, (2) have diabetes, and (3) have coeliac disease, at Urban House Initial Accommodation Centre in Wakefield; and what discussions they intend to have with that Centre about the provision of such meals. [[HL5280](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government strongly refutes the inaccurate reporting in relation to the food available at Urban House in Wakefield and the Home Office is in regular dialogue with its service providers around the services provided in Initial Accommodation.

Residents at Urban House in Wakefield are provided with three meals a day and the menu in use has been approved by a dietician and aligns with the NHS Eatwell guidance. The menu presents a list of options from which residents can choose.

The menu has been checked to ensure it aligns with medical, cultural and religious requirements as is required under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts. In addition to the main meals provided, additional food is available throughout the course of the day for the residents.

## Autism and Learning Disability: Death

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports by the Care Quality Commission that there were 386 deaths linked to learning disabilities and autism between 10 April and 15 May, representing a 134 per cent rise compared with the same period in 2019. [[HL5155](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** We have commissioned Public Health England to undertake a detailed analysis of the numbers of deaths of people with a learning disability. This will draw on data published by NHS England and by the Care Quality Commission to assess the impact of COVID-19 on this group of people.

## Borders

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to publish their Border Operating Model which was originally scheduled for publication in March. [[HL5405](#)]

**Lord True:** As announced on 12 June and as set out on [GOV.UK](#), the Government will publish a Border Operating Model in July.

## Care Homes: Coronavirus

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of COVID-19 outbreaks in care homes following the release of hospital patients to those care homes. [[HL4009](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The safety of residents and staff is a priority. We announced in our *Adult Social Care Action Plan*, on 15 April 2020, that testing will be provided to all care home residents before they are discharged from hospital into a care home. A copy of the Plan is attached. On 28 April, the Government announced that testing



would be expanded in the care sector to include both symptomatic and asymptomatic care home staff and residents. Testing asymptomatic workers and residents will help prevent and control outbreaks.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Adult Social Care Action Plan [covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL4009>

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that hospitals discharged patients with COVID-19 to care homes without alerting those care homes to such patient's suspected or confirmed diagnosis; whether they expect the Care Quality Commission to publish a report on any such instances; if so, (1) when they estimate that report will be published, and (2) whether the findings will be presented to Parliament; and what assessment they have made of the risk of legal proceedings being brought against any hospital found to have acted in such a way. [HL4304]

**Lord Bethell:** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is aware of a small number of cases where care homes have told them that a patient's positive COVID-19 status was known to the hospital but not disclosed at the point of discharge. The CQC is currently assessing whether there have been any breaches of regulation on the part of the hospital. Once all the relevant information has been reviewed, the CQC will assess what action might be appropriate, if any. Any enforcement action taken by the CQC would be made public. Due to the very small number of cases the CQC has been made aware of and is reviewing, it would be unlikely that this information would form the basis of a standalone report. If the CQC receives further information on this issue, it may seek to publish a report in the future.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether patients were discharged to care homes by NHS hospitals in the 30 days before ministers introduced routine COVID-19 testing; if so, why; and what assessment was made of the preparedness of the social care sector for the arrival of such patients. [HL5152]

**Lord Bethell:** It has always been our priority to ensure that everyone is discharged safely from hospital and to the most appropriate available place. On 19 March we published the *COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements* to support the safe and rapid discharge of patients who no longer need acute care. This specified that, wherever possible, people who are clinically ready should be supported to return to their place of residence (this could be a care home), where assessment of longer-term needs will take place. This follows the 'Discharge to Assess' model. Where a patient had been tested for

COVID-19, we specified that results – whether negative or positive – should be included in a patient's discharge documents.

To support the sector, this guidance also sets out the steps that care providers should be taking, and we provided £1.3 billion to support the process. We have provided advice to care homes throughout the pandemic in response to the latest conditions and emerging evidence and data.

On 2 April we published our *Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home* guidance. This set out further advice on infection control procedures for care homes e.g. limiting visits to essential visits only unless exceptional circumstances and providing advice on isolation, decontamination, cleaning and protective measures for staff. We recommended that all symptomatic residents in care homes should be immediately isolated for 14 days from the onset of symptoms, including patients discharged from hospital.

On 15 April we published our Adult Social Care Plan which included a commitment to all patients being tested prior to discharge to a care home. A copy of *COVID-19: Our Action Plan for Adult Social Care* is attached.

Copies of the *COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements* and *Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home* are attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Action Plan for Adult Social Care [covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan.pdf]

Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 [admission-and-care-of-residents-during-covid-19-incident-in-a-care-home.pdf]

Hospital Discharge Service Requirements [COVID-19\_hospital\_discharge\_service\_requirements.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-03/HL5152>

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Age UK that (1) some residents of care homes are being asked to pay more than £100 a week in extra fees to cover the costs of COVID-19, and (2) the inability of residents to meet these costs could precipitate closures of care homes leaving residents homeless. [HL5344]

**Lord Bethell:** When choosing to charge, a local authority must not charge more than the cost that it incurs in meeting the assessed needs of the person. A local authority must also regularly reassess a person's ability to meet the cost of any charges to take account of any changes to their resources.

We know the social care sector is under pressure due to growing demand from both older people and those of working age. We are providing councils with a £1 billion grant for adults and children's social care on top of

maintaining £2.5 billion of existing social care grants for 2020/21. We have provided £3.2 billion to local authorities to help with COVID-19 pressures, and a £600 million Infection Control Fund for care homes, 75% of which must be distributed on a 'per bed' basis, including to social care providers with whom the local authority does not have existing contracts.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they took in response to the information published by Public Health England in February advising that (1) people should not be discharged from hospitals into care homes if there was risk of COVID-19 transmission, (2) it was not safe to discharge untested individuals to care homes from hospitals where there was between five and 25 cases, and (3) there should be no discharges to care or residential homes. [HL5345]

**Lord Bethell:** The scenario set out in Public Health England's (PHE) National Infection Service document, issued on 24 February, related to hospital-acquired COVID-19 outbreaks during the containment phase of COVID-19, prior to 12 March, when there was no sustained community transmission in the United Kingdom. There was no evidence of recorded cases of hospital-acquired COVID-19 outbreaks during the COVID-19 containment phase and before 19 March when the COVID-19 hospital discharge service requirements were published.

On 12 March the Government announced that we were moving our COVID-19 response from the 'contain' to 'delay' phase. On 13 March PHE published new guidance to care homes. We subsequently published the COVID-19 hospital discharge service requirements on 19 March.

