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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<b>Baroness Berridge</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Bethell</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip
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<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
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<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
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## Written Statements

Thursday, 25 June 2020

### Covid-19: Testing

[HLWS306]

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

Reducing healthcare-associated COVID-19 infection is a top priority. Today, the NHS has set out plans for testing of NHS staff. This includes continuing to prioritise testing of all NHS staff with symptoms, asymptomatic regular testing of staff in situations where there is an incident, outbreak or high prevalence and regular surveillance testing across all staff. Under the risk-based approach advised by clinical experts, we are continually reviewing clinical evidence to ensure regular testing of asymptomatic staff is undertaken where appropriate. The CMO's advice is that this is currently best done through a survey, which monitors prevalence in NHS staff. This survey, which will be expanded over the coming months, helps us to determine where wider asymptomatic staff testing is needed. Clinical advice is to focus intensive asymptomatic testing in those areas or settings identified to have high prevalence. This dynamic approach which responds to risk is essential as when prevalence is very low, the risk of misleading results is higher and this can undermine the value of testing. We will continue to keep clinical advice under review.

I also want to clarify a point on the predominant reason for the minority of positive cases that do not go into the NHS test and trace scheme. On June 17<sup>th</sup> I set out that they are largely in-patients in hospital and therefore testing and tracing in the normal sense does not apply. Testing and tracing is different for hospital in-patients than for the general public, as contact tracing is usually done by the hospital rather than by NHS Test and Trace contact tracers. Local hospital infection control teams are often best placed to do the contact tracing for in-patients as these individuals may not be in a position to be able to communicate their contacts and hospitals will have a clear list of patients on wards, staff and shift patterns. This is standard practice for other infections. The data from these hospital in-patients do enter the NHS Test and Trace system. Positive cases who are not contacted by the contact tracing system are either those who do not respond to repeated attempts to make contact (through phone, SMS and email contacts) or for whom NHS Test and Trace has incorrect contact details. Further data will be set out by NHS Test and Trace tomorrow in the normal way.

### Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts and Implementation Plan

[HLWS308]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Alex Chalk) has made the following Written Statement.

In May 2019, the Ministry of Justice established a panel of experts to lead a review into how the family courts deal with risk of harm to children and parents in private law children cases involving domestic abuse and other serious offences. The panel held a call for evidence over the summer of 2019, which received submissions from over 1,200 individuals and organisations with experience of the family justice system. As well as receiving testimonies through written submissions, the panel held a series of focus groups and roundtables across England and Wales. It is due to the wealth of evidence gathered that the panel took the necessary time to evaluate and discuss their findings, which I now present to the House.

I would first like to acknowledge the dedication of all those who work in the family justice system. I have seen first-hand how they have to make difficult decisions about the best interests of the child with the information available to them. It is a challenging job at the centre of an often painful dispute between two parents, and I hope that our implementation plan will reassure them that we value their commitment and will support them in their roles.

But there is more to do. I welcome the panel's report, and am incredibly grateful to all panel members for their time and expertise. I have carefully considered their conclusions and am determined to take action to improve the experience of survivors of domestic abuse in our family courts.

This report lays bare many hard truths about long-standing failings in the family justice system, especially in protecting the survivors of abuse and their children from harm. It is not a comfortable read. The testimonies in the report show that there are some fundamental issues that we must address in order to improve the experience and ensure the safety of all participants in the family justice system.

I want to make it clear that this is not acceptable, and that while these issues largely predate this Government, we have a strong and unwavering commitment to ensure domestic abuse survivors are better protected. This is not only to help those who have been directly affected, but also for their children, who should always be at the heart of any decision made in the family court.

The publication of this report provides a unique opportunity for the family justice system to reform how it manages cases involving children. The report is the

springboard for the actions we will take to better protect and support children and domestic abuse victims throughout private family law proceedings.

The Domestic Abuse Bill will enable us to make some of the immediate changes called for in the panel's report, alongside other measures which will help to ensure that victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences. As recommended by the panel, we will use the Bill to extend automatic eligibility for special measures to victims of domestic abuse in the family courts. The Bill will also ban cross-examination by perpetrators of domestic abuse in the family courts.

We also have committed to invest more widely in support for victims of domestic abuse, including £35 million announced alongside the Bill to support victims and their children, and an additional £76 million of extra funding that we announced to support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, modern slavery and vulnerable children and their families during the current pandemic.

But we acknowledge that, in light of the panel's findings, this does not go far enough. And that is why we are publishing an Implementation Plan alongside this report. This details the first steps we will take across the family justice system to take forward the recommendations of the panel and make the changes that are needed.

In response to hearing that the adversarial nature of the family courts can contribute to further harm to victims of abuse or their children, I am pleased to announce that we will trial a different 'investigative' approach within our forthcoming pilot of Integrated Domestic Abuse Courts. This approach will seek to ensure that all parties in proceedings are safe and able to provide evidence on an equal footing, without the retraumatising effects of being in court with an abusive ex-partner.

We are committed to making it easier for judges to apply 'barring orders', under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989, to prevent abusive ex-partners repeatedly dragging a victim back to court.

We will also look to improve how the family courts gather the wishes and feelings of the children at the heart of proceedings, to ensure no child is overlooked during the process. Alongside this, I acknowledge the panel's conclusion that the presumption of parental involvement can detract from the child's welfare and safety, and so will review this urgently.

Finally, we are working with colleagues across the family justice system to improve training on domestic abuse, to address gaps where appropriate, and to provide professionals with the tools to effectively support vulnerable parties.

The report is built upon the direct experiences of hundreds of victims of domestic abuse who responded to our call for evidence. There will be many others who were unable to speak out, and I want to thank each person who came forward and provided their testimony to the

panel. Each had a unique experience, but together they showed that this is a problem that thousands of people experience. Thanks to them, we have a unique opportunity now to address these issues in a meaningful and long-lasting way.

The report and Implementation Plan can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/assessing-risk-of-harm-to-children-and-parents-in-private-law-children-cases>.

## Ministerial Correction: Test and Trace App

[HLWS307]

**Lord Bethell:** During the Private Notice Question on the NHSX Covid-19 app tabled by Lord Clement-Jones on 22 June 2020, I was asked by Lord Truscott about the cost of the app to taxpayers. I told the House the cost to date has been £11.8 million and I would like to correct the record. The cost of the NHS Covid-19 app will be £10.8 million as of 30 June 2020. This figure is based on the spend for developing and hosting the app together with associated policy, project, evaluation, assurance and related activity.

Hansard: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-06-22/debates/69F28101-5695-4379-B23A-5E2CE7278BFF/Covid-19TestAndTraceApp#contribution-29330D84-B0FC-489C-88CE-31C0C14AEABC>.

## Offshore Wind Projects

[HLWS310]

**Lord Callanan:** My Rt. honourable Friend, the Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, made the following Statement today:

This Statement concerns applications made by Orsted Hornsea Project Three (UK) Limited and Norfolk Vanguard Limited for development consent for the installation, operation and maintenance of, respectively, the proposed Hornsea Project Three and Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farms, their related offshore infrastructure off the coast of Norfolk and their related onshore electrical connections within that county.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make a decision on an application within three months of the receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) of the Act to set a new deadline. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it. The statutory decision deadline for Hornsea Project Three offshore wind farm was re-set by Written Ministerial Statements on 8 October 2019 and 23 January 2020. The deadline for the decision on the Norfolk Vanguard offshore wind farm was reset by Written Ministerial Statement on 23 January 2020. The re-set deadline for both applications was 1 June 2020.

The Secretary of State has decided to set a new deadline of 1 July 2020 for deciding these two applications to allow further consideration to be given to the environmental information received by the Secretary of State following consultation on both applications.

The decision to set the new deadlines for these applications is without prejudice to the decisions on whether to grant or refuse development consents for them.

## Planning: Online Access to Documentation

[HLWS311]

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

Responding to Covid-19 – temporary measures to ease restrictions on the planning system

Today the Government has introduced the Business and Planning Bill in Parliament. The Bill responds to the Covid-19 emergency and brings forward temporary changes to the planning system to support economic recovery. This statement sets out supporting temporary measures that the Government proposes to ensure the planning system continues to operate effectively.

### *Online inspection of documents*

The effects of Covid-19 mean that it is not possible for everyone to enter public buildings safely to access certain planning documents made available for inspection. The Government has made clear [Written Ministerial Statement, 13 May 2020 ‘Virtual working and planning – Responding to Covid – 19 Restrictions’] that online inspection of documents should be the default position. It has already made secondary legislation providing temporary flexibility for consultation and publicity requirements for planning applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) and for Environmental Impact Assessment development under the TCPA in relation to environmental statements.

This statement makes clear, for the regimes addressed below, how the Government expects local authorities, applicants and the Mayor of London to meet the requirements for making documents available for inspection by the public whilst social distancing restrictions apply. Everyone involved in the planning process is expected to engage proactively in the move to online inspection of documents and to consider the practical measures needed to ensure fair participation. When it becomes possible for documents to be made available for inspection in public buildings again, then the Government expects this to be done as soon as practicable.

### *Compulsory purchase orders (CPOs)*

There are requirements in the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 for newspaper and site notices to provide details of a place where copies of CPOs and associated maps can be inspected, both prior to submission of the CPO to the confirming authority and when it is confirmed. Provisions in secondary legislation requiring inspection of

documents are similar, and in some cases require documents to be provided on request. It is the Government’s view that these legislative requirements can be satisfied by the acquiring authority making a copy of the order and map available for inspection on a website. Hard copies of documents should be provided by the acquiring authority on request. The Government has published updated planning guidance in relation to the compulsory purchase process which can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-compulsory-purchase-guidance>.