Since the start of the outbreak we have been working closely with the sector and public health experts to ensure we have the right guidance and support in place for care homes.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter sent to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care by Cathy Gardner questioning the legality of discharging patients with COVID-19 into care homes, including the one in which her father died on 3 April, and calling for a retraction of the statement that a "protective ring had been thrown around care homes"; when they intend to respond; and what advice they have (1) sought, and (2) been given, by Government law officers in response to that correspondence. [HL5347]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government does not comment on litigation matters.

Every death from this virus is a tragedy. It is our priority to ensure that everyone is discharged safely from hospital and to the most appropriate available place. Patients are discharged when it is clinically safe and they no longer need acute care.

We have provided extensive support and guidance to care homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also provided local authorities with £3.2 billion to help them deal with the impacts of COVID-19, as well as £1.3 billion via the National Health Service to enhance the NHS discharge process. On 13 May, we announced an additional new £600 million Infection Control Fund for care homes to tackle the spread of COVID-19.

## Care Homes: Disease Control

*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 capacity of care homes to deal with patients being diverted to such homes from NHS hospitals in the event of a pandemic. [HL4399]

**Lord Bethell:** The lessons identified from Exercise Cygnus continue to be considered by the Government and a range of stakeholders, including expert advisory groups and local emergency planners.

Working across the Government and with stakeholders, the lessons from Exercise Cygnus have informed our preparedness, including strengthening health sector plans to surge and flex systems and resources beyond normal operations, and stockpiling personal protective equipment specifically for a pandemic influenza, informed by expert advice.

The safety of residents and staff is always a priority and patients should not be discharged unless it is clinically safe to do so. We have provided extensive support and guidance to care homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also provided local authorities with £3.2 billion to help them deal with the impacts of COVID-19, as well as £1.3 billion to enhance the National Health Service discharge process.

We have established the Capacity Tracker as the single mechanism across the country to report bed vacancies and help manage demand and monitor workforce pressures in care homes during this incident. We strongly encourage care homes to contribute regularly to this tracker.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to review our guidance and national support in line with the latest scientific advice.

## China and Hong Kong: Press Freedom

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they are using their Defend Media Freedom campaign to raise and address the curtailing of media freedom and attacks on journalists in China and Hong Kong; and what plans they have to introduce Magnitsky-like sanctions against those responsible for abuse of journalists in China and Hong Kong. [HL5342]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Media freedom is vital to open societies and journalists must be able to investigate and report without undue interference. We

must oppose attempts by any state to restrict press freedom, silence debate, abuse journalists, or spread misinformation. We are monitoring individual cases of concern around the world, and we are working with international partners on how best to support media freedom, including raising our concerns where appropriate.

The UK has publicly raised the issue of media freedom in China, including priority cases such as the sentencing of citizen journalist and rights activist Huang Qi in 2019. British diplomats have attempted to attend trials of civilian journalists and rights activists in China to show support.

In Hong Kong, media freedom is guaranteed under the Joint Declaration and Basic Law. In our six-monthly reports to Parliament on Hong Kong, we have regularly highlighted the importance of freedom of the press and set out our views on specific incidents of concern. We did so in the most recent report on 11 June. We will continue to raise the need to uphold Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms with the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities, as the Foreign Secretary did with State Councillor and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 8 June.

We have announced our intention to establish a UK autonomous Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky-style') sanctions regime. The regulations will come into force in the coming months. It is not appropriate to confirm who might be designated under the sanctions regime before the designations are in place. To do this could reduce the impact of the designations.

### **Chorley and South Ribble Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments**

*Asked by Lord Hoyle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government who was consulted over the decision taken by the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust to close the accident and emergency department at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital. [HL4260]

**Lord Bethell:** Proposals to temporarily close the accident and emergency department at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital were discussed at a senior level within the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Fylde Coast Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS England and NHS Improvement during March 2020, in light of the emerging COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision to temporarily reconfigure services at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital was taken via a virtual meeting of the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Board on 26 March 2020, under emergency powers in response to the pandemic. The aim was to address patient safety issues and make the critical care service more sustainable in managing the expected increase in COVID-19 patients who need critical. The decision was communicated to staff on the same day with two press statements being added to websites and further

shared via email to range of stakeholders, including local media, hon. Members, local councillors, integrated care system and integrated care provider colleagues, neighbouring trusts and CCGs and the North West Ambulance Service between 27 and 31 March 2020.

### **Community Transport: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what long-term support they plan to offer to community transport providers to help them adapt vehicles to improve safety for passengers while COVID-19 remains a threat. [HL5321]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** On 23 May, we announced a further £254 million in funding for buses as part of the Government's efforts to help increase bus services as quickly as possible. This will allow people travelling to hospitals, supermarkets or their place of work to get to their destination safely and quickly, whilst helping ensure social distancing can be observed. Bus operators who hold a permit under section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 are eligible for this new funding.

Operators will be able to claim for reasonable personal protective equipment and safe operation costs, such as hand sanitiser, cleaning vehicles, and installing barriers and screens.

### **Coronavirus: Death**

*Asked by Baroness Hollins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they estimate they will be able to quantify the number of COVID-19 deaths, in particular the number of deaths of those from at risk groups, including people with learning disabilities, regardless of whether confirmation by diagnostic tests was possible. [HL3535]

**Lord Bethell:** The number of deaths of various at-risk groups has been published by the Office for National Statistics. This includes a breakdown of deaths by the most common underlying conditions, ethnicity, age and occupation.

NHS England publishes data on deaths of patients with a learning disability in England (LeDeR programme) who have either tested positive for COVID-19 or are considered to have had COVID-19.

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether there is any correlation between the COVID-19 death rate in the UK and spare bed capacity in the NHS. [HL5136]

**Lord Bethell:** The National Health Service's response in ensuring that there has been sufficient capacity in place to manage COVID-19 demand has been exceptional. We ensured that we had as many beds available as possible to



care for patients with severe respiratory problems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NHS expanded its critical care capacity significantly to cope with the predicted demand from COVID-19 patients. This included an increase in critical care beds, ventilators and provision of oxygen.

All COVID-19 patients who were admitted received the urgent treatment that they needed.

### Coronavirus: Disease Control

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to revise their guidance to those designated clinically vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5264]

**Lord Bethell:** We recognise the effect that social distancing and self-isolation may have on a person's mental wellbeing, including those who are clinically vulnerable and self-isolating. We have published official guidance on mental health and wellbeing online at GOV.UK and are promoting this through the Every Mind Matters online resource.