### *Development consent orders (DCOs)*

The Planning Act 2008, relating to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP), requires that at the pre-application stage the Statement of Community Consultation must be made available for inspection. At the post-consent stage, where a Development Consent Order grants authority to acquire compulsorily an interest in land, the Act requires that a copy of the DCO must be made available for inspection.

It is the Government’s view that these requirements can be met by making documents available for inspection online. It expects applicants to take reasonable steps to ensure that anyone wishing to view the documentation can find these documents online. Hard copies should be made available by the applicant on request.

For the NSIP regime there are other provisions in secondary legislation relating to consultation and publicity requirements. The Government intends to bring forward secondary legislation shortly to replace temporarily the requirement for documents to be made available for inspection in a place, with a requirement for documents to be made available online.

### *Planning appeals*

For planning appeals there are provisions in secondary legislation for consultation and publicity requirements, and the Government is considering whether these should be amended to enable more to be undertaken by digital processes, similar to the flexibilities already brought in for planning applications under the TCPA. The Government expects local planning authorities, appellants, the Planning Inspectorate and other parties to be proactive in their use of digital processes for consultation and publicity.

### *Local development documents*

When preparing Local Development Documents, local planning authorities are required to make certain documents available for inspection at their principal office, and other places that they consider appropriate, and provide copies of the plan or strategy to a person that requests one. In addition, local planning authorities must publish the document on their website. The Government intends to bring forward secondary legislation shortly to remove temporarily the requirement for local planning authorities to make these documents available for inspection at their offices and other places, as well as the requirement for these documents to be provided on



request. Local planning authorities will need to ensure that these documents are made available on their website.

*Spatial development strategies*

The Business and Planning Bill amends the provisions in the Greater London Authority Act 1999 that require the Mayor of London to make the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) available for physical inspection at certain locations and to provide a copy on request.

The Bill will remove these requirements provided that the Mayor makes the current SDS available by appropriate electronic means. The Mayor will be required to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State on arrangements that may be appropriate for those who do not have internet access.

There are also similar provisions in secondary legislation that apply for the Mayor of London and combined authorities who have been conferred the power to make a spatial development strategy. The Government intends to bring forward secondary legislation shortly to temporarily disapply requirements for these documents to be made available for inspection at their offices and enable them to be made available online.

*Extending development consents*

The Business and Planning Bill includes a provision to extend certain planning permissions and consents under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. There are already established routes to make changes to DCOs and it is the Government's view that these routes can be used to extend commencement periods in certain circumstances. Developers can submit applications for non-material or material changes to the relevant Secretary

of State. The Secretary of State can also make a material change to a DCO in exceptional circumstances. The Government expects developers to take proactive steps to ensure that applications to extend DCOs are submitted in sufficient time and the Government will actively engage with any such applications.

## **Surveillance Camera Commissioner: Annual Report**

[HLWS309]

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

My Rt Hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying the 2018/19 Annual Report of the Surveillance Camera Commissioner before the House, as required by section 35 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner is an independent role appointed under section 34 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The Annual Report covers the exercise of the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's statutory functions over the year to 31 March 2019 and provides a comprehensive update on the progress made against the National Surveillance Camera Strategy for England and Wales, which the Commissioner published in March 2017.

Copies of the report will be available from the Vote Office.

## Written Answers

Thursday, 25 June 2020

### A1: Yorkshire and the Humber

Asked by **Lord Caine**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will bring forward plans to widen the A1 between Darrington and Doncaster; and what steps they are taking to ensure any such plans (1) help boost growth and investment in Yorkshire, (2) reduce congestion on the M1 between Leeds and Sheffield, and (3) support the Northern Powerhouse. [[HL5586](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The second Road Investment Strategy, published with the Budget in March, confirmed funding for the development of a scheme to enhance the A1 between Darrington and Doncaster. In developing the scheme, Highways England will take into account the potential benefits for road users on this and other routes, and for the economy.

### Aarhus Convention

Asked by **Baroness Whitaker**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they now plan to ratify the Aarhus Convention. [[HL5735](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK ratified the Aarhus Convention in 2005 and we remain a party in our own right. Our exit from the EU does not change our commitment to respect, protect and fulfil the obligations contained in this important international agreement.

### Apprentices: Young People

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement by the Prime Minister on 3 June that young people "should be guaranteed an apprenticeship", what plans they have to introduce a scheme to ensure this guarantee is realised; what (1) ages, and (2) categories of people, will be able to participate in any such scheme; and how will the (a) employers, and (b) training opportunities, be (i) found, and (ii) funded. [[HL5579](#)]

**Baroness Berridge:** Apprenticeships will have an important role to play in creating employment opportunities, particularly for young people, and supporting employers in all sectors to access the skilled workforce they need to recover and grow post COVID-19. We are looking to support employers of all sizes, and particularly smaller businesses, to take on new apprentices this year. We will set out further details in due course. We will also ensure that there is sufficient funding to support small businesses wanting to take on an apprentice this year.

## Asylum

Asked by **Lord Marlesford**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what requirements have to be fulfilled before a person who has been granted political asylum in the UK can (1) be granted UK citizenship and (2) be issued with a British passport; and what is the shortest period in which this process can be completed. [[HL5537](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The requirements for naturalisation as a British citizen can be found on gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-citizenship-indefinite-leave-to-remain>.

Before applying for citizenship, a person granted political asylum in the UK should normally apply for permanent residence after they have lived in the UK for five years.

To become a British citizen, you normally need to have held permanent residence in the UK for 12 months, before you submit your application to naturalise, unless you are married or in a civil partnership with a British citizen. The service standard for applications for citizenship to be decided is six months.

After you have become a British citizen, you can apply for British passport which can take approximately four weeks to be processed.

### Asylum: Finance

Asked by **Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 12 May (HL4183), what proportion of the increase of 26p a day in asylum support is attributable to the additional costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, such as those arising from increased hygiene needs. [[HL5527](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We review the level of financial support provided to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute annually, using a methodology that has been in place since 2014 and which the courts have agreed is rational and lawful. The methodology takes account of the costs of food, clothes, toiletries and other items.

The standard weekly allowance has been raised to £39.60 from £37.75, an increase of around 5%, because the methodology showed this is now the amount the average asylum seeker needs to meet their essential living needs. This increase is considerably higher than current year to year rise in general inflation, which was reported to be 0.8% in April.

This allowance is only one part of the package of support provided. We also provide free accommodation, utilities are paid for, council tax is paid for, and there is free access to the NHS and free education for their children.

## Boilers: Safety

*Asked by Earl Attlee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to require statutory inspections of boilers and pressure vessels to be conducted by inspectors who they (1) appoint, and (2) fund. [HL5577]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Under the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 the users and owners of boilers and pressure vessels have a statutory duty to have them examined by a competent person at periods specified in a written scheme of examination.

Her Majesty's Government has no plans to appoint inspectors or fund inspections to deliver these statutory inspections.

## Children: Computers

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children who normally attend school in (1) Lancashire, and (2) Pendle, have (a) no access to a computer or laptop, and (b) been provided with a laptop. [HL5592]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department is providing laptops and tablets to vulnerable and disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examinations in year 10. Vulnerable children are those receiving support from a social worker, including pre-school children, or are a care leaver.

Local authorities and academy trusts are best placed to identify the children and young people who are in need of devices and distribute the laptops and tablets. The devices have been allocated to local authorities and academy trusts based on the department's estimates of the number of disadvantaged and vulnerable children that do not have access to a device. Where local authorities and academy trusts have identified a need greater than their initial allocation, the department has been working with them to provide additional devices.

In May, the department invited local authorities to order devices for the most vulnerable children first. Earlier this month, the department started inviting academy trusts and local authorities to order their devices for disadvantaged year 10 pupils. Thousands of devices continue to be delivered each day. Laptops and tablets will continue to be ordered and delivered throughout June.

## Children: Temperature

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to require that children's temperatures be monitored during the school day. [HL5605]

**Baroness Berridge:** The government's current plans do not require that children's temperatures be monitored during the school day. This is not a reliable method for identifying COVID-19.

The department has published comprehensive guidance to schools and nurseries on the protective measures that should be implemented to substantially reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

The guidance advises that if anyone in an education or childcare setting develops a new, continuous cough, a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home to self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test.

## Community Relations: Bangladesh

*Asked by Baroness Uddin*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to meet members of Bangladeshi communities in order (1) to address the community's concerns around the impact of COVID-19 on the British Bangladeshi population, and (2) to create greater awareness of Government safety measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5572]

**Baroness Berridge:** The Race Disparity Unit is working with COVID teams across departments to engage directly with ethnic minority communities, including Bangladeshi communities, across the country. The Government has been working closely with faith leaders, the voluntary sector, community representatives and BAME business leaders to ensure that advice and relief measures announced are available to those who need it. To increase accessibility, government advice, guidance, legislation, and the support measures announced were translated into over 25 different languages.

## Coronavirus: Disease Control

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to (1) support the UN Secretary-General's appeal on 23 March and reiterated on 3 April for a global ceasefire in response to COVID-19, and (2) ensure that appeal does not lose momentum, given the current overall levels of violence worldwide. [HL5926]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK supports the UN Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in armed conflicts. We have made that support clear at the UN Security Council, and in joint statements with other UN member states as part of the Groups of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and Children and Armed Conflict on 30 March, and the Protection of Civilians on 27 May.