We are working with the National Health Service and Public Health England, service users, academics and the voluntary sector to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of COVID-19 and plan for how to support the public's mental health and wellbeing throughout the 'recovery' phase.

### Coronavirus: Hospitals

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many patients were in each NHS Nightingale hospital each week between 23 March and 28 April. [HL3662]

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

### Courts

*Asked by Lord Falconer of Thoroton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cases have been adjourned in (1) family courts, (2) civil courts, (3) magistrates courts, (4) crown courts, and (5) tribunals, in each of the last three months. [HL5292]

*Asked by Lord Falconer of Thoroton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many of the 4,066 hearings in England and Wales as of 27 April were adjourned to be determined at a future date. [HL5293]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Comprehensive figures for adjournments are not held for (1) family courts (2) civil courts (3) magistrates' courts (4) crown courts and (5) most tribunals.

MoJ publishes figures on adjournments in the First Tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), Social Security and Child Support, Criminal Injuries Compensation, Mental Health, and Special Educational Needs and Disability as part of National Statistics, and the figures relating to the period in the request are due for publication later in 2020.

On 11 June 2020, HMCTS published new management information on the gov.uk website to provide stakeholders and the public with information to understand the very latest high-level position on the impact on workload volumes and activity across HMCTS. Annex A shows the volumes of hearings listed and hearings adjourned due to COVID-19 in the civil jurisdiction only.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Annex A [Annex A - HMCTS Civil adj data Mar - May 2020.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-04/HL5292>

### Courts: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Coussins*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many court hearings held remotely since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic have (1) included the virtual presence of an interpreter, and (2) been rescheduled because an interpreter was needed but not available. [T] [HL5587]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Information on how many hearings held remotely since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic for spoken and non-spoken interpretation is provided below. The difference in start dates reflect the fact that thebigword's system did not start recording any remote bookings until 30<sup>th</sup> March. We expect that very few took place before this date.

	Dates	Number of telephone interpreting hearings	Number of video remote interpreting hearings
thebigword – spoken interpretation	30.3.2020 – 12.6.2020	2769	1470
Clarion uk – Non-spoken interpretation	23.3.2020 – 12.6.2020	N/A	288

The Ministry of Justice does not collect data on all hearings that have been rescheduled because an interpreter was unavailable. HMCTS performance data, including ineffective trial rates due to interpreter availability, is currently not available for this period.

### Deportation: Zimbabwe

*Asked by Lord Oates*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to suspend all removals of Zimbabwe citizens

from the UK in the light of the political, economic and humanitarian situation in that country. [HL5234]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** All asylum and human rights claims are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw.

The Home Office only seeks to return those whose claims have been unsuccessful and who, by definition, do not need our protection and are not at risk on return. We work closely with other countries to ensure people are returned safely and with dignity.

### Disease Control

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 13 May (HL3564) and Lord True on 1 June (HL4540), whether there is a record of total government spending on preparations to counter the risk of a pandemic. [HL5498]

**Lord Bethell:** The United Kingdom's influenza pandemic preparedness is based on a 'defence in depth' strategy to minimise spread of infection and treat individual cases. In addition to plans to surge National Health Service provision, including critical care, the strategy involves measures to reduce the demand on those NHS services by reducing the risk of transmission and minimising serious illness, including through the stockpiling of personal protective equipment and antivirals.

As this strategy is multi-faceted and it involves many organisations and departments, including the NHS, it is not possible to identify a single source of expenditure that accurately represents our pandemic preparedness. Since 2016-17, NHS England's funding has increased every year in real terms. NHS England's mandate is £129.7 billion this year, reaching £137.5 billion in 2023-24.

### Disinformation: Coronavirus

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the fourth factsheet of the UK COVID-19 news and information project published by Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism on 1 June, what assessment they have made of the results of the survey fielded from 21–27 May which reported that trust in Her Majesty's Government as a source of information about COVID-19 had "declined substantially since April", and which showed a "significant increase in the percentage of people who say they are concerned about false or misleading information about coronavirus from the UK government"; and how they intend to tackle the issue of the loss of public trust in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5307]

**Lord True:** In responding to this unprecedented pandemic, the Government has been guided by the very best scientific and medical advice from our world-leading experts, and we believe their advice to be trustworthy. This approach is illustrated in the advice received and followed from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). Protecting the health and safety of the British public is, and must always be, our number one priority. Minutes of SAGE meetings have been published and are available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>.

### Divisions: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask The Senior Deputy Speaker what consideration has been given to implementing arrangements for Members of the House of Lords to vote in person in divisions in line with the method used by the House of Commons on 2 June. [HL5325]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** In late March arrangements were made for members to vote in the Royal Gallery, allowing for social distancing, should the need for a division arise. Use of these temporary arrangements was not ultimately required. The Procedure Committee and the House agreed to concentrate on the development of electronic voting facilities, given the high number of members who are currently unable to attend Westminster and are required to participate remotely in the business of the House. Operation of the electronic voting system commenced on 15 June and is to be used by all members whether remote or on the Estate. Engagement with the remote voting system has been extremely good. These arrangements will be kept under review by the Procedure Committee, which continues to meet regularly.

### Email: Fraud

*Asked by Lord Lucas*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to update guidance on their websites to refer individuals who have received suspicious emails to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service, which currently refer only to Action Fraud. [HL5311]

**Lord True:** The public have been able to report suspicious emails to the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) through the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) since April 21st, 2020 by emailing [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk), when it was launched alongside the Cyber Aware campaign.

### Fires

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to undertake a programme to educate people about

(1) the risks posed by, and (2) ways in which to prevent, wildfires, particularly those associated with barbecues. [[HL5281](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** During the pandemic the Home Office has collaborated with the National Fire Chiefs Council through the Fire Kills campaign to raise awareness of pertinent fire safety messages. This has included messaging on outdoor and barbecue safety. Campaign material has been developed and made available online and to fire and rescue services to support local interventions.

The Department of Food and Rural Affairs has engaged with the National Park Authorities and has been analysing their wildfire preparations to understand National Park Authorities capacity for dealing with the current challenges. It will consider what further actions are needed and review the current guidance on handling of wildfire risks from portable barbecues.

### Health: Older People

*Asked by Lord Crisp*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking as part of the social care strategy to promote to all people over the age of 60 the NICE Guideline NG16 that sets out that it is possible to "delay or prevent ... dementia, disability and frailty in later life". [[HL4951](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department has prioritised prevention and through the Care Act 2014 it has required local authorities to have measures in place to identify people in their area who would benefit from services to help reduce, delay or prevent needs for care and support.