The UK recognises the necessary role of counter terrorism operations, to protect civilian populations and prevent terror groups from using the Covid-19 pandemic



to their advantage. We are deeply concerned about the impact that Covid-19 will have on vulnerable countries, particularly those tackling extreme poverty. We continue to work within the UN Security Council to promote initiatives which will build on the global ceasefire and marshal support for UN efforts to take forward peace processes and mitigate risks of conflict escalation.

### **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Lennie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) personal confidentiality agreements, and (2) non-disclosure agreements, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has signed with (a) businesses, (b) individuals, and (c) third parties, advising the Department on its response to COVID-19. [T] [HL5924]

**Lord Callanan:** This information is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

### **Entry Clearances: Overseas Students**

*Asked by Lord Broers*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the proposal for a two-year graduate work visa for international students will take effect. [HL5584]

*Asked by Lord Broers*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how long international students in the academic year 2020–21 will have to be physically present in the UK to qualify for the two-year graduate work visa. [HL5585]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Graduate route will be introduced in the summer of 2021. To give assurance to those who begin their course overseas this year, the Government published guidance for international students on 16 June confirming that those who enter the UK to complete their course before 6 April 2021 will be eligible for the route if they meet the requirements.

### **Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes**

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost of providing the current free school meals voucher scheme during the upcoming summer holidays. [T] [HL5526]

**Baroness Berridge:** Provision for free school meals is ordinarily term time only. However, owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, the government fully understands that children and parents face an entirely unprecedented situation over the summer. To reflect this, we will be providing additional funding for a Covid Summer Food Fund which will enable children who are eligible for free school meals to receive food vouchers covering the 6-

week holiday period. This is a specific measure to reflect the unique circumstances of the outbreak.

The government has made significant wider support available for children and families at this time. On 10 June, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, confirmed an additional £63 million to be distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. In addition, the government has introduced an uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by around £1,000 a year for the next 12 months as part of an injection of over £6.5 billion by the government into the welfare system.

Additional support has been pledged by various departments across government with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) announcing the provision of £16 million for food support through charities, including FareShare and WRAP. DEFRA have also issued 2 million food packages to those who are shielding.

The Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme ensures that thousands of disadvantaged children have access to enriching activities and nutritious healthy meals over the summer, and is receiving £9 million this year.

More widely, the government has supported families to cope with the impact of coronavirus by introducing a range of support measures, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme. Support has also been provided to help families pay their rent or mortgage, access sick pay, and delay tax payments.

In relation to free school meals, this response applies to educational settings in England only. Education is a devolved matter and it will be for each administration to determine the actions they wish to take.

### **Gaza: New Businesses**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to encourage new technological enterprises in Gaza. [HL5729]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is more than tripling spend on Economic Development programming in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and we will provide £58 million between 2018 – 2023. This includes helping improve water and energy supply, particularly in Gaza, and addressing movement and access restrictions that currently inhibit trade. By focussing on these issues, we aim to improve daily life and opportunities for thousands of Palestinians.

The FCO and British Council also provide funding to the OPT's to support our commitment to educating tomorrow's academics, scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs, including in digital skills. The Chevening scholarship programme and Higher Education

Scholarships for Palestinians (HESPAL) provide support to Palestinians to access the best of UK university education and expertise. The @Palestine project is working to develop the English skills of Palestinian youth to enable them to engage in the global digital economy.

## GCE A-level: Assessments

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they have taken to ensure the calculated grades given to students due to sit A Level exams this summer are fair. [HL5600]

**Baroness Berridge:** This is a matter for Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have asked its Chief Regulator, Sally Collier, to write to the noble Lord, and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

## Heating: Carbon Emissions

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the future support for low carbon heat consultation failed to include the option of large-scale heat pump projects, and proposed support only for off-grid domestic settings and district heat initiatives. [HL5582]

**Lord Callanan:** The aim of the Clean Heat Grant scheme for heat pumps and biomass is to provide targeted support to households and small and medium-size enterprises, where upfront cost is a particular barrier in transitioning to low-carbon heat. The scheme is focussed on supporting the installer base that will be required to implement regulations to phase out the installation of high-carbon fossil fuel heating off the gas grid. The Government is committed to doing this during the 2020s, as set out in the Clean Growth Strategy.

While off-gas-grid areas are therefore the focus of the scheme, and BEIS expects uptake to be higher in such areas, we do not propose to exclude support for heat pumps on the gas grid. We are also proposing to support installations in non-domestic buildings up to a capacity of 45kW.

The Clean Heat Grant scheme has been designed as part of a broader package of measures to support the decarbonisation of heat in buildings and in heat networks. The Government intends to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy later this year, which will set out the wider actions that we will take for reducing emissions from buildings.