The Challenge on Dementia 2020 commitments included action on risk reduction, and messaging has been incorporated in the NHS Health Check for all eligible adults in England aged 40-74 to increase dementia awareness and motivate people in midlife to make positive changes.

### HMS Dasher

*Asked by Lord West of Spithead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Goldie on 18 May (HL4067) and 20 May (HL4194), what plans they have to release the response to the request made on 3 May 1943 by the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen to Flag Officer in Command Greenock to supply a further list of recovered bodies, following the sinking of the HMS Dasher. [[HL5499](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** This information is potentially available in records relating to Western Approaches Command War Diary for 1943, Information and Instructions (General Regulations) for shipping at Greenock, the Records of the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen within the records of the Board of

Trade, Casualty Branch files, or a file containing information about the sinking given to next of kin. All of those files, under references ADM 116/4539, ADM 199/631, ADM 358/3214, ADM 358/1512 and ADM 1/15419, are open to the general public at The National Archives, Kew. The Naval Historical Branch holds no records of this nature in their collections.

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

### Homosexuality

*Asked by Lord Cashman*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 12 December 2016 (HL Deb, col 1021) that Her Majesty's Government was committed to addressing historical wrongs experienced by homosexual and bisexual men who were convicted of actions that are no longer crimes, what plans they have to use the power contained in section 166 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 to expand the list of now repealed or abolished offences contained in section 92 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 in order that gay people previously cautioned for, or convicted of, offences, such as solicitation, can apply for a disregard and, if successful, obtain a pardon. [[HL5288](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government is committed to upholding the intent and purpose of the disregard scheme and to working closely with counterparts across government, particularly the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Defence, to explore the feasibility of bringing further offences within scope.

Work to identify what further offences might be added under the provisions enabling the Secretary of State to extend, by regulations, the list of offences currently eligible for a disregard under the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 must be completed before any proposed amendments can be brought forward. This work is ongoing and the Government remains fully committed to considering any appropriate proposals, in due course.

### Hospital Beds: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of any relationship between spare bed capacity in the NHS and deaths from COVID-19 in care homes and the community. [[HL4121](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** To date, we have not undertaken an assessment of the relationship between spare bed capacity in the National Health Service and deaths from COVID-19 in care homes and the community. The safety of residents and staff is always a priority and patients should not be discharged unless it is clinically safe to do so.

## Intellectual Property

*Asked by **Baroness Neville-Rolfe***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the relevant legislation in order to limit rights of representation at the UK Intellectual Property Office for new UK trade mark and design applications and existing UK trade mark and design rights, to persons with a UK or Channel Islands address for service, following the end of the transition period, if there is no reciprocity. [HL5314]

**Lord Callanan:** Officials are having ongoing conversations with representative bodies over how to best approach the issues surrounding address for service once the transition period ends.

## Islamic State: Military Intervention

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether RAF Reaper drones have been operated outside Operation Shader; if so, why; and whether such operations took place under independent UK control. [HL5457]

**Baroness Goldie:** REAPER is an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platform. We do not comment on intelligence matters and I am therefore withholding the information as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

*Asked by **Baroness Stern***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether RAF Reaper drones have been used for operations outside of Operation Shader over the past 12 months; and if so, for what purpose they were used and where. [HL5486]

**Baroness Goldie:** REAPER is an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platform. We do not comment on intelligence matters and I am therefore withholding the information as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

## Islamic State: Unmanned Air Vehicles

*Asked by **Lord Touhig***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many drone strikes British Armed Forces have carried out against Isil this year in (1) January, (2) February, (3) March, (4) April, and (5) May. [HL5441]

**Baroness Goldie:** This year, United Kingdom Armed Forces have recorded the following numbers of weapon release events from Reaper remotely piloted aircraft against Daesh targets:

January - 0

February - 0

March - 0

April - 1

May - 6

## Israel: Palestinians

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that that government plans to renew legislation which prohibits Palestinians living outside of the 1967 ceasefire border from living with their spouses in Israel. [HL5434]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made an assessment of these reports. The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process is clear: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

## Israeli Settlements

*Asked by **Lord Hylton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to (1) end visa-free entry to the UK for Israeli citizens, and (2) consider other sanctions, in response to the annexation of new areas of land by Israel. [HL5374]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We will not discuss possible responses to hypothetical situations. The Foreign Secretary made clear our concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement, which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank, during a call with the Israeli Foreign Minister on 2 June. We also reiterated our concerns at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law.

## Iyad Hallaq

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the (1) killing of Iyad Khairi Hallaq, (2) raiding of his parents' home, and (3) physical assault of his sisters, by Israeli forces. [HL5432]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As the UK Consul General in Jerusalem and the UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv stated on 31 May, we are deeply saddened to hear about the death of Iyad Khairi Hallaq after he was shot by Israeli police in East Jerusalem. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family. We urge restraint in the use of live



fire by the Israel Defense Forces. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations and if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. The perpetual cycle of violence must end.

### **Legal Aid Scheme: Finance**

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to using unspent funds from the legal aid budget for this financial year to fund law centres and other legal aid providers, based on what they would have received in any six month period, to ensure their viability. [HL5169]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Data on legal aid expenditure is released quarterly by the Legal Aid Agency, with the next release scheduled for September.

MoJ is continuing to work closely with the Legal Aid Agency and HMCTS to assess the impact of Covid-19 on legal aid provision, and we are working closely with the sector to identify whether further support is required.

We have already introduced measures to support the sector, such as paying for virtual hearings in the same way as in-person hearings, halting pursuit of outstanding debts, relaxing some evidence requirements, and encouraging legal practitioners to use existing avenues of financial help, such as the ability to apply for early payment for work already done on a case. We have already put in place measures to bring forward funding by expanding the scope and evidence requirements for payment for work in progress in Crown Court cases.

We have recently announced that we will be providing £5.4m in funding to not-for-profit providers of specialist legal advice, including Law Centres, which should go some way to helping them address immediate cashflow problems and ensure they remain able to provide support for the communities they serve.

### **Legal Profession: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will move to a grants-based system for funding legal services as recommended by the Low Commission report following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5289]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The government continues to recognise the importance of the legal support services and the essential role that they play in helping people resolve their legal problems.

Following our 2019 review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 reforms, the Ministry of Justice published the Legal Support Action Plan, which set out our vision for resolving legal problems earlier by ensuring that people can access the right legal support services at the right

time, and in the right way for them. Whilst we do not intend to move to a fully grants based system for funding legal services, there are elements of the Legal Support Action Plan that drew on the recommendations of the Low Commission report.

COVID-19 interrupted significant elements of some of this work, as we reprioritised our focus on considering the impact of the pandemic on the legal support sector who support individuals in need of help.

As a result of this, the Ministry of Justice has secured emergency funding for the not-for-profit legal advice sector, including £5.4 million for providers of special legal advice. £3 million of this funding will go to Law Centres and this will be distributed through the Law Centres Network. The remainder of the funding, £2.4 million, will be contributed to the Community Justice Fund, administered by the Access to Justice Foundation (ATJF), in order to provide funding for other non-specialist advice and support providers.

This funding will be additional to the £370 million of funding administered by the National Lottery Communities Fund which qualifying third sector organisations, including those in the advice sector, will be able to bid for directly.

We have also continued existing work with the specialist advice sector and launched a new £3.1 million grant in partnership with the ATJF to enhance legal support for litigants in person over the next two years. This new grant is in addition to nearly £8m invested by the Ministry of Justice in support of litigants in person in the civil and family courts since 2015 through the Litigants in Person Support Strategy.

### **Middle East: Military Operations**

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether RAF Reaper drones have (1) conducted strikes, or (2) provided reconnaissance support, as part of Operation Kipion. [HL5491]

**Baroness Goldie:** I cannot comment on whether or not RAF Reaper remotely piloted aircraft have been or will be employed as part of Operation Kipion. I am withholding information on the location of Reaper aircraft as its release would, or would be likely, to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

### **Neurology: Health Services**

*Asked by Lord Dubs*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) outpatient neurology appointments have been cancelled to date, and (2) neurology inpatients were sent home from hospital early in England, as a result of COVID-19. [HL4955]

**Lord Bethell:** NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that this information is not collected.

## Nissan

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the measures to be taken in order to ensure that Nissan retains its Sunderland plant following the end of the Brexit transition period. [[HL5317](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government regularly speaks to businesses to ensure they are prepared for the end of the transition period, including Nissan.

Nissan has over 6,000 jobs at its Sunderland plant and over 7,000 staff across UK. The company has renewed its commitment to its Sunderland plant recently and is continuing to invest in this country.

We are determined to ensure that the UK continues to be one of the most competitive locations in the world for automotive and other advanced manufacturing.

## Public Sector: Ombudsman

*Asked by **Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are planning to introduce a Public Services Ombudsman. [[HL5193](#)]

**Lord True:** I refer the noble Baroness to the answer given to [HL2091](#) on 2 March 2020.

## Recreation Spaces

*Asked by **Lord Addington***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage access to outdoor recreational space through (1) improved accessibility and (2) better public transport links. [[HL5270](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Government remains committed to delivering the ambition and actions set out in the Inclusive Transport Strategy. Disabled people have exactly the same rights to access the transport network – including the built environment – as other users, and we need to continue to provide a transport system that enables key workers to get to work and everyone to carry out essential journeys.

The Government provides a variety of funding to support public transport links. Central and local government spends over £2 billion a year supporting bus services, in addition to money invested by the industry, and has committed to spend a further £3 billion over this Parliament. This year we are providing £20 million to trial demand responsive and other services in rural and suburban areas; and £30 million to all local authorities to improve current and restore lost services.

The Government is committed to invest around £48 billion in maintaining and upgrading the rail network in the period from 2019 to 2024, focused on increasing reliability and punctuality for passengers.

The Government has also pledged £500 million to start reopening lines and stations reconnecting smaller communities, regenerating local economies and improving access to jobs, homes and education.

## Relationship and Sex Education

*Asked by **Baroness Barker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what resources they are providing to schools to teach LGBT-inclusive Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. [[HL5271](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Barker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what role Ofsted will play in ensuring that LGBT-inclusive statutory Relationships Education or Relationships and Sex Education is taught in all schools from September. [[HL5272](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Barker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 5 May (HL3330), what is meant by schools developing Relationships Education or Relationships and Sex Education "that is sensitive to the ... backgrounds of their pupils". [[HL5273](#)]

*Asked by **Baroness Barker***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what resources have been requested by (1) teachers, (2) schools, and (3) teaching unions, to teach statutory Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education from September. [[HL5274](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We also want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. We are making Relationships Education compulsory for primary school-age pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for secondary school-age pupils and Health Education compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools from September 2020.

Whilst it is important that the statutory duty to teach the new subject still comes into force in September, given the current circumstances faced by schools, the department will reassure schools that there will be some flexibility. Schools that are prepared to teach the subjects should begin teaching from September 2020. Schools that are not ready to teach the subjects should aim to start preparations as soon as possible and begin teaching no later than the start of the summer term in 2021.

The department is committed to supporting schools in their preparations and is currently developing a new online service featuring innovative training materials, an implementation guide, case studies and support to access resources. This support will cover all of the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance and will be inclusive to all pupils. This will be available in the

summer term, with additional content added in the following months. Training will also be available for schools that need additional support. This will complement the online training materials and will be available through existing teaching schools' regional networks.

As part of the consultation on the draft regulations and statutory guidance, the department included a number of questions on school support and implementation. The responses to the consultation, including from expert organisations and teachers, demonstrated that teachers want to receive training to support the delivery of the new subjects. The government response to the consultation can be accessed via the following link: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/780768/Government\\_Response\\_to\\_RSE\\_Consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780768/Government_Response_to_RSE_Consultation.pdf).

The department has also been working extensively with teachers, schools and subject experts throughout the development of these subjects, to assess the needs of schools. We have also been working closely with over 1,500 early adopter schools. This has informed our investment in a central package to help all schools to increase the confidence and quality of their teaching practice in these subjects.

In all schools, the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included in the core content listed in the statutory guidance are appropriately handled. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010. The statutory guidance can be accessed via the following link: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf).