## Hong Kong: Politics and Government

*Asked by Lord Bowness*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish an international contact group to

ensure that the government of China respects their (1) legal, and (2) moral, obligations towards Hong Kong; and which countries, if any, have been approached to form any such international contact group. [HL5833]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have made clear to China, alongside our international partners, our concerns about the current situation in Hong Kong. China's decision to impose this legislation lies in direct conflict with its international obligations under the principles of the legally-binding, UN-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration.

As the Foreign Secretary said in Parliament on 2 June, we want to build up a groundswell of those who share our commitment to international law. We believe this is the most effective means of getting China to live up to its obligations and responsibilities as a leading member of the international community. On 17 June, the Foreign Secretary issued a statement together with other G7 foreign ministers urging the Government of China to reconsider its decision to impose the legislation.

We are also working within international institutions. The UK delivered a statement at the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, on 16 June, urging China to engage with Hong Kong's people, institutions, and judiciary to ensure it maintains Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms. The UK and the US raised Hong Kong at the UN Security Council on 28 May.

## Local Broadcasting: Television

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of regional broadcasting in the process of levelling up the regions of England; and what discussions they (1) have had, or (2) intend to have, with the BBC about proposed cuts to English regional television. [HL5906]

**Baroness Barran:** Broadcasting plays an important role in reflecting and representing people and communities from all over the UK. The BBC has a particular role to play here. The BBC's Royal Charter requires the BBC to represent, reflect and serve audiences, taking into account the needs of diverse communities of all the UK nations and regions.

The BBC's proposed cuts to English regional television were debated in the chamber on 22 June 2020 with unanimous support for regional broadcasting. However, the BBC is editorially and operationally independent of government, and regional programming is a matter for the BBC.

Under the new regulatory system introduced by the government in 2017, the BBC Board must ensure the BBC complies with its Charter duties, and the government established Ofcom as the BBC regulator to ensure the BBC is robustly held to account.

## Merchant Shipping: Safety Measures

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the reasons for delaying the incorporation of amendments to regulations arising from international conventions and obligations into the draft Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances and Arrangements) Regulations 2020; how many such amendments relating to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea are outstanding; and what plans they have to rectify this delay. [HL5583]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The global nature of the maritime sector results in an extensive set of international obligations and amendments, emanating predominantly from the International Maritime Organization and the International Labour Organization, which means that UK domestic legislation is having to be constantly updated. The diverse nature of the obligations means that some conventions are implemented in multiple instruments.

The Department for Transport, including the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, identified the need for 30 separate Statutory Instruments (SIs) related to international obligations, to be delivered on an ongoing basis between 2019 and 2022. Of those, four SIs have been completed, with a further six planned to be laid by the end of 2020. 13 are expected to be completed in 2021, with the remaining seven expected to be completed by the end of 2022. 13 of the 30 SIs relate to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea.

Since 2016, when updating secondary legislation to implement international maritime obligations, where appropriate, the Department for Transport has included ambulatory references; these will allow future changes to technical requirements and associated provisions to be brought into force domestically quicker, without the need for further legislative action.

## Nature Conservation: Crime

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how wildlife crime, including the illegal killing of raptors and illegal use of traps and snares, has been affected by the COVID-19 lockdown. [HL5581]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Government is aware of suggestions that there has been an increase in reports of wildlife crime, in particular associated with raptor persecution, during the COVID-19 lockdown. Raptor persecution is one of the UK's six wildlife crime priorities and we understand a number of criminal investigations are ongoing. However, it is not possible to confirm on available data whether there has been an increase in the incidents of wildlife crime, increased reporting, or a combination of both.

## Parliament: Art Works

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask The Senior Deputy Speaker what plans there are, if any, to survey statues, pictures and items on display on the Parliamentary Estate to assess whether (1) their display is appropriate, and (2) further explanatory materials are required. [HL5593]

**Lord McFall of Alcluith:** The Lord Speaker's Advisory Panel on Works of Art and the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art, with the support of the staff in the Heritage Collections team, develop and manage the Parliamentary Art Collection including its care, display and interpretation. The current concerns around public art are being taken very seriously and both the Panel and the Committee will consider these issues at their next meetings.

In advance of this the Heritage Collections team are reviewing the works in the Collection and will be presenting the Panel and Committee with information and proposals for further interpretation. The Parliamentary Art Collection website is currently the main platform for providing context to the artworks in the Collection and further supporting information is provided to visitors by the Visit Parliament team, who deliver guided and audio tours. As a listed building and a busy working parliament, there is a limit on the amount of printed information that can be added next to artworks on display in the building but the possibilities for leaflets and other forms of information being made available are being considered. The Heritage Collections team continue to work with colleagues across Parliament to ensure that the context provided about works in the Collection are appropriate.

The Parliamentary Art Collection documents the history of Parliament and in recent years efforts to make the Collection more diverse and inclusive have been pursued by both the Panel and Committee. In 2019 the Panel secured the loan of a bust of Lord Constantine, the first black Life Peer, from the National Portrait Gallery to coincide with the 50th anniversary of his taking his seat in the House of Lords. The bust is now on long term display in Millbank House.

## Personation: Internet

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make the creation of false personas online, for the purpose of coercing people into fraudulent relationships, a criminal offence. [HL5590]

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to make creating a false identity on a social networking platform, for the purpose of deception, abuse or fraud, a criminal offence. [HL5591]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government is aware of the harms caused by identity crime and that criminals use false identities to commit and enable a range of offences. We are deeply concerned by the growth in scale and complexity of scams and fraudulent activity online. Victims can suffer both financial and emotional harm, and we are conscious that criminals exploit social relationships to achieve their objectives.

Where a person:

- dishonestly makes a false representation knowing that it is untrue or misleading, or knowing that it might be, and
- they intend to make a gain, to cause loss to another, or to expose another to a risk of loss

then they will be committing an offence under section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006 of fraud by false representation.

The Government is firmly committed to making the UK the safest place to be online, and we are looking to bring forward legislation to do so as soon as possible.

### Ports: Wales

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK's exit from the EU on the ports of Holyhead and Fishguard. [HL5712]

**Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist:** The Government is clear that we will leave the transition period by the end of the year. Welsh ports will benefit from leaving the transition period as it ensures that we take back control of our laws, trade, borders and money on the basis of the agreement we reached in October and which enabled us to leave the EU on 31 January.

Furthermore, on 12 June, the Government committed to building new border facilities in Great Britain for carrying out required checks, such as customs compliance, transit, and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks, as well as providing targeted support to ports to build new infrastructure. Where there is no space at ports for new infrastructure, the Government will build new inland sites where these checks and other activities will take place. The Government is consulting with ports across the UK including Holyhead and Fishguard to agree what infrastructure is required. This includes working with the Welsh Government recognising their devolved responsibilities in regards to ports.

### Prisoners' Release

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many prisoners have been released under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme; and what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the scheme. [HL5601]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** On 4 April, we announced the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme. This scheme enables risk-assessed prisoners, who are within two

months of their release date, to be temporarily released from custody, as part of the national approach to managing public services during this challenging period. As of Friday 12 June, 113 offenders have been released under this scheme.

Alongside the careful release of low-risk offenders, we are also implementing our compartmentalisation strategy to manage different cohorts of the prison population, working to expedite remand cases and temporarily expanding the estate through the installation of single occupancy units. This is to strike a balance between limiting the spread of COVID-19 in prisons while ensuring the public is protected. We are providing ongoing monitoring of the scheme to assess its effectiveness as one of a number of measures in place to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in prisons.

### Public Transport: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken, or intend to take, to enforce the requirement for passengers on public transport to use face coverings. [HL5617]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** We do not expect stringent enforcement immediately from 15 June and have seen high levels of compliance since the launch. We expect to see a gradual ramp-up of enforcement, supported by a significant Government communications campaign over the coming months.

It will be up to operators to decide the best way to enforce these changes, and we are working closely with them to help implement their plans. We are also working closely with Transport for London and the police, including the British Transport Police, are able to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice as set out in the Regulations.

### Railways: Hygiene

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) cleanliness, and (2) hygiene, on passenger trains in England. [HL5614]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** We have been clear that our priority remains the safety of staff and passengers. We have issued comprehensive guidance to the public transport operators, including rail operators, on keeping trains clean and ensuring staff and passengers are able to maintain good hygiene.

### Refugees: Children

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conditions for child refugees in Greece; what humanitarian and medical aid they have provided to those refugees; and what plans they have, if any, to allow them to come to the UK. [HL5618]



**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK Government has previously raised concerns about the conditions in the migrant camps with the Greek Government and in light of our strong bilateral relationship will continue to do so when necessary. On 22 April the UK and Greece signed the UK-Greece Migration Action Plan, which aims to improve overall management of irregular migration in the Eastern Mediterranean:

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/historic-uk-greece-migration-action-plan-signed>).

As part of this ongoing cooperation the UK will continue to provide further practical support when possible – this recently included the provision of over £500,000 for urgently needed humanitarian goods and in 2019 the UK helped finance the Metadrasi children's shelter on Samos, which provides a safe place to stay and professional support to the most vulnerable unaccompanied children who arrive on Samos.