Ofsted's school inspection handbook sets out that inspectors will consider the provision for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education as part of a wider judgment of pupils' personal development. Routine Ofsted school inspections are currently suspended in order to alleviate pressure on school leaders and staff at this challenging time, and there are no plans to lift the suspension this term. When routine inspections do re-start, inspectors will be sensitive to, and will take account of, the context and circumstances of schools. Further information on this will be made available in advance of any re-introduction of routine inspections.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL5271\_HL5272\_HL5273\_HL5274\_PDF\_1  
[HL5271\_HL5272\_HL5273\_HL5274\_Government\_Response\_to\_RSE\_Consultation.pdf]

HL5271\_HL5272\_HL5273\_HL5274\_PDF\_2  
[HL5271\_HL5272\_HL5273\_HL5274\_Relationships\_Education\_Relationships\_and\_Sex\_Education\_RSE\_and\_Health\_Education\_statutory\_guidance.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-04/HL5271>

## Riot Control Weapons: USA

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what quantity of (1) tear gas, (2) rubber bullets, and (3) riot shields, have been exported in the past three years from the UK to the United States; whether they plan to suspend exports of such products to the United States in view of the use to which they are being put by police in response to the protests following the death of George Floyd; and whether they have asked the government of the United States to ensure that already exported materials are not being used for this purpose. [HL5278]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** I have been deeply saddened by the violence that has taken place in the US. The death of George Floyd was a grave injustice and the right to peaceful protest is an important part of any free society.

The United Kingdom takes its export control responsibilities seriously and operates one of the most transparent export control systems in the world. We publish quarterly and annual statistics on all our export licensing decisions, including details of export licences granted, refused and revoked on GOV.UK.

We are able to review licences and suspend or revoke as necessary when circumstances require, and this is done in line with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Records of the quantity of tear gas, rubber bullets, and riot shields exported in the past three years can only be provided at disproportionate costs.

## Road Traffic Offences: Enforcement

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have fully to implement Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enable councils to manage traffic offences including the obstruction of cycle routes. [HL5322]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department is giving thought to the role these powers could play in helping councils to deliver their transport recovery plans. No decisions have yet been taken.

## Roads: Safety

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety Roads Policing and its contribution to road safety, published on 4 June; and what consideration they have given to the reasons

why road deaths in the UK have not declined since 2010. [[HL5320](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The PACTS report was an evaluation of academic work to establish if enforcement had an impact on road casualty numbers.

In the Refreshed Road Safety Statement in July 2019 we announced the most comprehensive review of roads policing and this reflects our commitment to continuing to reduce the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.

We will also shortly be launching a Call for Evidence to help us further investigate the link between enforcement, collisions, congestion and crime – helping make our roads safer for everyone.

### Schools: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of each occasion on which a temporary closure direction was issued under the Coronavirus Act 2020, schedule 16, paragraph 1, whether they will list (1) the persons to whom it was issued; (2) when it was published; (3) when it came into effect; (4) where it was published; (5) the specified period for the direction; (6) the advice received under paragraph 1(4) of schedule 16; and (5) the guidance to which a person receiving a direction must have regard to under paragraph 5(4) of schedule 16. [[HL5331](#)]

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of each occasion on which a temporary closure direction was issued under Coronavirus Act 2020, schedule 16, paragraph 4, whether they will list (1) the terms and conditions of the authorisation, and (2) the persons to whom the authorisation was issued. [[HL5332](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has not issued any temporary closure directions under schedule 16, paragraph 1 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, nor has he authorised anyone (either local authority or the Office for Students) to issue temporary closure directions under paragraph 4 of Schedule 16 to that Act.

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of each occasion on which a temporary closure direction was issued under the Coronavirus Act 2020, schedule 17, paragraph 1, whether they will list (1) the persons to whom the direction was issued; (2) when it was published; (3) when it came into effect; (4) where it was published; (5) the specified period for the direction; (6) the advice received under paragraph 1(3) of schedule 17; and (5) the guidance to which a person receiving a direction must have regard to under paragraph 4(4) of schedule 17. [[HL5333](#)]

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of each occasion on which a temporary closure direction was issued under Coronavirus Act 2020, schedule 17, paragraph 3, whether they will list (1) the terms and conditions of the authorisation, and (2) the persons to whom the authorisation was issued. [[HL5334](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** Schedule 17, paragraph 1 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 gives the Secretary of State a power to issue 'temporary continuity directions' to educational institutions, registered childcare providers and local authorities requiring them to take reasonable steps which can be set out in the direction in connection with the provision of education, training, childcare (or services relating to these), or ancillary services and facilities, for a specified period. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has not issued any temporary continuity directions under schedule 17, paragraph 1 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, nor has he authorised anyone (either local authority or the Office for Students) to issue temporary continuity directions under paragraph 3 of Schedule 17 to that Act.

### Schools: Private Education

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what efforts they will make to encourage schools in the independent sector to grant access to their premises and resources over the summer to pupils from state schools disadvantaged by school closures in place since March. [[HL5266](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government shares the concern about the impact of prolonged school closures on disadvantaged pupils and is committed to doing whatever we can to make sure no child, whatever their background, falls behind as a result of COVID-19.

The government has committed over £100 million to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children in England to access remote education and social care services, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers.

The government is providing over 200,000 laptops and tablets to vulnerable and disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examinations in year 10, receiving support from a social worker or are a care leaver. The government is also providing over 50,000 4G wireless routers to care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged children in year 10 who do not have internet connections.

The department has also partnered with BT to give 10,000 young people free access to BT Wi-Fi hotspots, who do not have access to good internet by other means.

We are considering, with a range of partner organisations what more is required to support all pupils



make up for time spent out of school. This includes discussions with the Independent Schools Council to understand what offers of support might be available locally.

### Social Security Benefits: Immigrants

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what public funds are available to those who have no recourse to ordinary benefits. [HL5483]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Non-UK nationals and family members who are issued with a residence permit with a No Recourse to Public Funds condition are not eligible to access taxpayer-funded benefits such as Universal Credit, Child Benefit or housing assistance for the duration of their leave. Public funds do not include contributions-based benefits and the State Pension. The Department has no powers to award taxpayer-funded benefits to an individual whose Home Office immigration status specifies no recourse to public funds. The Home Office determine whether persons granted leave to enter or remain in the UK are eligible to access public funds.

However, as part of its response to COVID-19, the Government announced in the Budget on 11 March that it would provide local authorities in England with £500 million of new grant funding to support economically vulnerable people and households in their local area.

### Social Services: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the analysis published by the Local Government Association on 4 June that adult social care providers may face £6.6 billion in extra costs by the end of September as a result of COVID-19; and how they expect those costs to be met. [HL5343]

**Lord Bethell:** We recognise that COVID-19 is imposing significant pressures on the social care sector. We have now made £3.2 billion available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic, including in adult social care.

On 15 May we published details of an additional £600 million Infection Control Fund for Adult Social Care. This funding is to support adult social care providers in England reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and to support workforce resilience.

This funding is part of the Government's commitment to ensure the health and social care system have all the resources they need during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Government will continue to monitor pressures in the National Health Service and local government and will keep future funding under review.