Protecting vulnerable children remains a key priority of this Government and we have a proud record of doing so through our asylum system and our resettlement schemes. The UK remains fully committed to meeting its obligations under the Dublin III Regulation, and unaccompanied children can continue to transfer to the UK from Greece under Dublin. Despite covid-19 restrictions, the UK is ready to accept transfers under Dublin whenever Member States are in a position to make those arrangements. We recently worked closely with Greece to complete the transfer of vulnerable people, including unaccompanied children, on 11 May who were united with family members in the UK. We continue to liaise with our counterparts in Member States on what actions can be taken during this period and to effect transfers as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

### Syria: Humanitarian Aid

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to build consensus among United Nations Security Council members on renewing UNSC Resolution 2504 on Syria; and whether they are ensuring that this is guiding any decision-making about the development of the resolution. [HL5669]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is working to build consensus around the vital renewal of UN Security Council Resolution 2504 on Syria through regular multilateral discussions in New York and bilateral engagement by Ministers and senior officials with other permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council. The UN Secretary General has set out the need for cross border aid access into north-west and north-east Syria. We are therefore pressing for the UN Security Council to mandate this on humanitarian grounds, raising this most recently on 16 June.

### Syria: Politics and Government

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to send ministerial level representation to the EU–UN Brussels Conference on 30 June; and, if not, what steps they plan to take (1) to reach a political solution to the situation in Syria, and (2) to support the people living there. [HL5667]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government does intend to attend the Brussels IV Conference on Syria at ministerial level. The Government will express the UK's continued support for UN Special Envoy Pedersen's efforts to reach a political settlement, and set out our plans for future humanitarian support for the Syrian people. In our biggest ever humanitarian response to an individual crisis, the UK has to date committed £3.1 billion to Syria and the region since 2012.

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure meaningful women's participation in forthcoming political negotiations on Syria; and what steps they will take include a commitment to women's participation in (1) their verbal intervention in, and (2) the official outcome documents of, the EU–UN Brussels Conference. [HL5668]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** In line with the 'Shared Approach to Gender in Syria' that the Government published in 2018, we are supporting Syrian civil society actors to ensure the inclusion of women's voices in the conference discussions. The UK continues to support programming to empower Syrian women and girls socially, politically and economically, and we strongly advocate for the meaningful participation of Syrian women in politics, including the UN-led political process.

### Terrorism: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Troubles-related incident victims payments scheme. [HL5649]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The UK Government made legislation establishing a victims payments scheme in January. It did so both to fulfil its legal obligation (under the Executive Formation Act) and because it is committed to doing what it can to progress a scheme that has been delayed by political disagreements for too long. The Executive committed to take forward a scheme and, under the provisions of the Regulations, is legally obligated to now do so.



We will continue to prioritise supporting the Executive's delivery of this scheme. NIO officials have been offering support to assist progress on implementation, by advising the team of officials on the appropriate interpretation and intention of the Regulations; but it is the Executive's responsibility to implement the scheme.

### **Trade Agreements: Israeli Settlements**

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that their trade agreements will not be made with businesses which (1) exist within, or (2) support, any Israeli settlement considered to be illegal under international law. [HL5731]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The United Kingdom does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including settlements, as part of Israel. For this reason, goods originating from settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are not covered by the United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, which enters into force at the end of the Transition Period.

### **UK Trade with EU**

*Asked by **Lord Bowness***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications under World Trade Organisation rules of goods entering from outside the EU if (1) there is no free trade agreement by 31 December, and (2) the UK permits the import of the same goods from the EU without the imposition of any tariffs. [HL5755]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The UK Global Tariff (UKGT) is the United Kingdom's permanent most-favoured-nation (MFN) tariff schedule. At the end of

2020 the United Kingdom will transition to MFN terms with all those nations that it does not have a free trade agreement with. In line with the United Kingdom's international commitments, the same tariffs will apply to all World Trade Organisation (WTO) trading partners, unless an exception applies - for example, a free trade agreement (FTA) or other preferential arrangement is in place.

The UK Government intends to achieve an FTA with the EU by December 2020. We therefore do not expect the UKGT to apply to EU imports. However, if we do not achieve an FTA by the end of the transition period, the UKGT will apply to the EU in line with the United Kingdom's obligations under the WTO.

The UK Government will publish a Taxation Information and Impact Notice alongside the legislation for the UKGT as is standard practice. This notice will include the Government's impact assessment.

### **UNRWA: Expenditure**

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what contribution they have made to the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in (1) 2017, (2) 2018, (3) 2019, and (4) 2020. [HL5728]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Last year UK funding to UNRWA, helped UNRWA provide education to around half a million children (half of whom are girls), health services for around 3.5 million Palestinian refugees, and social safety net assistance for around 255,000 of the most vulnerable.

DFID's funding contribution to UNRWA 2017-2019 is as follows: £51.1m in 2017, £65.5m in 2018, £65.5m in 2019. We will announce our plans for 2020 in due course.

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