### Social Services: Disease Control

*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 capacity of the social care system to be able to provide the level of support needed if the NHS implemented its proposed reverse triage plans which would include the movement of patients from hospitals into social care facilities. [HL4400]

**Lord Bethell:** The lessons identified from Exercise Cygnus continue to be considered by the Government and a range of stakeholders, including expert advisory groups and local emergency planners.

Working across the Government and with stakeholders, the lessons from Exercise Cygnus have informed our preparedness, including strengthening health sector plans to surge and flex systems and resources beyond normal operations, and stockpiling personal protective equipment specifically for a pandemic influenza, informed by expert advice.

The safety of residents and staff is always a priority and patients should not be discharged unless it is clinically safe to do so. We have provided extensive support and guidance to care homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also provided local authorities with £3.2 billion to help them deal with the impacts of COVID-19, as well as £1.3 billion to enhance the National Health Service discharge process.

We have established the Capacity Tracker as the single mechanism across the country to report bed vacancies and help manage demand and monitor workforce pressures in care homes during this incident. We strongly encourage care homes to contribute regularly to this tracker.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to review our guidance and national support in line with the latest scientific advice.

### State Retirement Pensions

*Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the proportion of the UK population over state pension age in 1990; and what is the projected figure for 2050. [HL5313]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** In 1990, State Pension age was 60 years of age for females and 65 years for males. Based upon Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimates, the proportion of the total UK population over State Pension age in 1990 was 18.4 per cent.

In 2050, State Pension age is legislated to be 68 years of age for both males and females. Based upon ONS 2018 mid-year population projections, the most up-to-date ONS population projections available, the proportion of the

total UK population over State Pension age in 2050 is estimated to be 21.4 per cent.

Percentages have been rounded to 1 decimal place.

These figures have been calculated using data available on the ONS website: [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

### State Retirement Pensions: Females

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports that women have received incorrect State Pension payments based on their husband's record, what assessment they have made of the numbers of women who did not receive automatic uplifts to their State Pension under the post-2008 rules; and what has been their assessment of why the automatic uplifts were not paid. [HL5337]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** As has been the case under successive governments of different political persuasions. Those who are already getting a State Pension based on their own National Insurance contributions must make a separate claim for the top up if their husband reached State Pension age before 17 March 2008.

Any women who believe they are being underpaid State Pension should contact the Department. Details on how to do this through the Pension Service are available on the Gov.uk website.

We are checking to find other individuals who may have been affected.

### Students: Plagiarism

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on academic performance in those countries who have banned contract cheating services; and what plans they have, if any, to adopt similar policies. [HL5328]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government is aware that legislation has been introduced in several countries to ban contract cheating services, including in New Zealand, several states in the USA and, most recently, Ireland. It should also be noted that a bill was introduced in Australia in December which, if passed, would make it an offence to provide or advertise academic 'contract cheating' services in higher education.

We would be willing to consider supporting any legislation, including a Private Members' Bill, that is workable and that contains measures that would eliminate essay mills in ways that cannot be delivered through other means, provided that the Parliamentary time permitted.

Ministers have called on universities, sector bodies, educational technology companies and online platforms to do everything in their power to help eradicate academic cheating of any kind from our world-class higher education sector. We have set a clear expectation that the

Office for Students (OfS) should take a visible lead in challenging the sector to eliminate the use of essay mills. We expect the OfS to work with the members of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment to ensure that the sector has the support it needs and that it is taking firm and robust action to ensure that this threat to the integrity of the higher education system is being tackled.

### Syria: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of sanctions on Syria on the pharmaceutical industry in that country and any subsequent impact on that country's ability to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5354]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK and European partners regularly review sanctions, including in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and have taken significant steps to mitigate against the wider impact of sanctions on Syrian civilians. The EU does not sanction medicine, medical equipment and medical assistance. As such, medical equipment, including oxygen, respirators (except powered respirators), personal protective equipment and ventilators as well as medicines and other medical items required to fight the COVID-19 pandemic are not subject to direct restrictions on export, supply, financing or use in Syria. Humanitarian exemptions apply in relation to other equipment required by the Syrian pharmaceutical industry. We assess that applying for a licence or authorisation may slightly delay the provision of goods to Syria's pharmaceutical industry, as may over-compliance by certain operators' unwillingness to engage in transactions related to Syria, for fear of accidentally violating the sanctions. But the sanctions do not prevent the delivery of items needed to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 2 June (HL4567), whether EU or UK restrictions prohibit the delivery of supplies required to deal with COVID-19 through (1) the ports of Latakia and Tartous, and (2) Damascus Airport, in Syria. [HL5356]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** EU sanctions do not prohibit medical supplies from being delivered into Syria regardless of the means of transport, including through Latakia, Tartous or Damascus. The EU Syria sanctions do not prohibit the supply, export, transfer or finance of food, medicines, medical equipment, disinfectants and other medical products required to deal with COVID-19 when used by international humanitarian organisations to provide humanitarian assistance. There are also humanitarian exemptions that apply in relation to certain dual-use goods. EU sanctions will continue to apply in the UK during the Transition Period.

## Terrorism: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assume responsibility for administering the Northern Ireland Troubles-related incident victims payments scheme, following the missed deadline to open the scheme to applications on 29 May. [HL5357]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Under the Victims Payments' Regulations 2020, the Executive is required to designate a Department to exercise the administrative functions of the Board on the Board's behalf. In the absence of an Executive, the UK Government brought forward legislation in January fulfilling its commitment to support the progression of this scheme. The Executive committed to take forward a scheme and, under the provisions of the Regulations, is legally obligated to now do so.

The Executive needs to designate a department that can own the policy and implement the scheme so that applications can be processed and payments made to victims.

Sinn Féin has been clear that it wants to reopen the criteria by which eligibility for the scheme will be determined but this scheme provides a fair, balanced and proportionate basis for helping those who suffered through no fault of their own. It is therefore imperative that Sinn Féin, along with all the parties, enable the scheme to move forward as the time for delay is done.

## Tolls: Greater London

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of any extension of the Central London Congestion Charge to Sundays on (1) the ability of people to attend places of worship in the zone, and (2) the financial sustainability of Churches in the zone. [HL5284]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London and delivered by Transport for London. The decision to temporarily extend the hours of the congestion charge was taken by the Mayor of London and it is a matter for him to confirm what assessment was made of impacts to churches and church goers.

## Transport: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are prioritising transport workers for COVID-19 testing; and whether those tests are currently available in such workers' workplaces. [HL5319]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** DfT is committed to ensuring that every transport worker who requires testing has access. We are engaging closely with stakeholders

and DHSC to ensure that a robust testing process is in place for transport workers, whilst recognising that priority needs to be given to patient care, front-line healthcare staff and social care workers. COVID-19 antigen testing is currently available through home delivery kits, regional test sites, satellite sites and mobile testing centres throughout the country.

## UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK troops being deployed as part of the UK's long-range reconnaissance force alongside the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali will be supported by (1) British Army Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, and (2) Royal Air Force Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems. [HL5488]

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what types of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems will be used to support the UK troops being deployed alongside the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. [HL5489]

**Baroness Goldie:** The UK's upcoming deployment to MINUSMA will be supported by the British Army Desert Hawk. This is assessed as the most suitable UAV for the deployment. There are currently no plans for Royal Air Force Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems to be used on the deployment. UK forces may also receive support from other Remotely Piloted Air Systems which are deployed as part of MINUSMA, including the German HERON.

## Universities: Brexit and Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the causes of the changes in position of UK universities since 2015 as measured by the QS World University Rankings; and what measures they intend to introduce to support universities to address any additional financial pressures as a result of (1) the COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) the end of the transition period of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. [T] [HL5616]

**Baroness Berridge:** The UK is a world-leading destination for study. According to the QS World Rankings, the UK has consistently had 4 higher education institutions in the top 10 since 2011/12. Four UK universities are currently in the world's top 10 and 18 in the top 100, second only to the US (this data is taken from the QS World University Rankings 2021).

The government recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak will have an unparalleled impact on all elements of the global and UK economy and the higher education sector is no exception. We have been working closely

with the sector to monitor the likely impacts of COVID-19 on student numbers in 2020-21 and we stand ready to support with various mitigations.

On 4 May, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced a package of measures to stabilise university admissions this autumn and to ensure sustainability in higher education at a time of unprecedented uncertainty. Temporary student number controls will be put in place for domestic and EU students for the academic year 2020/21 to ensure a fair, structured distribution of students across providers. As part of this package, a new University Research Sustainability Taskforce will focus on the sustainability of research capabilities, capacity and activities undertaken in universities and study this in the context of wider higher education operational implications and issues arising from the response to COVID-19.

The government has also pulled forward an estimated £2.6 billion worth of forecast tuition fee payments to ease cashflow pressure this autumn. It has also committed to pulling forward quality-related research funding for higher education providers in England in the current academic year by £100 million. The measures to stabilise admissions for this autumn also serve to reduce the risk to financial sustainability across the higher education sector.

This package of measures comes on top of the unprecedented package of support for businesses already announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>) and a range of business loan schemes, to help pay wages, keep staff employed and support businesses whose viability is threatened by the COVID-19 outbreak. We have confirmed that providers are eligible to apply for these government support packages, including business loan support schemes, which the Office for Students estimates could be worth at least £700 million to the sector.

To support international student recruitment, both the government and the higher education sector are committed to being as flexible as possible in accommodating applicants' current circumstances, including if they are unable to travel to the UK in time for the start of the next academic year. We will also publish a review of the International Education Strategy this autumn, which will respond to the new context and the challenges that are posed by COVID-19 across all education settings.

In addition to our response to COVID-19, the government is working alongside stakeholders to support students and the UK higher education workforce to manage the transition period. This involves working to solidify existing global relationships and establish important new global relationships as well as promoting an open and welcoming message to all international – EU and non-EU – students to wish to come to the UK to study at our world-class education institutions.

Finally, the government remains committed to international exchanges in education, both with the EU and beyond. As part of its negotiations with the EU, the government remains open to considering participation in some elements of the next Erasmus+ programme, provided that the terms are in the UK's interests. This will be subject to our ongoing negotiations with the EU. We will, in parallel with the negotiations, continue to develop a domestic alternative to Erasmus+, to ensure we are prepared for every eventuality.

## Unmanned Air Vehicles

*Asked by Baroness Stern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many personnel have qualified as (1) Reaper drone pilots, and (2) Reaper drone sensor operators, in each of the past five years. [HL5487]

**Baroness Goldie:** I am withholding annual information about the numbers who have qualified as Reaper pilots or sensor operators in each of the last five years as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

However, I can confirm that over calendar years 2015 to 2019 a total of 93 personnel qualified as Reaper pilots or sensor operators.

## Visas: Married People

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend (1) to reduce, (2) to waive, or (3) to eliminate, the minimum income requirement for UK citizens wishing to bring a foreign spouse or partner (and where relevant children) to the UK in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular for loss of income as a result of the lockdown to be accounted for in calculating the income requirement. [HL5156]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation closely and take these exceptional circumstances into account.

To ensure a spouse or partner and relevant dependent children applying for entry clearance, leave to remain or indefinite leave are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control, for the purpose of the minimum income requirement:

- A temporary loss of employment income between 1 March and 31 July 2020 due to COVID-19, will be disregarded provided the requirement was met for at least six months up to March 2020.
- An applicant or sponsor furloughed under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be deemed as earning 100% of their salary.



- A temporary loss of annual income due to COVID-19 between 1 March 2020 and 31 July 2020 will generally be disregarded for self-employment income, along with the impact on employment income from the same period for future applications. Income received via the Coronavirus Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will also be taken into account.

- Evidential flexibility may be applied where an applicant or sponsor experiences difficulty accessing specified evidence due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The minimum income requirement can also be met in several ways in addition to or instead of income from employment or self-employment. For example, income from investments, property rental or pension may also be taken into account, together with cash savings.

### **West Bank: Demolition**

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the demolition of Palestinian homes within parts of the West Bank which that government plans to annex. [[HL5436](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As we made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May, we remain concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. We urge both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

### **West Bank: Water**

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that water tanks belonging to Palestinians living in Kafr Qadum were shot by Israeli soldiers. [[HL5433](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made representations on these reports, the UK is concerned by the continued destruction of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances such destruction by an occupying power is contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We urge both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

### **World Press Freedom Day**

*Asked by **Lord Collins of Highbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to attend the World Press Freedom Conference hosted by the Netherlands and UNESCO. [[HL5510](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK intends to participate fully in the World Press Freedom Conference in the Hague from 18 - 20 October, though we do not yet know whether COVID-19 restrictions will allow attendance in person, or whether participation will be virtual. The UK Government remains committed to marking this joint celebration of World Press Freedom Day and the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with our Dutch partners on press freedom.

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